PRESIDENT'S REPORT --
LONG RANGE PLANNING
UPDATE

Eugene C. Hopkins, AIA

A year and a half ago, as Vice President, I formed a big picture committee to provide, as the name implies, a critical overview of the Society. This included analyzing finances (what is needed to break even), structure (is the Board structure and the Chapter structure providing the best vehicle for communicating, representing and operating the Society), and marketability (are we being effective in the way we promote what architects do -- its importance and what it means as a source of revenue generation.) The purpose of the overview was to respond to concerns of the Executive Committee that the Society was struggling to survive. We needed to step back and take a serious look at ourselves. Has the Society changed with the times? Is it effective as it exists? Is it what the members want it to be? And will it be effective (positioned) to take us into the 21st century?

After four months of effort by this committee, it was determined that the big picture committee could not answer all these questions. It became obvious that the effort needed to be turned into a Long Range Planning function for the Society. There needed to be input by the entire membership, because the Society represents all of us. It was decided that this data gathering effort would be conducted over the 1994 year. Steve Vogel, FAIA, accepted the position as chairperson to conduct interactive sessions at each of the ten chapters, including the AIA Michigan leadership retreat (with the Board of Directors and the Presidents and Vice Presidents of the chapters), Staff, Council of Presidents, and Firm Principals. These were typically two-hour sessions that encouraged input from the members about their likes and dislikes, what gets done well and poorly, what it isn't doing and should be doing, and what they would like to see the Society focus on.

Once all the data was collected, another task force was formed, chaired by Graham Dickens, AIA, to synthesize all the information and develop a working document. This document would be based on the feedback from the members about their likes and dislikes, what gets done well and poorly, what it isn't doing and should be doing, and what they would like to see the Society focus on.

Following is a brief synopsis of the pertinent recommendations of the report:

**Update the AIA Michigan Mission Statement as follows:**

VISION

AIA Michigan, a Society of The American Institute of Architects, represents and supports members of Michigan’s
architectural profession. It enhances the position of architects as leaders of the building team and designers of the built environment.

MISSION

The Mission of AIA Michigan is to organize and unite our members to promote the Vision by continuously improving the professional and business opportunities for architects. This Mission is achieved by means of:

* **Education** of the public to the value of the profession; education of members to a higher standard of practice; and education of students to the ever-changing needs of the profession.

* **Public Affairs Advocacy** through the development and dissemination of policies that enhance the natural and built environment; and the influencing of governmental legislation and regulatory policy that impact the effectiveness of the profession.

* **Fellowship** through activities that promote interaction among the members and allied professionals.

The current structure and programs, as well as all new ideas for possible change of the Society, were tested against the Mission in order to justify their appropriateness.

Based on this evaluation, the following areas of improvement have been identified:

1. Revise the AIA Michigan Board of Directors to provide:
   * Equal representation on the Board from all chapters
   * Representation by the non-traditional architect
   * Representation by the public
   * Representation by the schools of architecture
   * Representation by the allied professionals
   * Representation by the Emeritus members

2. Appoint a commission to review the current chapter structure in the state (underway).

3. Review the current relationship with the Michigan Architectural Foundation to ensure the goals of both AIA Michigan and the Foundation are being met.

4. Form a financial committee to review and recommend to the Executive Committee and the Board improvements that can be made in the financial structure of the Society, including an annual evaluation of the financial implication to sell Beaubien House and open an office in Lansing.

5. Review relationship with AIA Detroit to ensure the goals of both AIA Michigan and the Detroit chapter are being met.

6. Implement programmatic budgeting to evaluate each program's performance and value to the membership (underway).

I want to assure you that as shareholders in the Society, you will have the opportunity to have further input into this document. You had the opportunity this past year, and your representatives on the Board and Executive Committee will be dealing with these issues this year. In addition, any action requiring a change in the bylaws cannot be taken without your vote approval. Many of these decisions are too important to be made by a select few. I feel very strongly that the membership needs to have input on the long range direction of the Society and am supported by the Executive Committee and Board in these feelings.

1995-96 LEGISLATIVE OUTLOOK

Cawthorne, McCollough & Cavanagh, our lobbyists in Lansing, have provided us with a legislative outlook for the next two years. We are providing you with some pertinent information included in their outlook. Highlights are...

Governor John Engler's 709,111 vote victory, combined with total Republican control of the State Legislature for the first time in nearly a quarter of a century, sets the stage for a busy 1995 and 1996 year in Lansing.

The State Senate will remain in GOP hands, 22-16, and the House, after two years of a tie and a unique shared leadership arrangement, will be 56-54 Republican.

The following issues should be "front and center" in 1995-96. Some of these are included in the Governor's "Action Plan."

Transportation funding (including major gas tax increases), tort reform, auto insurance reform (again), single business tax revisions or repeal, health care (battle between Dems' universal coverage proposals versus Governor's 7-
the issues which are generally thought to have significant liability for the professional. As a word of caution and advice, read carefully those articles pertaining to:

* Indemnification: Check with your insurer. You may not be covered based on the language of your policy.
* Hazardous Materials: Again, check with your insurer. Don’t assume a responsibility you are not insured for and not expert to execute.
* Open End Responsibilities: Resist the temptation to assume everything will be "O.K." Be clear about your responsibility and those of the State.

Key words to look for: "approval" making you responsible for an agency’s future action. "assist" this usually means - the professional will do it. "monitor, evaluate, and take timely administrative action".

Read your contract carefully, negotiate assertively, practice like a business person, document your discussions and understandings, and seek qualified advice from your friends and your attorney.

BE AWARE: UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS MAY BE AFFECTED BY SOME BUYOUT OFFERS

A growing practice among employers, when reducing their workforce, is to offer incentives to employees to retire earlier than usual. As part of the buyout offer, many companies have allowed workers to liquidate the money in their retirement accounts and roll over these funds into an IRA. This is usually a better option for the employee than leaving their retirement accruals in the employer’s retirement fund to earn a sometimes unattractively low interest rate. However, employers and their employees should be aware that taking this option does affect the worker’s unemployment benefits.

Although the Internal Revenue Code does not treat the payment as having been "received" for income tax purposes, the Michigan Employment Security (MES) Act does. According to the MES Act, if a worker chooses the option to roll over the pension amount into an IRA, that worker has "received" the pension and used it by depositing it into an IRA. By receiving the pension, even for a limited time, and even with the purpose of rolling it over into an IRA, the claimant is subject to a total or partial reduction in unemployment benefits.

Even though the claimant is not literally using the money, he or she has control of it, and it is available for use. The amount of the deduction would depend on the amount of the claimant’s contribution to the pension fund.

If you would like further information, contact the MESC Employer Customer Service Hotline at 800/638-3994.

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7 Park in Joe Louis garage with a FREE shuttle to the Cobo Center door
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5 FREE advance registration
4 See and be seen by industry leaders
3 FREE hot dogs and meet sports celebrities*
2 Save time and money for your company — compare products at one time and place

And The Number One Reason Why You Need To Attend . . .

1 Experience the latest industry technology, products and equipment — all under one roof!

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If you have any business to take care of—membership, dues, or especially document orders—please be certain to contact us the week of December 19th. On behalf of the Staff of AIA Michigan, may we take this opportunity to wish you and your family a very merry and safe holiday season!
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Once all the data was collected, another task force was formed, chaired by Graham Dickens, AIA, to synthesize all the information and develop a working document. This document would be based on the feedback from the membership over the past year and would recommend what the Society should do. The outcome of the effort, called the Reorganization Task Force Report, was presented to the AIA Michigan Board for approval on October 27. The Board did approve the working document in principle.

Since the Board meeting, the perception is that the recommendations are a done deal and are to be implemented. That is definitely not the case. Some recommendations cannot be implemented without a vote of the membership.

This is simply the first go-around for the Board, as well as for the membership. The report that was produced is a recommended path to follow. It did not go into detail, but provided a big picture response to what we heard. The efforts and content of the report are an attempt to improve the value of AIA Michigan to its members for the dues dollars paid.

The next step is to take the appropriate elements of the recommendations and put them on the floor for further debate and scrutiny at several of the Board of Director’s meetings for 1995. This input will then be incorporated into the Reorganization Plan final document and the appropriate elements taken to the Board of Directors or the Membership for a vote.

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15 SMPS Holiday Party (for members and their guests); contact Janet Baetz 313/886-1190
15 Last day to purchase NOVA Awards Tickets at reduced rates; phone 313/995-1855
24-1 AIA Michigan headquarters closed for the holidays

**JANUARY**

18 AIA Grand Valley Program: Architectural Design, Gino Rossetti; 1995 Goals/Programs; AIA Michigan Restructure - Grand Rapids Art Museum, Grand Rapids; contact AIA Grand Valley
24-25 Expo West - Grand Center, Grand Rapids
26 LTU ArchiLECTURE: Grant Hildebrand, Architect, Seattle, Washington; architectural educator and noted Frank Lloyd Wright and Albert Kahn scholar; presentation pays tribute to Albert Kahn - LTU, Southfield
point incremental reforms), personal watercraft restrictions, personal watercraft restrictions, Tiger Stadium (and related downtown Detroit redevelopment), availability of vaccines, waste flow restrictions, anti-discount drug pricing, ban on tobacco and alcohol billboard advertising, charter schools (further refinement and expansion), high speed rail, disposal of low-level radioactive waste, downsizing of state government, DNR structural and procedural reforms, gaming, regional transportation revamping (for southwest Michigan), enterprise zones for economic development in each county, battery disposal, environmental code recodification, all appropriations matters, educational restructuring (Dept. of Education and ISDs), and restructuring of judiciary (i.e. jurisdictions of trial-level courts).

If you'd like a copy of the outlook they provided, give us a call at headquarters...we'll be glad to mail it out to you.

NEWS FLASH
STATE OF MICHIGAN

Government Affairs Task Force/A/A Michigan

The Office of Facilities, Bureau of Management and Budget, is in the process of revising the state's Professional Services Contract. A preliminary copy has been made available to several professionals to comment. This is partially in response to commentary provided to the state by Carl Roehling, AIA, of SH&G in May 1991.

In our opinion, not much progress has been made in removing or reducing some of the issues which are generally thought to have significant liability for the professional. As a word of caution and advice, read carefully those articles pertaining to:

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6. It's the largest design and construction industry show in the midwest
5. **FREE** advance registration
4. See and be seen by industry leaders
3. **FREE** hot dogs and meet sports celebrities*
2. Save time and money for your company — compare products at one time and place

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*Thursday, February 9, 3 p.m.*
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