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## ★ CoreNet Atlanta catalyzes industry optimism

CoreNet Global - Atlanta Chapter  
 Premium content from Atlanta Business Chronicle - by Tonya Layman, Contributing Writer  
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As CoreNet Global's mission is to advance the effectiveness of corporate real estate professionals and the entire industry engaged in delivering value to corporations through the strategic management of corporate real estate and workplace resources, CoreNet Global Atlanta leaders are capitalizing on a heightened sense of optimism throughout the industry and turning that into positive change for the its members.

CoreNet Global Atlanta Chapter President **Tim McCarthy**, who is a senior vice president at [Jones Lang LaSalle Inc.](#), has had three main areas of focus this year — providing high-quality education programs, attracting new members and adding value to sponsors.

In an effort to boost the quality and impact of the organization's educational programs, the chapter has redoubled its effort toward educational programs that provide members with information and insights needed to support their organizations.

"Learning and professional development is a cornerstone component of CoreNet Global. To that end, our chapter is committed to providing high-quality educational programs," he said. "We offer a steady slate of programs each year. We strive to provide timely and relevant information that is applicable to our membership regardless of their industry segment in the real estate genre. We try to get every member to participate in an event each year and we seem to be on track with that this year. To date, we have had more than 50 percent of membership participate in at least one of the educational programs or attend one of our networking events."

He added many of the chapter members will be attending the chapter's education forum on Aug. 25.

The organization's networking events are not simply cocktail parties or meet-and-greets. They tie in an educational component at most gatherings.

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"We try to have a speaker or roundtable event and then tie a networking event on the back end of that," McCarthy said, adding that by coupling the two things together they are able to secure better participation.

CoreNet President-elect **Darlene Hawksley**, director of real estate and business engagement at the McPherson Implementing Local Redevelopment Authority, said a recent networking event at a newly opened LEED-certified design firm allowed members exposure to a new work environment.

"It was an opportunity to showcase what is truly happening in the community and it was something you wouldn't have the opportunity to be exposed to without attending the event," she said. "It is nice to have a networking event with a takeaway."

Another 2011 goal is to attract and retain members.

"We continue to look for ways to enhance the membership experience for our chapter, whether it be through networking activities, young leader events or through community outreach opportunities," McCarthy said. "In addition to focused plans exploring fresh channels for new members, we also know it's easier to retain current members than attract new ones; therefore, we'll strive to make the experience so valuable that members will not leave once they've joined. We emphasize attracting and retaining end users and senior leader members — if we can be successful in these member segments, other segments will thrive as well."

Membership of the Atlanta chapter stands at about 350 — making it one of the larger, more active ones within the CoreNet Global network.

Even though that membership number is down a little, McCarthy is optimistic.

"The retention rate is high, meaning the members still involved are the members who have been here for many years," he said. "Many of the ones who are out were short-timers. The caliber of our members is high — they are the decision-makers within their organizations."

Also, the reduction in members is a result of fewer people working in the real estate industry.

"It is not that we aren't meeting or exceeding the expectations of our members," McCarthy said.

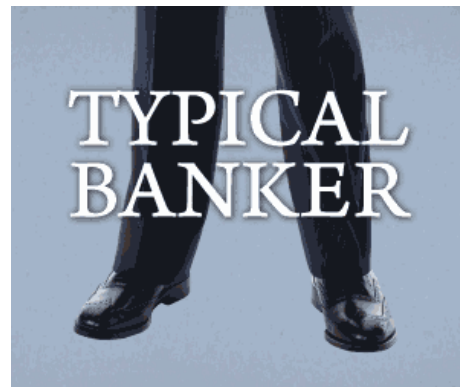
Hawksley said the organization reaches out to a wide segment of the population — from end users to service providers.

"While the number of people in the industry has changed over the last few years, we are in the position to re-engage people as I believe the horizon of our industry improves over the next few years," she said. "We have a large group of industry verticals represented in the chapter and that works to our advantage. That diversity is beneficial."

McCarthy's third goal for the year has been to return value to CoreNet Atlanta sponsors.

"Our sponsors are the fuel for the engine in terms of what we can provide including educational opportunities, networking opportunities and what we are able to give back to the community at large," he said.

Hawksley plans to keep many of the same goals as McCarthy had when her term begins in January.



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"We provide robust educational programs and networking opportunities that bring value to our members. If we stay true to that focus I believe we will automatically grow the membership," she said.

She also plans to boost the chapter's Community Reinvestment Challenge, a community service initiative.

"We have an extremely wonderful program but I personally think we can do more," Hawksley said. "There are many other ways we can give back to the community."

### CoreNet facts

CoreNet Global has 53 chapters worldwide.

CoreNet Global's four knowledge communities are workplace, strategy and portfolio planning, sustainability, and industry and manufacturing.

The organization supports two special interest groups: Women of CoreNet Global and Young Leaders.

The Atlanta chapter has about 350 members.

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