

NAIOP 2009 Snapshot of Public Policy Committee Activities

In 2009, the chapter successfully advanced our stated public policy mission: “To be the first line of defense at the legislature for our developer, owner and investor members, for their business tenants, and for all Minnesota business property taxpayers.” Spearheaded by its director, Kaye Rakow, a highly involved committee of volunteers and a supportive board of directors—and working in concert with an NAIOP-organized coalition of like-minded business groups—the chapter planned and executed an aggressive, highly creative, multi-level campaign, statewide in its scope, which successfully defeated an attempt by legislators to close a \$6 billion budget gap with further increases in the state’s already high business property taxes and other taxes on developers and property owners. Once again this year, the chapter’s focus on the urgent fiscal issues affecting our members allowed it to target resources strategically, informing and educating policymakers of the inherent dangers in proposed tax increase legislation for the state’s economy, for job creation, and for the ability of Minnesota companies to compete nationally and worldwide. Here is a summary of action steps taken in 2009 to influence the policymaking process.

Updated the member and property databases, organized by legislative district, to support aggressive member grassroots mobilization during the session.

Utilized the Penny Per Square Foot Fund, the chapter’s innovative fundraising vehicle (voluntary contributions based on square footage owned or managed) dedicated exclusively to support the chapter’s public policy program.

Raised money for the chapter’s PAC and leveraged its funds by coordinating with like-minded business groups.

Created and distributed hundreds of thousands of educational flyers on business property taxes in Minnesota.

Coordinated policy planning and actions with longtime business coalition partners, the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce, the Minnesota Business Partnership and local chambers across the state.

Fostered a close working relationship with Governor Pawlenty and his staff, in a unified position on proposed increases to the statewide property tax.

Established new coalitions with other business organizations—manufacturers and minority chambers of commerce.

Supported NAIOP headquarters staff by helping with other chapters’ issues, arranging meeting with staff and the 2010 head of the U.S. Conference of Mayors, garnering support for carried interest position and working with Governor Pawlenty’s office for speaking engagement at leadership conference.

Met with members of congress during recess and organized member grassroots action on national issues: carried interest, capital markets and building codes.

Recruited 72 CRE professionals to join 800 business owners at 2009 “Business Day at the Capitol.”

Executed intensive media relations campaign, including editorial boards of major dailies, monthly columns in financial and industry publications.

Launched the “Nexus Project” with the Minnesota Taxpayers Association, three-year study of local spending and costs driving demand for increased revenue.

Published post-session report informing members of chapter’s successful actions in “influencing the process.”

Conducted aggressive “in-the-halls” lobbying at the capitol by public policy director and lobbying counsel to educate and persuade key policymakers. Members provided testimony at committee hearings.

Arranged meetings with approximately 120 members and their state legislators before and during the session.

Planned and executed extensive publications program, including the *23rd Annual Comparative Tax Study of Minnesota* and 12 competing states’ and *TaxWatch* a pre-session alert.
