

## AIA Eastern Oklahoma: Alan Hewitt, AIA

Excerpted and adapted from a 2006 Component Excellence Award-winning entry.

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### SUMMARY

This Best Practice is excerpted from a 2006 Component Excellence Award-winning entry in the category of Government Affairs: Outstanding Individual Contribution. AIA Eastern Oklahoma submitted this article on behalf of Alan Hewitt, AIA.

### BACKGROUND

Alan Hewitt received his architecture license in Oklahoma in 1979 and became an AIA member in 1982. Immediately, he got involved with local and state AIA activities, becoming increasingly interested in government affairs, specifically concerning efforts to update the architect's licensing act as well as legislation that affected the health, safety, and welfare of Oklahoma citizens.

Hewitt was elected to the AIA Eastern Oklahoma Board of Directors in 1986 and the AIA Oklahoma Board of Directors just two years later in 1988. Since 2001 he has been cochair of the state and local Government Affairs committees. In this role he has led many statewide grassroots efforts as well as developed and maintained the government affairs section of the AIA Oklahoma Web site.

### PROCESS

Over the past five years of Alan's involvement with the AIA Oklahoma Government Affairs committee, he has spearheaded grassroots efforts to amend, support, and oppose state legislation. He has also spent countless hours researching and writing numerous white papers to educate AIA members.

Oklahoma's original Architect's Licensing Act was established in 1947. In 1998 the act was amended to meet current standards, but still remaining was a section that specified "what buildings require an architect." Its outdated language did not mirror current trends in architecture services. Recognizing that it needed updating, Hewitt worked tirelessly over the next few years to change this section of the act.

Hewitt promoted collaborative relationships with all parties involved in this issue, including the

Professional Engineers of Oklahoma, the Oklahoma Homebuilders Association, the American Society of Landscape Architects, the Oklahoma Municipal League, and the Oklahoma Schools Association. In addition, he worked with members of state agencies and legislators, and in August of 2006, SB 1991, an amendment to the original Architect's Licensing Act, was passed. SB 1991 redefined state legislation that delineates which buildings require an architect.

HB 1451, passed in 2003, changed the Oklahoma Architectural Act's fundamental definition of the practice of architecture. The new legislation established a task force to review all issues associated with the application of architecture laws in Oklahoma. That task force will be composed of three senate and three house members and 12 other persons who represent organizations with a vested interest in architecture laws.

In 2004, with Hewitt's help, the Oklahoma Contractor's Fair Play Bill was modified before passage, and issues that would have negatively affected architects' payment and liability were omitted.

In 2004, the help of the AIA Oklahoma Government Affairs committee prevented the Interior Design Practice Act from reaching the voting floor—its passage would have limited the use of the term "interior design," and architects would no longer be able to offer "interior design" services.

Hewitt leads the Government Affairs committee's lobbying efforts on behalf of architects' interests. In addition, he strives to educate architects about relevant issues. He wrote two white papers in 2002, one on the issue of taxation of architecture services and the other on tax reform. Hewitt learns and writes as much as he can about each issue and how it affects AIA members and then distributes this information to the membership.

### OUTCOME

In recent years, Hewitt developed a government affairs section of the AIA Oklahoma Web site to keep members up to date on relevant issues. In all,

his contributions are far too many to mention. AIA Eastern Oklahoma owes the success of its advocacy efforts to his leadership and the countless hours of research he has contributed, as well and the collaborative relationships he has developed.

## **RESOURCES**

### **More Best Practices**

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

- 21.01.05    Communication Plan of AIA Louisiana
- 22.06.02    AIA Kansas City: River Crown Plaza Forum Series
- 22.02.02    BSA ARE Success Teams

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### **Keywords**

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