

# Georgia Commons

A Publication of Community Associations Institute of Georgia, Inc.

## Inside —

**The Action of Communication**

**Innovation: Weighing the Rewards of New Technology Against Potential Liability**

**When to Consider Amending and Restating Governing Documents**

**Rebooting with Smart Software**

*...and more!*



# FRESH START



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## From the Chapter President



*“This year, I encourage boards, managers, and business partners alike to embrace the mindset of starting fresh...”*

As we turn the page on another year and look ahead with renewed purpose, there is something especially energizing about the idea of afresh start. In our communities, in our professional lives, and in the partnerships we build each day, a fresh start isn’t just a reset button—it’s an opportunity to rethink, reimagine, and reinvest in the values that strengthen our neighborhoods.

For community associations, the beginning of a new year is more than a date on the calendar. It’s a chance to reflect on the lessons behind us and set our sights on what’s possible ahead. Whether it’s improving communication, enhancing homeowner engagement, prioritizing financial health, or adopting new technologies, each association has its own path toward progress. What unites us is the shared goal of creating communities where people feel heard, supported, and proud to live.

This year, I encourage boards, managers, and business partners alike to embrace the mindset of starting fresh—not because last year was flawed, but because every year deserves intentionality. A fresh start invites us to ask thoughtful questions:

What can we do better? What can we simplify? What can we celebrate? And how can we strengthen the relationships that make our communities thrive?

In my work, I am continually inspired by the dedication of those who serve our community associations. Your commitment to fairness, collaboration, and service is the backbone of successful associations. As we enter this new year, let’s continue lifting each other up, sharing best practices, and approaching challenges with optimism and resilience.

May this season bring clarity to your goals, confidence to your decisions, and a renewed sense of purpose in all you do. Here’s to new beginnings, bold ideas, and a year filled with forward momentum.

*Wishing you all a meaningful and motivating fresh start.*

Warmly,  
**Eric Love**  
2026 Georgia Chapter President

### SAPPHIRE

<b>Access Management Group</b>	<b>Five Star Community Association Management</b>
<b>All In One Community Management</b>	<b>Georgia Community Management</b>
<b>Association Management Advisory Group</b>	<b>Homeowner Management Services</b>
<b>Atlanta Community Services</b>	<b>Homeside Properties</b>
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<b>Ameristar Roofing</b>	<b>Lazega &amp; Johanson</b>
<b>ArborForce Tree Services</b>	<b>Lueder, Larkin &amp; Hunter</b>
<b>Arborguard Tree Specialists</b>	<b>Miller Dodson Associates</b>
<b>Atlanta Landscape Group</b>	<b>Mr. Mister Mosquito Control</b>
<b>Atlanta Painting Company</b>	<b>National Cooperative Bank</b>
<b>Blueprint Painting &amp; Renovations</b>	<b>NatureScapes</b>
<b>Bouvier Insurance</b>	<b>Newman Certified Public Accountant, PC</b>
<b>BrightView Landscape Services</b>	<b>North Georgia Landscape Management</b>
<b>Brown &amp; Brown Insurance of Georgia</b>	<b>Northwest Exterminating</b>
<b>CertaPro Painters of NE Georgia</b>	<b>NowackHoward</b>
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<b>Coulter &amp; Sierra</b>	<b>Remediation Group</b>
<b>Crabapple LandscapExperts</b>	<b>Roof It Forward</b>
<b>Dorough &amp; Dorough</b>	<b>RooterPLUS!</b>
<b>Dreher Insurance</b>	<b>Russell Landscape Group</b>
<b>EPIC.</b>	<b>Team Pest USA</b>
<b>Go Painting of North Georgia</b>	<b>The Rick’s Group Landscape Management</b>
<b>Greenwood Group Landscape Management Services</b>	<b>Vantaca</b>
<b>HM Plumbing</b>	<b>Western Alliance Association Bank</b>
<b>Horizon Painting &amp; Renovations</b>	<b>Winter Capriola Zenner</b>
<b>Hotwire Communications</b>	<b>Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates</b>
<b>Huckleberry Enterprises</b>	<b>Zamora Tree Service</b>
<b>Johnson Yi Lau</b>	

### GOLD

<b>A &amp; D Painting</b>	<b>Premier Access Business Solutions</b>
<b>Alliance CAS</b>	<b>PTR Control Systems</b>
<b>American Painting &amp; Renovations</b>	<b>RealManage</b>
<b>CINC Systems</b>	<b>Reserve Advisors</b>
<b>Diversified Services Group</b>	<b>ReStruct Engineering</b>
<b>Falling Leaves Landscape Professionals</b>	<b>RJ’s Reliable Construction</b>
<b>First Citizens Bank</b>	<b>SavATree</b>
<b>FirstService Residential</b>	<b>Sears Pool Management Consultants</b>
<b>Gibson Landscape Services, LLC</b>	<b>ShaBen &amp; Associates</b>
<b>Heritage Property Management Services</b>	<b>SmartStreet Powered by Banc of California</b>
<b>Michaelangelo’s Sustainable Landscape &amp; Design Group</b>	<b>Tower Roofing</b>
<b>New Leaf Landscape Services</b>	<b>Village Management Software</b>
<b>Northside Tree Professionals</b>	<b>WellKept Waste</b>
<b>Pankey &amp; Horlock</b>	<b>Yellowstone Landscape</b>
<b>Phoenix Contracting</b>	

### SILVER

<b>Advantage Community Management</b>	<b>Gaddis &amp; Lanier</b>
<b>Alford &amp; Alford, Certified Public Accountant, PC</b>	<b>Illuminating Design</b>
<b>AQUA DOC Lake &amp; Pond Management</b>	<b>Owens &amp; Mitchell, CPA</b>
<b>Columbia Bank</b>	<b>Red Hat Painting</b>
<b>Exclusive Association Management</b>	<b>Turnkey Facility Maintenance</b>

# SAPPHIRE MANAGEMENT COMPANY SPONSORS



Access Management Group is proud of the strong legacy of consistent, successful community management around the Atlanta Metro area. Having long term relationships with our communities, employees and vendors enable us to excel for the betterment of over 275 Homeowner, Townhome and Condominium Associations. We pride ourselves in being experts of governing documents, covenants, bylaws, board and annual meetings, operating budgets, financial statements, assessment collections and much, much more. Our proven practices deliver first-class customer service to all residents. We work hand-in-hand with boards and homeowners to make your community a place you're proud to call home. Our goal is to protect and raise property values while building a trusted community.



Managing an HOA shouldn't feel overwhelming. At All In One Community Management, we make it simple by blending local knowledge with the structure of a big firm, so associations get results, not excuses. For over 20 years, we've supported North Metro Atlanta communities with managers who live nearby and specialists who handle compliance, financials, and amenities. Our approach means faster answers for residents and strategic guidance for boards. With an average client retention of more than a decade, we're proud to be the partner community's trust. Professional service without the distance. Local care without the gaps. That's All In One.



Association Management Advisory Group, Inc. is community management at its finest. Homeowner Associations are our specialty. We provide tiered levels of service from financial only to full service, or customized Homeowner Association Management. Our licensed professional community association managers and accounting staff are ready to partner with your Board of Directors to meet HOA challenges. Whether it is financial or full service we manage it all. Professional accounting assures your community's financial resources are managed and utilized to maximize community benefits. Customized financial services, cash management, accounting and detailed reports provide up to date information. AMAG will make a positive difference in your community.



We are a locally owned and operated community association management company serving neighborhoods across Georgia and the Southeast. We pride ourselves on personalized, hands-on service and never treat clients as just another number. Our local team works closely with boards and residents to keep communities well-maintained, financially strong, and positioned for long-term success. By combining community-focused care with modern technology, we streamline communication and improve efficiency. Our mission is simple: to provide responsive, trusted management that strengthens neighborhoods and makes residents proud to call them home.



Beacon Management has been ranked by the Atlanta Business Chronicle as one of Georgia's leading management companies for the past eight years. We deliver added value, quality service, competitive pricing, and robust expertise to oversee a property of any size or complexity. Our professional team has dealt with virtually every facet of real estate, giving us the experience that will materially improve your property. Comprehensive Services:

- Comprehensive Services:
- Sited and portfolio management for residential, commercial, and multifamily
- Five-star property staffing, and front desk/front gate services
- Mobile maintenance personnel and fully equipped maintenance vans
- State of the art, user-friendly technology



For more than thirty years Community Management Associates has provided professional association management services throughout Alabama, Georgia, Florida, South Carolina, and Tennessee. We bring many assets to every association we manage including first-class customer service, proactive, experienced management, and cutting-edge technology. Whether your association is large or small, a mid-rise or high-rise condominium, co-op, master planned community, or a commercial association office complex, CMA delivers professional, effective, and cost-efficient management, customized to your association's requirements at a price you can afford.



Five Star CAM specializes in bespoke management solutions for POAs, HOAs, condominiums, high-rises, and master-planned communities. We are your partner in building vibrant, thriving associations. Our mission is to provide five-star associations with the care they deserve. We prioritize personalized care, ensuring every owner in your association feels uniquely valued. Join us on a journey to redefine community association management by making every owner feel valued, understood, and cared for.



The GCM Difference is our people-friendly approach and culture of "care" that is integrated into everything we do. Our staff is friendly, knowledgeable and our technology is top notch. We drive through your neighborhood in a GCM wrapped vehicle, so your homeowners have "peace of mind". Our commitment to our Associations is also demonstrated by our simplified contract terms including a 30-day cancellation with or without cause. GCM achieved the Accredited Association Management Company designation from CAI and received the Trustdale certification. For over a decade we have been honored to serve HOA and Condo Associations throughout Georgia making Association living simple and enjoyable! 770.554.1236 | www.gcmgt.com



Homeowner Management Services, Inc. has been committed to serving Community Associations since 1993. HMS is locally owned and operated and has again been named Best of Forsyth and a Top Ten Management Company by the Atlanta Business Chronicle. As an Accredited Association Management (AAMC) staffed by accredited management professionals, HMS managers are given the support of an administrative and accounting team so they can focus on managing your community. We offer cutting edge technology and services to our clients. By providing a full selection of management services, associations can customize services to suit community needs. Call on HMS for Respected, Responsive, and Reliable services.



Established in 1977 and part of the Associa management company network since 2010, Homeside Properties, An Associa® Company, has served metro Atlanta for almost five decades. Our 75+ team members lead the industry in professional certifications and designations and have helped hundreds of local associations achieve their vision. We proudly serve the Metro-Atlanta area and surrounding cities with a dedicated team of community management experts. From comprehensive HOA and commercial property management to secure financial services and on-demand maintenance, our full suite of services can help your association thrive.



Silverleaf Management Group provides community association management to homeowners and condominium associations in metro Atlanta. We combine innovation with a high-level of customer service to provide a unique and effective solution for community management. We support communities of any size and provide professional community management services accentuated with personalized attention. Silverleaf is proud to hold the Accredited Association Management Company (AAMC) designation, and our manager's credentials include Association Management Specialist (AMS), Certified Manager of Community Associations (CMCA), and CAI's highest designation, the Professional Community Association Manager (PCAM). At Silverleaf, if we aren't exceeding your expectations, we aren't working hard enough!

## PLATINUM SPONSORS



Ameristar, is full-service roofing company with over a decade of experience. Installing a variety of single-ply, shingles, modified bitumen, and metal roof systems, and roof coatings, Ameristar can meet your most difficult requirements. Rated in the TOP 2% Nationally for quality of roof installation workmanship, by GAF, the largest manufacturer of roofing products in the U.S, you are assured you will receive an exceptional installation. Ameristar offers full roof replacements, gutter installations and repairs, maintenance programs, emergency repair services, and assistance with insurance claims due to storm damage. We provide quality products, outstanding customer service, superior workmanship, and extensive warranties on our installations.



Since 2013, ArborForce Tree Services has partnered with property managers and homeowner's associations throughout Metro Atlanta to protect and enhance community landscapes. Our ISA Certified Arborists understand the unique demands of managed properties—balancing curb appeal, resident safety, risk mitigation, and budget planning. We provide comprehensive tree care solutions designed specifically for HOAs and multi-property portfolios, including proactive tree trimming and removal, 24/7 emergency storm response, and advanced plant health management programs. Our team works closely with boards and management companies to develop customized maintenance plans that reduce liability, preserve property value, and ensure long-term landscape health. By combining technical expertise with responsible environmental practices, ArborForce delivers dependable service, clear communication, and scalable solutions tailored to the operational needs of property managers and community associations.

# PLATINUM SPONSORS



Arboguard Tree Specialists has been providing Georgia with quality Tree Care since 1981. Working with property managers, community associations and homeowners, our team of ISA certified arborists is equipped to handle all aspects of your property's Tree Care needs including proper pruning practices, removals, hazard mitigation, tree healthcare including soil remediation, insect and disease management, consultation services, and many other tree related needs. Call us today to see how we can help improve your assets!



Atlanta Landscape Group is a Commercial Landscape Contractor specializing in offering Landscape Services for Master Planned Communities in Metro Atlanta (including HOAs, Multi Family, Townhome, and Condo Communities).

The ALG Staff offers a Century of Experience, with Quality Services, Communication, and Proactive Management (that is second to none)!!!



Atlanta Painting Company is a trusted partner for property managers in the painting industry, delivering exceptional service tailored to the unique needs of managed properties. With years of expertise, the company excels in handling diverse projects, from apartment complexes to commercial buildings, ensuring quality and efficiency. Their team understands the challenges property managers face, such as maintaining tenant satisfaction and adhering to budgets and timelines. Offering premium materials and skilled craftsmanship, Atlanta Painting Company provides lasting results that enhance property value. Committed to clear communication and reliability, they are a go-to resource for property managers seeking excellence in the painting industry.



Blueprint Painting & Renovations believes in providing the highest quality painting, staining services, siding, roofing and maintenance to our clients throughout the Atlanta area. Our professional renovation specialists incorporate expert customer service and communication to ensure that our clients are completely satisfied and consistently exceed our client's expectations. Our renovation specialists and knowledgeable project managers work closely with condominium, townhome, and HOA community property owners and managers to ensure every project is completed quickly and to the highest standards. We are your partner for capital improvement solutions.



Bouvier Insurance is a family-owned, full service independent insurance agency established in 1959, specializing in community association master policies. We provide unparalleled service to our clients and communities as the insurance partner to more than 2,000 community associations. With locations in Georgia, Tennessee, Connecticut, and Rhode Island, we have developed and partnered with the country's leading habitational insurance carriers to offer unsurpassed value, commitment, and exemplary customer service.

Above all else, our agency will continue to stand by our outstanding reputation and founding values of ethics, integrity, and honesty. For more information call 877-817-1747 or visit [binsurance.com](http://binsurance.com).



BrightView, the nation's leading landscape services provider, brings 80 years innovation & professional cultivation of eye-catching grounds in a sustainable and environmentally correct manner. We have maintained metro Atlanta and Georgia properties since 1979. We bring your property a team of experts: horticulturists, irrigation techs, designers,

and arborists, who offer unmatched experience. We have developed cutting-edge tools: BrightView HOA Connect - an online portal for communicating with our community association customers; our Quality Site Assessment (QSA) reports - combines a punch list with images of the issues being addressed. Reach out to our team members in metro Atlanta & Savannah for details.



Brown & Brown, established in 1939, is the fifth largest insurance brokerage in the nation and the largest Property & Casualty broker in Atlanta. Our Atlanta office has an

entire division dedicated to community associations. We truly differentiate ourselves by remaining independent with our management company partners and the 40+ insurance companies that we represent. We are fully equipped to build the most effective insurance program specifically designed for each association. For a free consultation and program evaluation, please visit [bbinsurance.com](http://bbinsurance.com) or call 770-952-7725 to speak with one of our licensed agents.



CertaPro Painters of Northeast Georgia is a trusted local provider of professional residential and commercial painting services. Known for reliability, craftsmanship, and exceptional customer care, their team delivers beautiful,

lasting results tailored to each home's style and needs. From detailed interior refreshes to durable exterior coatings that withstand Georgia's climate, CertaPro uses premium products and proven processes to ensure quality and cleanliness on every project. Clear communication, accurate estimates, and on-time completion set them apart. Homeowners appreciate their respect for property and commitment to satisfaction. When it's time to enhance curb appeal or update living spaces, CertaPro is ready today.



Cobb, Olson & Andrie, LLC is a full-service litigation and real estate law firm focusing on the needs of homeowner's associations in the Atlanta area and all of Georgia. We represent boards of directors with covenant drafting, amendments and enforcement. Our firm is passionate about collections! Recognizing that assessments are the lifeblood of an association, we aggressively work to secure judgments and use custom collection tools to hunt for assets and foreclose on association liens if necessary. Retainer clients receive discounted collection packages, news alerts and complimentary board training provided by our attorneys. [www.coalegal.com](http://www.coalegal.com).



As a locally owned and operated business headquartered in Atlanta, GA, Colony Roofers' team are experts in providing affordable roofs and great customer service. Our employees are hand-picked for their experience, hard work, and integrity. We specialize in residential and commercial roofing systems, and work tirelessly to provide customers with exceptional quality and value. Our attention to detail is among the best of Atlanta roofers, and we stand by the quality of our work by offering rock solid workmanship. We offer assistance with roof replacement, repair, and gutter services.



Commercial Asphalt and Concrete Services, Inc provides important asphalt paving and concrete repair solutions for HOAs, apartment complexes, shopping centers and industrial parks in metro-Atlanta and the Tri-State area. We have also completed FAA airport projects on time and on budget. In addition, we have performed detailed sinkhole repairs and complex stormwater drainage replacement projects. Commercial Asphalt and Concrete Services, Inc has helped maintain and improve parking lots in Georgia for over 15 years using high-quality materials and expert craftsmanship. Feel free to email the Owner directly anytime at [davidwood001@comcast.net](mailto:davidwood001@comcast.net) or you can text him directly at 770-655-6027.



Coulter & Sierra, LLC specializes in real estate law and our practice areas include community association law, real estate development. Our attorneys are active on both the local and national level with the Community Associations Institute. We provide hands-on service and practical advice to build a long-term relationship with our clients. Our knowledgeable staff has years of experience dealing with a variety of real estate related issues. Learn more at [www.coultersierra.com](http://www.coultersierra.com)



Crabapple LandscapExperts is a full-service commercial landscape company founded 30 years ago by Georgia native, Bill Coleman. Originally a garden center in the early 70's, Coleman bought Crabapple in 1992 and targeted

commercial landscape maintenance efforts toward community associations. This rings true today as community association landscape maintenance has become cornerstone for the Crabapple brand. Over the last 17 years, Crabapple has expanded its landscape maintenance portfolio into business parks, retail/mixed-use, hospital campuses and industrial parks. Our services include landscape maintenance, lawn care, build/design, irrigation, floriculture and landscape enhancements. Crabapple is one of the few locally owned commercial landscape companies that has remained on Atlanta's Business Chronicle's top 10 list for the last 19 years



Dorough & Dorough, LLC offers a wide range of real estate related legal services: from serving successful national and regional builders and developers of planned

communities to representing hundreds of community associations across Georgia with assessment collection, contract review and covenant revision, enforcement, and interpretation services. We do not charge an annual retainer fee. We simply bill for services as they are requested as we believe it results in personalized service, mutual respect, and long-term relationships. Our straightforward business model allows us to promptly return emails and phone calls. Call us at (404) 687-9977 or visit our website at [www.Dorough.com](http://www.Dorough.com).



Dreher Insurance is an Independent Insurance Agency dedicated to providing exemplary service and education to our clients. Our focus on community associations has provided us access to unique industry carriers, enabling us to match our clients to policies according to their specific needs. The Agency is family owned ~ operated (for 22 years), with a supportive licensed staff to patiently serve our clients. Agents are available to board members, and association managers, setting up virtual meetings, or presenting to the entire community pertinent insurance content. Our goal remains to deliver each client the best value and service for their insurance dollars.



Epic is your dedicated disaster preparedness, response and recovery crew. We partner with businesses and communities across the southeast, offering a suite of services from assessments and training to full restoration and construction. With a watchful eye and forward-thinking solutions, our team is always a step ahead of what's next and committed to safeguarding people and rebuilding lives. We can't predict disaster, but we can be prepared, bring everything we've got and bring it fast.

# PLATINUM SPONSORS



Go Painting of North Georgia is a veteran owned commercial painting contractor built to service the HOA and multifamily sector. Occupied properties are our specialty. We have invested into the tech and tools for open and transparent communication among all stakeholders, saving time and diminishing headaches for everyone. Go Painting's tried and true project management has been refined over the last 18 years to deliver on time and on budget for our clients. We believe few things are more important than doing what you

said you would and delivering for those who count on you. At Go Painting of North Georgia, we will help you protect and beautify your community, so...LET'S GO!



greenwood group

Greenwood Group: Greenwood Group Landscape is built around the concept that we represent property management to their customers and that their image is tied closely to ours. Because of this our company is designed and our employees are trained to provide proactive communication keeping you up to date. Greenwood Group is a locally owned landscape management company with owners' experience of over 100 years. All have worked with national landscape providers as well. Our experience enables us to understand the specific needs of your business, landscape, and the demands of property management. We offer the following services Landscape Maintenance, Seasonal Color Services, Landscape Installation, and Irrigation Services.



HM Plumbing: A Trusted Partner for Property Managers. Founded in Marietta in 2007 by Daniel Hill, HM Plumbing is a company built on the values of integrity and service. HM Plumbing specializes in complex commercial and multi-family plumbing systems while maintaining the personal attention of a local partner. Property managers count on us not only for reliable service but also for guidance in understanding their plumbing infrastructure—whether it's mapping shut-off valves, explaining pressure systems, or planning preventive maintenance. Our goal has always been to make plumbing manageable for managers, providing the knowledge and support they need to keep their communities safe and running smoothly.



Horizon Painting & Renovations is your contractor for all your CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT projects! We provide quality commercial and HOA exterior and interior painting, pressurewashing, carpentry and renovation services. We have dedicated project managers who maintain strict work schedules, including material and manpower procurement, and handle quality control issues. Our promise to you is to improve upon the quality and timeliness of service in your projects, avoid many of the mistakes that other contractors make and maintain competitive prices and excellent communication with you throughout the entire project.



Hotwire Communications has been the leader in fiber-optic technology, delivering advanced fiber-based solutions since 2002. With a nationwide footprint, we cater our broadband, TV, and voice products to single and multi-family communities that are seeking an enduring technology partner. With up to 10-Gigabit symmetrical speeds, we ensure a future-proof network with end-to-end management. Experience Hotwire Communications' unparalleled concierge-style approach to customer service through our dedicated account managers, 100% U.S.-based call centers, and engaged senior leadership to deliver an unmatched service experience.



Huckleberry Enterprises is a team of passionate industry professionals. Founded by Jason Coultas and Brandon Baxter and managed as a team with a century of experience! We view your landscape from a holistic perspective. From the trees to the turf, we want to help protect your investment as we want to partner with you to create beautiful spaces that meet and exceed your expectations. Our program is designed to maximize the impact of your trees, shrubs, groundcovers, turf, and flowering annuals and perennials.

With a culture of collaboration, we believe that we can create an environment that everyone can be proud of.



Johnson Yi Lau, LLC delivers comprehensive legal services representing homeowner, townhome, and condominium associations across Georgia. Our team provides expert legal counsel and litigation services, taking a proactive and responsive approach to help associations function smoothly and efficiently. We value lasting relationships with our clients and aim to build long-term partnerships with property managers and broad members to strengthen the communities they serve. We look forward to the opportunity to partner with you. To learn more, please visit [www.jyllegal.com](http://www.jyllegal.com) or call us at (470) 731-7795.



Lazega & Johanson is the premier law firm specializing exclusively in the representation of condominium and homeowner associations throughout Georgia. Our team of experienced attorneys and paralegals are problem solvers who focus on proactive, practical and cost-effective approaches for our clients. We also offer unmatched assessment collection results, with two exclusive programs which make assessment collection economical for every community. Our Free Collections Program has absolutely no cost for initial collections, and our Contingency Collections Program offers a non-risk collection option. Let's help your community today! [www.LJLaw.com](http://www.LJLaw.com).



Lueder, Larkin & Hunter has specialized in community association law since inception. Our practice team structure, leveraging the benefits of technology, makes it possible to marshal all the resources our clients require to advance even their most ambitious legal objective. We offer multiple billing arrangements because each community association is unique, and the simple fact is that there is not one approach that works best for all communities. Our goal is to provide unparalleled legal services with the rate structure that works best for your association. We know community associations. We invite you to get to know us.



MillerDodson Associates, Inc. has specialized for 30 years in providing reserve studies to Community Associations, Religious and Educational Facilities, Resort Communities, Golf Courses, and Country Clubs. Whether your organization is looking to assess its current financial structure or develop a sustainable funding strategy for the future, MillerDodson provides the necessary insight to help make the most informed decisions. MillerDodson reserve study reports are intuitive, easy to read, and detailed. Headquartered in Annapolis, Maryland, the firm provides expert professional services through its Maryland headquarters and through its network of reserve analysts and specialists located throughout the United States.



Thermacell LIV is a mosquito repellent system that can provide your family with ongoing mosquito control that is environmentally friendly, effective, and technology integrated. The repellent system works by releasing minuscule amounts of metofluthrin into the air to repel mosquitoes from where you spend the most time outside. Whether you have a deck, patio, pool, gazebo, or all the above, MR. Mister can provide significant relief from mosquito bites with our professional repellent system. Call us for your mosquito control needs. (404) 471-3747



National Cooperative Bank (NCB) provides banking solutions for housing communities nationwide. With over 40 years of experience, NCB offers a full suite of banking products and services uniquely tailored to the housing market - including cash management, investments, and financing options. Currently, NCB has more than 3,000 relationships with housing communities and their respective property management companies. Call or text us today at 559-HOA-LOAN or visit [www.ncbassociationbanking.coop](http://www.ncbassociationbanking.coop).



Naturescapes delivers commercial landscape services across the greater Atlanta and north Georgia region specializing in homeowner association communities, commercial buildings and shopping centers. Since 1983, our teams wake everyday with an unmatched commitment to delivering the highest quality landscaping service in the industry. As one of Georgia's top landscaping companies, we have cultivated long-lasting relationships with HOA boards, property managers, and property owners. We have enhanced our capabilities and look forward to creating new relationships. Ready for quality landscape service from Naturescapes? Give us a call today 770-923-7023.



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**Georgia Chapter of CAI**  
1595 Peachtree Parkway,  
Suite 204-356  
Cumming, GA 30041  
Tel: (770) 736-7233  
Fax: (770) 736-7232  
E-mail:  
executivedirector@cai-georgia.org



**Executive Director  
Tina Saadat**

**OUR MISSION:**

The Georgia Chapter of CAI is the voice of the community association industry in the state. Our purpose is to facilitate the professional creation and operation of community associations through the delivery of high quality education for our multidisciplinary membership. We are committed to building cohesion, integrity and respect.



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Developing professionalism in the community association industry through education, advocacy and business networking.

**Vision Statement:**

To be the voice of community associations throughout the state of Georgia.

## Congratulations Julie McGhee Howard, Esq.!



Julie has been awarded the Don Buck Lifetime Contribution Award, the highest honor bestowed by the College of Community Association Lawyers (CCAL)! This prestigious award is presented only periodically to recognize exceptional commitment to community association law and those who have made a lasting impact on the industry through education, advocacy, and leadership.

We are so proud of you Julie and lucky to have you a part of our Chapter!





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# Reuse & Recycle: Considerations to Converting Common Areas

By Christine Khano, Esq.  
Lazega & Johanson LLC

A new year, perhaps a new board, and/or new community agendas, often inspire community associations to embrace a fresh start. Rather than expanding their footprint or starting from scratch like with newly built communities, many mature communities that have been established for decades are considering taking a more resourceful approach to creating new community spaces. Specifically, many have expressed interest in reusing and recycling existing common areas. These visions include reimagining and repurposing underused tennis courts and converting them into pickleball courts, transforming an outdated lounge area into an indoor golf simulator space, and deleting an abandoned gazebo and replacing it with a dog park.

While innovative, converting a common area from one use to another can be far more complex than a fresh coat of paint, so, an association should carefully evaluate the legal, financial, structural, operational, and community-wide implications before committing to any conversion of existing common spaces. This thoughtfulness should ensure its well envisioned changes do not create unintended consequences.

## Legal Authority.

Well-intentioned plans can quickly unravel if an association fails to confirm its legal authority to act. The association would be best served by consulting with its legal counsel early on and having an attorney review the association's governing documents. The governing documents, including the declaration, plats, and floor plans, if applicable, may include limiting language preventing the board from unilaterally repurposing the common areas. Certain areas may be expressly designated or reserved for certain purposes or activities, in which case, membership approval for amendments to the governing documents are likely needed. With an eye towards compliance, the association should also be sure that its proposed use of the common area, along with any physical changes, complies with local zoning and building codes.

Presuming the board overcomes the legal hurdles, there are still other practical considerations to address. These may include, but are not limited to, garnering community support, property values, and liability.

## Community Sentiment.

Even if the board of directors may act unilaterally in its decision to repurpose a common area, should it? The board should consider whether the community would support the decision to convert the existing space; after all, the board's decision could otherwise be greeted with unnecessary membership pushback. Part of this may depend on the demographic of the community and the projected actual use of the converted space, as well as the initial reason people chose to purchase in the community in the first place. Obtaining community input can be invaluable.

## Desirability and Value for Resale.

Along those lines, in addition to the current community's sentiment, how desirable would it be to prospective buyers? Ideally, any conversion to the shared space would add value to a resale.



*"...converting a common area from one use to another can be far more complex than a fresh coat of paint..."*

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Communities with limited funds, or those seeking to appeal to a broad range of potential owners, may want to avoid dedicating the common space to activities that are short-lived trends or serve only a niche group of residents.

## Insurance.

Although associations may remember to consult their attorney while brainstorming, many boards often overlook the critical step of also consulting its insurance carrier. Insurance policies likely consider how the common areas of a community are being used. Converting a space, for example, from a passive green space to a dog park, can significantly alter and increase the exposure to certain risks. The insurance carrier may determine that the conversion will impact the type and amount of coverage, which will, in turn, affect the overall, long-term cost of the conversion.

## Other Practical Considerations and Limitations.

The above topics are only portions of the puzzle. The association should also consider other practical and logistical impacts of the proposed converted space to complete the picture. Specifically, the association may shift its attention to the following:

- Physical limitations with the structure: Does the existing structure require a different foundation? Can it all even be done?
- Stormwater management and drainage: Will any physical changes impact drainage in the community or neighboring properties?
- Noise and nuisance: Will the increased use cause noise or other nuisance concerns to the community or neighboring properties?
- Cost: How much will it cost the association for the initial change? What about the continued cost to maintain and operate the repurposed area? How will the association fund the conversion? Does the association require membership approval?

Repurposing a common area can infuse a community with excitement and vigor. It can demonstrate thoughtful stewardship of association resources. A fresh start does not require starting from scratch. However, success in repurposing common areas does require thoughtful planning, community-wide engagement, and due diligence. ■



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# A Fresh Start That Lasts: Best Practices for the Busy Season

By Lisa Simmons,  
Chairperson of Beacon Management Services

Spring marks the start of the busy season for community associations. Amenities reopen, vendors return in force, capital projects accelerate, violations and enforcement escalate, and resident interactions increase dramatically. With that activity comes heightened expectations, greater visibility, and—if leadership is not intentional—more friction.

For community association managers and boards, spring offers a critical opportunity to reset not just operations, but expectations. Communities that take deliberate steps early in the season consistently experience fewer conflicts, smoother operations, and stronger relationships throughout the year.

## Action Step 1: Reestablish Roles Before Activity Peaks

Before the calendar fills and urgency takes over, managers should lead a short but intentional reset conversation with the board.

This does not need to be complicated. A spring board meeting or workshop is the ideal time to revisit:

- What decisions require board input versus management execution
- How board members communicate requests to management
- Where the board adds the most value...strategy, policy, and oversight

### Practical Tip:

Managers can provide a one-page role summary or agenda item titled “Preparing for the Busy Season.” Framing this as preparation keeps the conversation collaborative.

Clear roles reduce micromanagement, eliminate confusion, and allow managers to operate efficiently when demand increases.

## Action Step 2: Reground the Board in Governance Best Practices

Spring momentum can push boards into reaction mode, where decisions are driven by complaints, emails, or the loudest voices in the room. Strong managers help boards pause and re-anchor to governance fundamentals.

### Key reminders to reinforce:

- Decisions should align with governing documents and established policies
- Consistency in enforcement matters more than speed
- Meetings should stay focused on governance, not daily operations
- Risk, liability, and long-term impact must be considered — especially during peak activity

### Practical Tip:

Managers can share two or three real examples of how good governance prevented issues in other communities. Boards respond well to practical scenarios, not theory. Strong governance early in the season creates confidence later, especially when pressure increases.

## Action Step 3: Set Realistic Timelines — Then Communicate Them Clearly

Spring optimism often leads to unrealistic expectations. Boards want visible progress, residents expect quick action, and vendors are stretched thin.

Managers show leadership by helping boards set achievable timelines based on:



Adam Webber/Stock / Getty Images Plus

*“For community association managers and boards, spring offers a critical opportunity to reset not just operations, but expectations.”*

- Vendor availability and seasonal demand
- Permitting and approval requirements
- Budget constraints and reserve planning
- Weather and operational realities

### Practical Tip:

Present timelines in ranges rather than exact dates. For example: “This new landscape project is realistically a late May to early July completion.” This manages expectations while maintaining accountability. Once timelines are set, managers should help boards communicate them clearly to residents. Transparency reduces frustration and builds trust.

## Action Step 4: Clarify Communication Protocols Before Volume Increases

More residents outside means more emails, calls, and concerns. Without structure, communication can quickly become overwhelming.

### Spring is the right time to confirm:

- How residents submit maintenance requests or complaints
- Expected response times
- When issues are handled by management versus escalated to the board
- How vendors communicate changes or delays

### Practical Tip:

Managers should prepare a series of communication reminders to residents about the topics above while reinforcing processes without sounding restrictive. Simple clarity prevents confusion and reduces repetitive inquiries. Clear communication protocols protect managers’ time and help boards avoid being pulled into operational matters unnecessarily.

## Action Step 5: Prepare the Board for Increased Visibility and Emotion

With greater activity comes heightened emotion. Architectural requests, amenities opening, pool rules, parking issues, enforcement decisions, and construction disruptions all become more visible in spring and summer.

CONTINUES ON PAGE 40.



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# The Action of Communication

By Stephanie Munn, PCAM,  
Access Management Group

We all know and understand that communication is constantly changing. I think it may be easy to think that in this day and age it is more complicated than it ever has been due to the technology we have at our fingertips, but I am sure that each generation has faced a similar battle. One fact that remains the same is that in order to run a successful business, communication is key. So how do vendors, management companies, and boards effectively communicate in this generation?

Management companies are often the “go between” for information from owners, boards and vendors. In the last decade, management company software and communication portals have drastically changed allowing for better documentation and affect ways to communicate such as e-blast, text messages, and owner portals for tracking questions, work orders and general communication. Now, with artificial intelligence (AI) becoming a commonly adopted tool, some management companies have started implementing AI-answering abilities into their software or calling systems. While all this information is great to have at our fingertips, it cannot replace human interaction in some circumstances.

With the art of communication, it is important to make sure that the homeowners, boards, and vendors are understood and that the details of a request are accurate to handle the situation appropriately. Asking good questions, from the management end, is an equally important part of that communication, especially when navigating various client personalities or expectations.

*“Management companies are often the “go between” for information from owners, boards and vendors.”*



Rudzhhan Nagiev/Stock / Getty Images Plus

For vendors, it can be easy to receive a request and simply take the information given and check it off of the “to do” list. However, vendors should always feel free to ask questions back to board members or management companies to make sure they have all the information in order to complete the request. It’s okay to ask for pictures or what the overall objective is for the request. It’s also okay to provide your opinion and professional feedback with the request. Sometimes, a client’s request or proposal may not be the best option to solve the overall objective, so more personalized communication is needed.

Board members and homeowners without a doubt have the most invested interest in their community, so their opinions are valid and must be considered within the expectations of the association’s governing documents. While vendors and management companies assist in the art of the association’s communication structure, they

CONTINUES ON PAGE 40.



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# CAI-Georgia Annual Meeting & Awards Luncheon Friday, December 5 – Dunwoody Country Club



(above) Christina Steinman, Community Management Associates, Clarence Yau, Johnson Yi Lau, Kenneth Hair, Access Management Group



(Left) D'Arcy O'Conner, Diversified Services Group, Julie Anne Cooper-Williams, Homeowner Management Services



(above) Emily Chester, Blueprint Painting & Renovations, Christine Swenson, Team Management, Susan Contreras, Blueprint Painting & Renovations, Shannon Skelton, Blueprint Painting & Renovations



(left) Angelina Amoye, Five Star CAM, Madeline Bader, Coulter & Sierra



(above) Madeline Bader, Coulter & Sierra, Dennis Hoffman, Community Management Associates, Erin Byers, Silverleaf Management Group



(left) Michelle Yates, RooterPLUS!, Kevin Thompson, Unlimited Landscaping & Turf Management



(above) Joshua Schmutzer, Northwest Exterminating, Heather Waters, Homeowner Management Services, Julie Anne Cooper-Williams, Homeowner Management Services, Doug Ward, Homeowner Management Services, Terri Tallarico-Shinners, Homeowner Management Services, Paul Moceo, Ameristar Roofing



(above) Scott Whitehead, Unlimited Landscape & Turf Management, Nick Owenby, Unlimited Landscape & Turf Management, Hyder Ali Syed, Unlimited Landscape & Turf Management, Justin Green, Unlimited Landscape & Turf Management, Lisa Fuerst, Pankey & Horlock



(above) Josh Skubal, Commercial Asphalt & Concrete Services, Randy Ray, Atlanta Landscape Group, Tyler Thurmond, Atlanta Community Services



(above) Tim Winterstein, Royal Flush Plumbing, Lisa Simmons, Beacon Management Services, Sherri Stebbins, Royal Flush Plumbing, Jackie LeVaughn, Homeowner Management Services



(above) Spencer Farmery, Winter Capriola Zenner, Orson White, Sentry Management, Penelope Hilliard, Crabapple LandscapExperts, Russell Estey, Team Pest USA



(above) Nicolle Robleto, Zamora Tree Services, Robin Cuson, Commercial Asphalt & Concrete Services, Sharon Martin Andersson, Go Painting North Georgia, Tracy Henson, Homeowner Management Services

(right) Devin Sack-Stearns, Atlanta Landscape Group, Jennie Hollis, Outdoor Solutions Group, Jessica Smith, Remediation Group, Joanna Eljazzar, Lazega & Johanson, Morgan Coehn, Natural Stone Services, Adam Ziegler, United Land Services





(above) Sara Hicks, Parker Young Restoration



(above) R.C. Shanks, Homeowner Management Services, Nicole Jones, FirstService Residential, Jennie Hollis, Outdoor Solutions Group



(above) Bart Parker, Gibson Landscape Services, Sherri Stebbins, Royal Flush Plumbing, Jackie Patterson, Homeowner Management Services, Traci Shiller, Homeowner Management Services, Pat Hillen, Homeowner Management Services



(above) Kenneth Hair, 2025-26 Programs Committee Chair



(above) Lisa Brown, Atlanta Community Services, Robbie Parenti, Phoenix Contracting, Cari Gaines, Crabapple LandscapExperts, Bree Spencer, Atlanta Community Services, Emily Serebrenick, RooterPLUS!, Makayla Hendrix, Community Management Associates, Nicole Russell, Atlanta Community Services, Debbie Kanzelmeyer, Atlanta Community Services, Tyler Thurmond, Atlanta Community Services



(above) Kelley Moon, EPIC., Joe Moon, Turkey Facility Maintenance, Ashlie Gray, EPIC., Ivie Collins, EPIC.



(above) Jannette Shockley, Lazega & Johanson, Natalie Hunsucker, Homeowner Management Services, Jason Hunsucker, Lazega & Johanson, Chris Lee Khano, Lazega & Johanson



(above) Morgan Cohen, Natural Stone Services, Hollie Battle, Community Management Associates, Stephen Finamore, Lueder, Larkin & Hunter, Kent Atzinger, Access Management Group



(above) Mike Dangler, Russell Landscape Group, Stephen A. Winter, Winter Capriola Zenner, Matt Baker, RoofTop Contracting, Michael Tardella, RoofTop Contracting



(above) Amelia Brand, Homeside Properties, Lisa Hart, Homeside Properties, Kenneth Baggs, Homeside Properties, Jeff Creecy, Greenwood Group Landscape, Mallory Devereaux, Lueder, Larkin & Hunter



(above) 2025 CAI-Georgia Board of Directors: Eric Love, American Homes 4 Rent, Tracy Henson, Homeowner Management Services, Penelope Hilliard, Crabapple LandscapExperts, Joe Moon, Turnkey Facility Maintenance, Joseph C. Larkin, Lueder, Larkin & Hunter, Hollie Battle, Community Management Associates, David Hill, Access Management Group, Erin Murray O'Connell, Dorough & Dorough, Ian Mari, Homeowner Leader



(above) Jason Tolley, Tolley Community Management



(above) Miye Johnson Yi, Johnson Yi Lau, President's Award Winner, Kelley Moon, EPIC.

*More photos on the next page..*

*Awards Photos from previous page.*



(above) Morgan Cohen, Natural Stone Services, Rising Star Award Winner, Jennifer Gragg, Colony Roofers



(left) Madeline Bader, Coulter & Sierra, Educator of the Year Ward Winner, Lisa Fuerst, Pankey & Horlock



(above) Bill Gourley, NowackHoward, Committee Chair of the Year Award Winner, Doug Ward, Homeowner Management Services



(above) Kelley Moon, EPIC., Miye Johnson Yi, Johnson Yi Lau, Doyle P. Jones Leadership Award Winner, Debbie Kanzelemeyer, Atlanta Community Services



(above) Miye Johnson Yi, Johnson Yi Lau, Kelley Moon, EPIC., In'Spires' Service & Dedication Award Winner, Ashlie Gray, EPIC. Ashlie Gray, EPIC.



(above) Joseph C. Larkin, Lueder, Larkin & Hunter, Tina Saadat, CAI-Georgia Executive Director, Miye Johnson Yi, Johnson Yi Lau, Kelley Moon, EPIC.



(above) Eric Love, American Homes 4 Rent, President's Gavel Presentation to Miye Johnson Yi, Johnson Yi Lau



(above) David Hill, Access Management Group, Rita Kennedy Award Winner, Joe Moon, Turnkey Facility Maintenance



(above) Homeowner Volunteer Excellence in Service Award Winner, Ian Mari, Miye Johnson Yi, Johnson Yi Lau



(above) Penelope Hilliard, Crabapple LandscapExperts, Tracy Henson, Homeowner Management Services



(left) Morgan Cohen, Natural Stone Services, Amanda Hawk, P3 Painting & renovations, Jessica Smith, Remediation Group, Michelle Yates, RooterPLUS!, Lauren Carroll, North Georgia Landscape Management, Val de Benedictis, Zamora Tree Services, Jennie Hollis, Outdoor Solutions Group, Liz DeCoudres, Remediation Group, Kimberly Daniels, Access Management Group, Nicolle Robelto, Zamora Tree Services



(left) Rita Kennedy Award Winners: David Hill, Access management Group, Dennis Hoffman, Community Management Associates, Kent Atzinger, Access Management Group, Scott Douglas, Homeowner Leader, Mike Crew, Homeowner Management Services, Miye Johnson Yi, Johnson Yi Lau, Kelley Moon, EPIC., Teddy Russell, Russell Landscape Group, Ashlie Gray, EPIC., Julie McGhee Howard, NowackHoward, Stephen A. Winter, Winter Capriola Zenner, Chuck Negas, Northwest Exterminating, Joe Moon, Turkey Facility Maintenance

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# When to Consider Amending and Restating Governing Documents

By Brianne Wingate, Esq.  
Coulter & Sierra LLC

Enforcing covenants and managing a community should not require hours of decoding the association’s governing documents. Yet, many associations struggle to interpret their governing documents because they have become fragmented, outdated, or clouded by years of separate amendments. When boards and managers cannot easily refer to these documents, day-to-day administration slows and enforcement becomes harder to carry out consistently. At that point, it may be appropriate to reduce unnecessary complexity and restore a workable foundation of governance through an amended and restated version of the governing documents.

Although amended and restated documents may include some new amendments, the purpose is not always to introduce an entirely new set of covenants, restrictions, or rules of governance. Rather, it may take the declaration and its amendments and consolidate them so they read as one integrated instrument. The result is hopefully governing documents that reflect the association’s current policies and governance structure, without requiring references to multiple recorded instruments.

Over time, as a community evolves and changes, an association may find themselves managing issues that did not exist when their community was first established. Short term rentals, home-based businesses, and new technologies have raised questions that older documents never contemplated or addressed. In response, associations often adopt piecemeal amendments to address issues only after they arise. Each amendment may solve a discrete issue, but when the mass of documents are taken together there may be contradictions or conflicts. When a web of documents and amendments are layered with cross-references, continuing to add new provisions may increase confusion. At that point, it may be time to consider an amended and restated document.

In the case of declarations, it is common for original covenants to include provisions intended to apply only during the early stages of the community, such as a declarant’s rights and privileges during its control period. However, once control has turned over to the community’s owners, those terms focused on the declarant lose their practical relevance. Boards are then left operating under documents that emphasize rights and structures that no longer exist, which can not only cause confusion but also increase the risk of inconsistency in governing practices.

Moreover, as boards respond to the practical needs of a mature community, they often adopt more formalized policies, more nuanced rules, and structured enforcement practices that best fit the community’s needs. These shifts often make sense operationally but remain difficult to implement under the community’s existing terms. An amended and restated declaration offers a way to bring the governing documents back into alignment with how the community actually operates.

Statutory changes may also drive the need for amended and restated documents. Georgia community association law has evolved significantly over time, and many older governing documents predate modern statutory frameworks or contain provisions that no longer align



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*“Over time, as a community evolves and changes, an association may find themselves managing issues that did not exist when their community was first established”*

with current law. Although statutes generally control in the event of a conflict, relying on statutory authority alone places the association in a more defensive posture. Amending and restating the governing documents can reduce that uncertainty and provide the association with a clearer, more defensible foundation when owners challenge provisions or enforcement authority.

Timing and communication matter. Associations often consider amending and restating their documents only after a problem surfaces. Taking this step proactively, during a period of relative calm, allows the board to frame the process as preventive rather than reactive. Owners are often more receptive when they understand that the goal is to improve efficiency and maintain operational stability, rather than to pursue the kinds of hidden or self-serving motives skeptical owners may otherwise assume.

In terms of procedure, a proposed restatement follows the same process as any other amendment to the declaration, but on a broader scale. In most Georgia communities, approval requires a vote of the membership at the threshold set out in the existing documents, which commonly falls in the range of sixty-six to seventy-five percent. Consult with your association’s attorney to determine the appropriate process and approval requirements under the governing documents and applicable law.

Amended and restated governing documents are not necessary for every community, but they can be an effective tool when the original documents fall out of step with how the association actually operates. Consolidating the changes made over an extended period of time can replace existing fragmentation with a clear and unified set of governing provisions. Ultimately, a restatement is about rebuilding a governing framework that is more reliable and easier to apply consistently. ■



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# Rebooting with Smart Software

By Fawn Dill, CMCA  
Access Management Group

Association management software has evolved significantly in recent years. What was once designed primarily to support boards of directors and property managers has become a powerful tool for homeowners as well. Enhanced reporting, improved communication tools, and more efficient workflows are now standard features, creating a more transparent and responsive experience for the entire community.

One of the most impactful improvements is real-time access to information. In the past, homeowners often received most association information at the closing table or during the annual meeting, with limited visibility throughout the year. Today’s management platforms provide secure homeowner portals and community websites that offer 24/7 access to governing documents, financial reports, meeting information, and community updates. This accessibility allows homeowners to stay informed on their own schedule and encourages greater understanding of how the association operates.

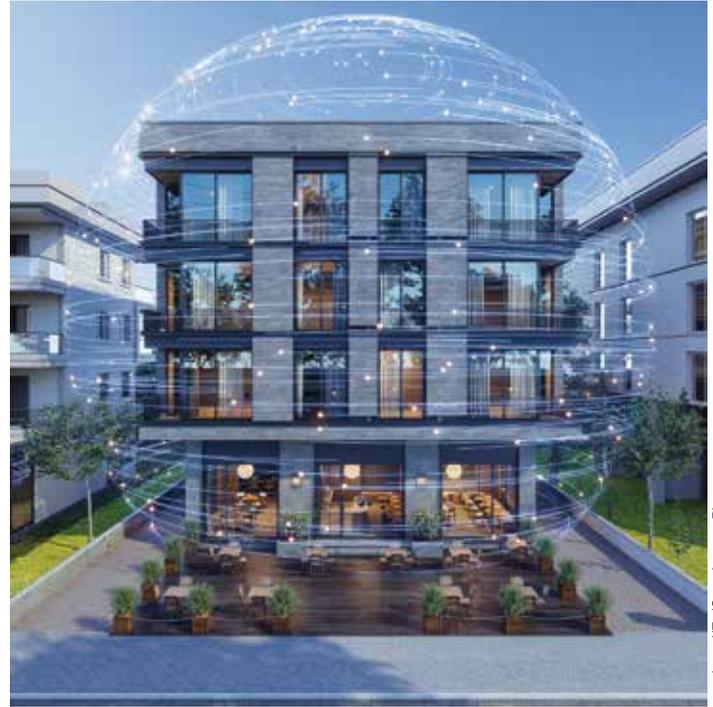
Financial transparency has also improved dramatically. Budgets, balance sheets, and income statements are now presented in easy-to-read electronic formats, allowing homeowners to better understand how assessments are allocated and spent. With consistent access to financial data, homeowners can follow trends over time and gain confidence in the stewardship of association funds.

Work order and inquiry tracking has become more streamlined and accountable. Homeowners can submit maintenance requests or general questions through the portal and receive automated updates as items are reviewed, assigned, and resolved. This reduces the need for repeated follow-ups while creating a clear record for homeowners, the Board, and management. Over time, patterns and recurring issues become easier to identify, allowing for more proactive planning and faster resolution.

Ultimately, these advancements help homeowners feel informed, engaged, and confident in the management of their community. Increased transparency and accessibility strengthen trust, support better communication, and foster a stronger partnership between residents, the Board of Directors, and the property management team.

### What software improvements mean for homeowners:

- 24/7 access to information – View governing documents, financial reports, meeting materials, and community updates anytime through the homeowner portal.



onurdongel/E+/Getty Images Plus

*“Work order and inquiry tracking has become more streamlined and accountable.”*

- Greater financial transparency – Easily understand how Association funds are budgeted and spent with clear, easy-to-read reports.
- Simpler requests and faster follow-up – Submit and track work orders or questions in one place, with real-time updates and fewer follow-ups needed.
- Increased accountability and trust – Clear visibility into processes helps ensure consistent handling of requests and builds confidence in community management.
- A more connected community – Better communication and insight allow homeowners to stay engaged and informed year-round. ■

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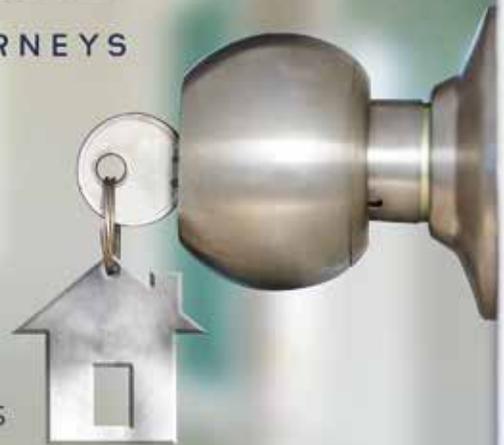
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# Innovation: Weighing the Rewards of New Technology Against Potential Liability

By Benjamin Ost, Esq.,  
Dorough & Dorough, LLC

From virtual meeting platforms to online management and payment programs, the successful adoption of technology has been a boon for community associations for years. However, new technology comes with its own risks, and it is important to remember that adopting new and untested platforms can create liability that is not apparent at the time. The purpose of this article is to review a handful of new(ish) technologies on the horizon and point out various legal issues a board of directors should consider before or while adopting them.

## Cloud Based Security Systems

Most people probably recognize the names “Flock” and “Ring.” Each represent a cloud-based security platform that allows cameras to stream footage or information to a database held and maintained by the company offering the service. These systems offer cost savings because they avoid the installation of on-site servers for the data to be stored and allow the company to ensure proper functioning “in real time.” The legal problem that can accompany this type of arrangement is the use of the data captured by the system. It likely shocks no one that companies can make money selling data obtained from customers. Security system operators have the same incentives to sell data as any other company and they have access to valuable data: the comings and goings of vehicles, people, and vendors in a community. In addition, and as recently seen in the news, some law enforcement agencies – both local and federal – often seek access to that information to assist in investigations.

Each director has a fiduciary duty to safeguard its members’ interests – including personal information in the Association’s possession or control. Liability in the form of a breach of that duty can arise when a board shares information where no legal duty exists. Consider law enforcement: using footage captured by cameras to investigate crimes is common. Also consider that any law enforcement agency has specific ways to legally require certain information, including security footage. Is it a breach of duty for a Board to proactively share such data without having first received the proper legal demand? This is an issue that has no set answer but that may become increasingly important given the political divide currently surrounding federal law enforcement agencies and their practices. The good news is that liability can be minimized if the board ensures that data sharing policies are in place – both on the association side and in the contract with the vendor.

## AI Communication Platforms

It has been a dream of many managers and directors for decades to be able to press a button to respond to that owner who just sent the fiftieth email of the year asking the same question in slightly different words. And now the answer to that dream appears to be within reach: AI algorithms that can review and respond to queries and statements from owners. Many property management companies and associations are already adopting use of these systems to provide “first round” responses to frequently asked owner questions. As with



Rasi Bhadrantani/Stock / Getty Images Plus

*“It has been a dream of many managers and directors for decades to be able to press a button to respond to that owner who just sent the fiftieth email of the year asking the same question...”*

the adoption of cloud based security systems noted above, there is nothing inherently wrong with use of AI to facilitate communication in an association and doing so comes with the benefit of more time to deal with other issues. However, AI is imperfect in its ability to respond to questions. If unmonitored, it can provide inaccurate or even nonsensical responses.

Explaining the liability for AI use in communication first requires a brief look at liability for a “wrong answer” provided by a director or property manager. We have all done it – you are moving too fast and fire off an email that is flat out wrong. When this is done by a director or manager, Georgia law offers legal protection both for the person and the association. This protection, however, would not extend to a piece of software that “gets it wrong.” If AI is used without proper review, the association increases its liability for a wrong answer both because the AI algorithm is not protected legally and because the parties responsible for answering questions failed to properly review the response. In addition, AI might not understand that similarly situated owners must be treated in a similar manner. If AI tells one owner one thing and another owner with the same basic issue another thing, it could result in claims of unequal and arbitrary enforcement or mix ups over maintenance obligations.

To avoid this extra liability, the board must reasonably determine that an AI platform is capable of performing its intended function and put policies in place to ensure proper review where necessary. This liability may also be offloaded to the vendor providing the AI service in some circumstances through contract with the right language.

**Facial Recognition**

While not yet common in Georgia, other states have seen the implementation of facial recognition security systems (particularly in luxury high rise condominiums). These systems promise a heightened level of security because they don't rely on codes or cards that can be utilized by anyone else. While the data concerns noted above exist, these provide an additional level of concern. First, do they work well? If they don't work on site what is the recourse? Is there a code-based system that can be used? An onsite concierge? Since entry into a building is one of the most important rights of an owner and delay in entry can cause not only anger and frustration but harm in certain cases, it is important to ensure that this type of system, which is still relatively untested, avoids situations where people are inadvertently left without access and without a clear way to obtain very timely access if that occurs. As with the issues above, liability mitigation can be achieved through clear policies telling owners what to do if they can't get access and in being sure that the contract for the service says who is responsible if the system fails and a lawsuit is filed.

**Conclusion**

As with any change impacting an industry, technological innovation will likely be great for communities in the long run. It is important to remember, in the meantime, that being on the "cutting edge" carries risks. Doing a thorough review of adoption of new technology by the board and ensuring that policies are in place to account for potential issues go a long way towards mitigating any liability from early adoption. In addition, it is always okay to say "not yet" when a new technology emerges; sometimes waiting to see how it goes for others is the best way to avoid a misstep yourself. ■



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Survivor Class

# A Fresh Start for Community Plumbing: From Reactive Repairs to Proactive Systems

By Karen Hill,

Vice President of Operations & Marketing Hill Mechanical of Georgia, LLC d/b/a HM Plumbing

In community associations, plumbing problems rarely arrive quietly. They show up as flooded units, frustrated residents, after-hours emergencies, and urgent board meetings. For years, the industry norm has been reactive—fix the leak, stop the damage, move on to the next fire.

But a fresh start in 2026 demands a different approach. With my team, we work daily with community association managers, board members, and fellow service partners across Georgia. What we're seeing is a clear shift: the most successful communities are no longer asking, "Who can respond the fastest?" They're asking, "How do we prevent this from happening again?" That change in mindset is transforming how plumbing should be managed in community associations.

## Lesson One: Plumbing Is a System, Not a Series of Incidents

One of the biggest lessons my team has learned over the past year is that recurring plumbing issues are rarely isolated failures. They are symptoms of larger system patterns—aging infrastructure, deferred maintenance, pressure imbalances, undocumented modifications, or incomplete repairs made years earlier.

When associations treat plumbing as a connected system rather than a collection of individual units, decisions improve dramatically. Budgeting becomes more accurate. Emergency calls decrease. Communication with residents becomes clearer and more confident.

A fresh start begins with understanding what you actually own: domestic water lines, recirculation loops, isolation valves, sewer mains, storm systems, and how they interact across buildings—not just within them.

## Lesson Two: Documentation Is the New Preventative Maintenance

One of the most impactful changes we have witnessed is prioritizing documentation as part of the service—not an afterthought. Today's community managers are juggling more properties, more compliance requirements, and more stakeholders than ever before. Expecting institutional memory to carry critical infrastructure knowledge is no longer realistic.

Updated shutoff maps, service histories, photos, pressure readings, and system notes allow boards and managers to make informed decisions quickly—especially during emergencies. Documentation also reduces miscommunication between vendors and protects associations when leadership transitions occur.

In 2026, preventative maintenance isn't just completing inspections—it's institutional clarity.

## Lesson Three: Emergency Readiness is a Board Responsibility, Not Just a Vendor Service

Emergency plumbing will always exist. What changes is how prepared a community is when it happens.

The associations that experience the least disruption during freeze events, main breaks, or system failures are the ones that planned ahead:

- They know where their shutoffs are.

*"When associations treat plumbing as a connected system rather than a collection of individual units, decisions improve dramatically."*



Serhii Brovko/Stock / Getty Images Plus

- They've identified high-risk areas.
- They've established escalation protocols.
- They've aligned expectations between boards, managers, and vendors before the crisis.

A fresh start means shifting emergency planning out of the maintenance room and into board-level conversations. Plumbing risk is financial risk—and it deserves the same strategic attention.

## Lesson Four: Strong Vendor Partnerships Are Strategic Assets

Another trend my team is seeing is a move away from transactional vendor relationships toward long-term partnerships. Communities benefit most when their plumbing partner understands the property, communicates clearly with management, documents work consistently, and provides guidance—not just invoices.

From our perspective, the best relationships are collaborative. As a plumbing expert, it is important to us to advise when repairs should be made now versus planned later. Being collaborative partners includes helping managers understand the technical issues with board-friendly language and flag system trends before they become emergencies.

A fresh start doesn't mean spending more—it means spending smarter, with fewer surprises.

## Looking Ahead: What 2026 Will Demand

Community associations are becoming more complex, not less. Aging infrastructure, tighter budgets, resident expectations, and regulatory pressures will continue to collide.

### The associations that thrive will be the ones that:

- Treat plumbing as a system
- Invest in documentation
- Plan for emergencies proactively
- Build trusted vendor relationships

A fresh start isn't about forgetting the past. It's about learning from it—and building communities that are prepared, protected, and positioned for the future. ■



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# Fresh Start: Onboarding a New Vendor/Client Relationship and Contract

By Jason Coultas,  
Huckleberry Enterprises

I have been entering into new contracts in my industry, landscaping services, for 15 years. The only thing that I have seen consistently is inconsistency. We tend to close our eyes and swing without really knowing exactly what we are aiming for. We know what we do and how to do it, but do we know what each client is expecting? Sadly, we don't always know how we are going to deliver our service to their specific need.

What I have seen work is a process that we tend to do more intuitively or maybe accidentally. Recently, my team and I decided to sit down and map out what that process looks like when it goes well.

We all know the theory. Set expectations clearly and deliver with good communication. Why don't we all do that then? I will assert it is because we don't have a map on how to get there. We have a rough idea, and we are talking on the phone while driving there, metaphorically speaking, and we keep getting lost.

What we have is a plan that starts with the initial conversation and ends with a referral that leads to the next initial conversation. My Team calls it the "Circle of Success." This circle, or your own version of this circle, can be a guide to any business that is seeking to improve their process of delivering consistent service that creates loyalty and referrals from their client base.

**1. The Proposal.** This is where it all starts. With a good estimate and a quality proposal that reflects the estimate, we create the framework for the entirety of the future of service with that client. If you never get a chance to make a first impression, then this is your only chance.

**2. Plan to Execute.** Once the contract is in place and expectations are clear, we can develop a plan with the client and our team. For us in a landscape management contract, that is usually a plan of action for the first 6–12 weeks. It will come with photos and details for both the crew and client.

**3. Make Sure That the Team has Clear Instructions.** This is where we spend time planning with the team members that are performing the work. Getting buy-in from the team is an essential part of the process.

**4. Communicate the Plan to the Client.** This is where we are creating the pattern of communication with the clients. If we create a plan and work with the team on the plan, but don't relay that back to the client, they are likely to assume that we have no plan. This creates anticipation for future results and validation.



*“Set expectations  
clearly and  
deliver with good  
communication.”*

Miladin Pusic/iStock / Getty Images Plus

**5. Complete Work and Review with Client.** Once work is completed, we validate with photos and possibly further details.

**6. Validate the Team.** This is our opportunity to re-enforce with the team that is executing the plan that the cycle is essential AND that we value them for their hard work and commitment to the success of the relationship with our client.

**7. Seek Client Validation.** We feel that this is one of the most important steps. If we have completed steps one through six but fail to seek validation from the client, then we can create a false sense of success. We can convince ourselves that we are doing great work. And we might be. But we are serving the client, and not our own egos! This can be as simple as a text, email or call that says, “Mrs./Mr. Client, we would love to hear back from you on the completion of our initial plan of action.”

**8. Ask for Referral / Close the Loop.** We know that a warm referral is the ultimate validation. This completes a cycle that opens the door for more business. If that cycle continues, we are building a business development machine that cannot be matched with sales people and marketing.

If we follow this pattern with all new contracts AND continue this as part of our work culture, then we have something to measure ourselves against. We also have a map to go back to when we are lost. If Mrs./Mr. Client is not happy, then we can go back to see where we left off and take corrective action!

“You do not rise to the level of your goals. You fall to the level of your systems,” a concept popularized by James Clear in *Atomic Habits*, highlighting that relying on motivation to achieve goals is unreliable. We can decide where we want to go as long as we have a map to get there. ■

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# The Rising Cost of Inaction: How Industry Trends Are Elevating Capital Planning

By Henry McKenna,  
Reserve Advisors

Much like business leaders, homeowners association boards manage financial resources and make decisions that preserve and enhance community value. With personal budgets under pressure, every decision faces greater scrutiny from dues increases to the timing of major repairs. While limiting assessment increases or delaying projects may feel like an easy way to help residents in the short-term, the long-term consequences can be substantial. Underfunded reserves and deferred maintenance increasingly signal higher risk to insurance providers and mortgage lenders.

## Industry Trends Are Elevating Reserve Planning

Following the Surfside tragedy, expectations for reserve planning have rapidly changed across legislation, insurance, and lending. Several states have passed laws aimed at improving structural safety and long-term financial preparedness:

1. Florida – Requires reserve studies for buildings with three or more residential stories. Communities must fund reserves at the level outlined in the study, and older buildings must undergo periodic structural inspections.
2. Maryland – Signed into law in 2022, condominiums, cooperatives, and certain HOAs must conduct periodic reserve studies and fund reserves as outlined in the study.
3. Tennessee – Signed into law in 2023, associations with \$10,000 or more in common assets must conduct periodic reserve studies to inform reserve planning and reduce future assessments. (There are currently no statutory funding requirements.)
4. New Jersey – Signed into law in 2024, condominiums, cooperatives, and certain HOAs must conduct periodic reserve studies and fund reserves as outlined in the study.

## Insurance Trends

Recently, underwriting standards have tightened as insurers respond to the risks posed by aging infrastructure. What once amounted to confirming that a reserve study exists is now a closer review of structural conditions, maintenance history, and financial preparedness.

### Key insurance trends include:

1. More Detailed Inspection Requirements – Insurers increasingly review reserve study timelines and whether major projects have been completed. If a structural item is overdue, such as a roof replacement, risk and the likelihood of a claim rises. (likelihood of a claim).
2. Condition-Based Premiums – Premiums used to be driven mainly by age, building materials, height, and location. Today, maintenance history, deferred work, and reserve adequacy often influence pricing.
3. Stricter Underwriting Terms – Associations that deviate from reserve funding plans or regularly defer maintenance may see lower limits, higher deductibles, exclusions, or, in extreme cases, denial of coverage.

*“As industry expectations continue to rise, boards can better protect their communities by focusing on a few core practices...”*



sorbetto/Digital Vision Vectors/Getty Images

## Mortgage Trends

After Surfside, Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac introduced updated guidelines to address safety and structural risk. These rules place greater weight on reserve funding, proactive maintenance, and periodic inspections. Because roughly 70% of conventional loans are backed by Fannie Mae or Freddie Mac, communities that fall short can feel the impact quickly. If a loan is denied due to association-level concerns, a community may land on a “do not lend” list.

### Key mortgage trends include:

1. Stricter Reserve Requirements – Lenders increasingly require a recent reserve study and confirmation that reserves are being funded as recommended.
2. Increased Documentation Requests – Associations may need to provide maintenance records, capital project histories, and inspection reports. Lenders often review reserve studies for structural deterioration and water infiltration risk. If the project timing differs from the study, boards may need documentation to support the decision.
3. Impact on Buyer Eligibility – When lenders view a condominium as high risk, fewer buyers qualify for financing, which can hinder sales and put pressure on property values.

## Best Practices to Mitigate Risk

As industry expectations continue to rise, boards can better protect their communities by focusing on a few core practices:

1. Prioritize Structural and Safety-Related Projects – Addressing high-risk items, such as roofs, waterproofing systems, and structural concrete, demonstrates responsible stewardship and reduces insurance and lending concerns.
2. Maintain Adequate Reserve Funding and Keep the Reserve Study Current – Strong funding reduces the likelihood of future deferred maintenance and signals financial preparedness. Reserve studies should be updated every 3 years, or sooner if funding changes significantly or major projects are delayed or completed.

CONTINUES ON PAGE 40.



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# Why Technology Matters in HOA Management

By R.C. Shanks, PCAM,  
*Homeowner Management Services*

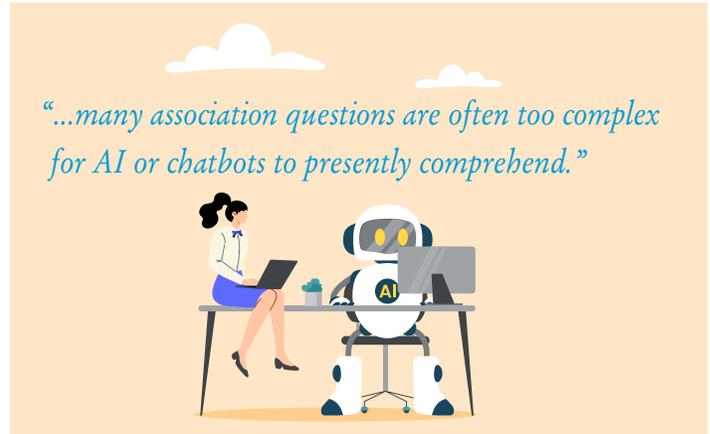
Modern technology including artificial intelligence (AI) is a fantastic asset in association management when properly utilized. It saves time and increases productivity. However, it's extremely important not to overlook personal contact and involvement. Association management is still very much a people business.

This starts with better efficiency of document management and workflow automation. Most if not all community association management companies utilize software that streamlines most of the accounting and data management functions. Financial reports, billing, payment of invoices, homeowner ledgers and violation reports can be generated instantly.

All the software companies are constantly improving their functions and adding new modules. Association meetings are now primarily conducted on Zoom or a similar platform, eliminating most in-person meetings. Often this system can create agendas and transcribe minutes automatically. Still, it is crucial to review and edit the transcription to ensure it is correct.

Community inspections are now mostly automated using software that generates letters that include pictures and tracks the timelines. These can be customized for each community. Some management inspections are already using drones to inspect the properties rather than the managers.

Resident communication is now often automated. Many people conduct most of their business using their smartphone, tablet, or laptop, so they have even come to expect their call to be answered by



ThongSami/Stock / Getty Images Plus

a virtual assistant. These automated systems are great and can answer basic questions; however, many association questions are often too complex for AI or chatbots to presently comprehend. Therefore, it's very important for there to be an option for the homeowner to be able to talk to a real person.

All in all, modern technology and AI will continue to improve, and we all need to embrace it. In doing so, though, we must control it, rather than let it take over. It has and will continue to increase our productivity, giving us the time to give the homeowners the personal attention they want and deserve. ■



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**FRESH START THAT LASTS...from page 14.**

**Managers help boards prepare by:**

- Discussing enforcement consistency before issues arise
- Aligning on how complaints will be handled
- Reinforcing the importance of calm, professional responses
- Encouraging boards to defer operational matters to management

**Practical Tip:**

Remind boards that how decisions are communicated often matters as much as the decisions themselves. Consistency and professionalism reduce escalation.

**Action Step 6: Lead With Preparation, Not Reaction**

The most effective managers enter spring with a plan. They review last year's challenges, identify problems and their resolutions, and prepare boards for what's coming.

**This proactive approach allows managers to:**

- Reduce conflict before it starts
- Maintain credibility with residents and vendors
- Create a smoother workload during peak months
- Focus on leadership rather than constant firefighting

**A Fresh Start That Lasts Beyond Spring**

A successful busy season is rarely accidental. It is built on clear roles, strong governance, realistic expectations, and structured communication before activity accelerates. Spring is the moment to lead intentionally. Managers who take these steps early create stability that carries through summer, budget season and beyond, benefiting boards, residents, and the entire community. ■

**RISING COST OF INACTION...from page 34.**

3. Leverage Your Reserve Study Partner for Clarity and Documentation – When questions arise, reserve study providers can often supply explanations and documentation that help keep insurance renewals and real estate transactions on track.

Insurance and lending standards will continue to evolve, pushing the industry toward greater resilience. A stronger focus on structural integrity and reserve funding encourages communities to address deterioration early, rather than waiting until issues become complex and costly. Associations that take a disciplined approach to capital planning will be best positioned to maintain coverage at the most affordable rates, protect loan eligibility, and support home values. ■

**COMMUNICATION...from page 16.**

are all limited to the governing documents, association's budget and contractual obligations to align to the expectations being requested. Communication within communities can be challenging as some people prefer less interaction within the community while other people want constant communication. Utilizing technology can help bridge these gaps and help make communication more efficient.

The golden rule still holds true, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." Whether you are a manager, vendor, homeowner, or board member, the best communication is to do what you said you are going to do. Let your "word" be as loud as your actions. When we prioritize communication with our actions all other things will align. ■

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# “Hops” into 2026 — Kickoff Social at StillFire Brewing — January 22, 2026



(above) Tracie Stuart, Team Pest USA and Lindsay Gogolin, Sesmas Tree Services.



(above) Debbie Brownhill, Forestar, Sheri Stebbins, Royal Flush Plumbing



(above) Emil Ramic, Alfa Homes, Michael Tardella, RoofTop Contracting, Robert Cairns, Community Specialists



(above) Morgan Cohen, Natural Stone Services, Amber Tilley, Access Management Group, Jessica Smith, Remediation, Chris Wagnon, Falling Leaves Landscape Professionals, Jeff Creecy, John Anderson, Illuminating Design, Bill Frey, Illuminating Design, Liz DeCoudres, Remediation Group, Urania Murillo, The Rick's Group Landscape Management, Alan-Michael Goens, Falling Leaves Landscape Professionals, Porth Monts, Falling Leaves Landscape Professionals, Michelle Salazar, Gibson Landscape Professionals



(below) Doug Ward, Homeowner Management Services, Joseph C. Larkin, Lueder, Larkin & Hunter, Joey Greer, Mailbox Project, Melissa Dicks, Mailbox Project



(above) Richard Kirchner, Southeastern Waste Collection, Joshua Jones, Winter Capriola Zenner, Clarence Lau, Winter Capriola Zenner, Tobi Soyeb, Winter Capriola Zenner, Mike Hilton, Atlanta Painting Company, Kyle Shaughnessy, Winter Capriola Zenner



(above) Bart Parker, Gibson Landscape, Marion Williams, Stella Kilpatrick, PTR Control Systems, Diane Lasek, PTR Control Systems, Lauren Carroll, North Georgia Landscape Management, Adam Benson, North Georgia Landscape Management



(above) Joanna Eljazzar, Omar Cooper, Lazega & Johanson, Vicky Sand, NowackHoward



(above) Porth Monts, Falling Leaves Landscape Professionals, Marcos Garcia, Community Management Associates, Alan-Michael Goens, Falling Leaves Landscape Professionals



(above) Devin Sack-Stearns, Atlanta Landscape Group, Andrew Hixon, National Cooperative Bank, Daniel Zisoff, PMI Reliance



Kelly Schriver, Absolute Fire & Flood Restoration, Spencer Farmery, Winter Capriola Zenner, Nathan Nelson, FirstService Residential



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