

# Reigniting Member Interest at AIA Inland California

Contributed by AIA Inland California

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## SUMMARY

To increase member awareness and participation, AIA Inland California (AIA IC) upgraded member activities. In January 2008, the Board of Directors developed an on-going program that would run through calendar year 2008.

The mission for the year revolved around three key goals:

- Provide relevant programs and events for members
- Develop an outreach program to join with like-minded organizations in the Inland California region
- Focus on sustainability as a key concern

## INCREASING INTEREST IN PROGRAMS

Over the years, attendance at the monthly AIA IC chapter meeting was waning.

Starting in January 2008, the entire chapter meeting program was completely overhauled to attract more attendees. New and relevant programs were developed on topics such as:

- The 2008 International Building Code adoption in California
- Construction document constructability in the eyes of contractors
- BIM from the consultants point of view
- Green rating systems
- Tours of manufacturing plants and award-winning LEED-rated buildings
- The impact of Integrated Project Delivery
- Design awards ceremony focusing on sustainable projects
- A design charrette with a local city

To attract a wider audience and increase interest in AIA IC programs, most events addressed two separate topics. For example, a tour of a new project would be coupled with a panel discussion on a different topic. All meetings are registered so members can receive CEU credits.

Another new program allowed members to introduce themselves, their work, and their firm. This program increased member relations and helped members get to know each other better.

In response to the new activities and program format, an instant increase of attendance, excitement, and enthusiasm was recognized. Meetings grew from 25 to 30 attendees to an average of 70 to 90, with a peak of 150 attendants at one event.

The higher attendance allowed for increased member networking which pleased members; and, in response, sponsors were delighted at the rise in marketing opportunities.

## REACHING BEYOND THE AIA

To increase the chapter's community involvement, the AIA IC joined forces with the USGBC Inland Empire chapter to address sustainability education and advocacy in the region. Education and advocacy of sustainable issues were immediately put in high gear as both organizations participated in numerous events together, such as:

- Joint meetings with AIA IC and USGBC-IE members
- Tours of sustainable projects
- Participation in Earth Day events in the region
- Inviting USGBC-IE to participate in the AIA IC Design Awards program
- Speaking at various green symposiums in the region as a credible voice

This relationship opened an opportunity for AIA IC and USGBC-IE to have a joint office and resource center in a Platinum LEED building that showcases sustainable design features to the public called The Frontier Project.

AIA IC is in discussions with the local chapter of Construction Specifications Institute (CSI) and Urban Land Institute (ULI) to join forces to address development and policy issues in the Inland California region.

## SETTING NEW GOALS

The new platform for meetings and external relationships has been successful thus far. With the program's success, AIA IC has set a new goal to have the most educated and well-informed members in the region, to be the authoritative resource for issues in our communities. In addition, with ever-increasing support, AIA IC is able to offer more

scholarships, professional mentorship and education opportunities.

## RESOURCES

### More Best Practices

The following AIA Best Practices provide additional information related to this topic:

- 21.04.03 AIA Florida Membership Program
- 21.04.04 AIA Colorado Membership Program
- 22.05.06 Firm Visits Increase Membership at AIA Triangle

### Feedback

The AIA welcomes member feedback on Best Practice articles. To provide feedback on this article, please contact [bestpractices@aia.org](mailto:bestpractices@aia.org).

### Key Terms

- Leadership
- Associations
- Design associations
- Architectural associations
- The American Institute of Architects
- AIA components