



**A MESSAGE FROM THE
ACUMA PRESIDENT**

Tracy Ashfield

A Year Like No Other

*What We Learned in
2020 We Can Apply
to 2021 and Beyond*

By Tracy Ashfield



As I write this column, the “memorable” year of 2020 has been receding in my rear view mirror. It’s been a year that will find a special place in history books, mostly for tough times.

The Covid-19 pandemic certainly had a lot to do with it; it really disrupted our industry. But as difficult as the disruption was, it also acted as a catalyst for positive change.

Every lending executive I have spoken with—without exception—has talked about the extraordinary efforts their teams produced in order to ensure that the doors to their shops—virtual or otherwise—remained open and ready to help members with their home-financing needs.

Throughout a most challenging year we talked about the impact on our lending business of working remotely, especially during the hottest home financing market since 2003. We managed to sustain ourselves on video calls and virtual learning opportunities.

Among its members ACUMA has seen consistent and high demand for our virtual programming. That’s certainly good news. But what have we missed?

WHAT I MISSED IN 2020

I have missed many things during the past year. Among them are:

- Witnessing first-hand our members networking during events, learning from each other and collaborating on ideas that help each other grow.
- Sitting at the breakfast or lunch table at a workshop or conference and participating in (or simply listening to) dynamic conversations about everything from how best to structure a departments to how to implement a new construction loan program.

- Collaborating openly and honestly—seeing that sincere willingness to share with each other, even among competitors. It is one of the best things that make credit unions unique.

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ROLE OF BUSINESS PARTNERS

Sadly, I know we’ve also missed the chance to learn from, and network with, business partners. When was the last time you shared a meal or a cup of coffee with one of your mortgage insurance partners?

The teams that help run our business partners’ companies are filled with industry thought leaders, many of whom are able to see the

mortgage industry through unique lenses.

And although your peers may all be fellow lenders, each of you have your own unique story to tell, too. And with that are ideas for ways credit unions can continue to move the market-share needle higher.

ACUMA IN 2021

So what does this all mean for ACUMA?

Very simply, we are eager to come together with our members in the fall of 2021 at the beautiful Gaylord Hotel at National Harbor, Maryland, along the banks of the Potomac River. Once there, we want to again offer the face-to-face networking you have told us is invaluable to you.



Throughout the year we're also going to roll out more ways for you to interact with each other and get 'up close' to industry thought leaders for impactful dialogue.

But we can't wait until September to renew ties. We need to focus now on keeping those connections alive and well, and making new ones. We'll help you reach out.



ACUMA continues to bring you timely and relevant educational opportunities, but throughout the year we're also going to roll out more ways for you to interact with each other and get "up close" to industry thought leaders for impactful dialogue.

Now back to those history books I mentioned earlier. Just as most of the paper in the mortgage process has gone digital in 2020, I predict the history books that record everything that occurred will go digital too—as e-books!



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