

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

CELEBRATING
CREDIT UNION

MORTGAGE
HEROES

ACUMA Pivots to Virtual Conference

A pivot to an online conference did not prevent ACUMA from engaging its membership in a two-day educational event that touched on all the “hot topics” of mortgage lending for credit unions. The 24th annual Conference of the American Credit Union Mortgage Association brought together nearly 500 registrants for presentations, discussion and Q&As—all presented through the magic of the “virtual” world we have adopted during an unprecedented pandemic.

Last year’s Sept. 22-23 program, hosted by ACUMA President Tracy Ashfield and dedicated to “Mortgage Heroes,” included videos of credit union employees who went above and beyond during the pandemic. Snippets from conference sponsors, who made possible the event, were also interspersed between sessions.

Attendees praised the conference. “Yes, it’s been a great conference,” Katie Bott, AVP of Real Estate Lending for University FCU in Utah, said soon after the event. “I’ve attended a few online conferences this year, and would like you to know this has been the best one.” Bott singled out “great material” and the format for how the website worked.

The “new normal” of Covid-19 challenged our way of doing business and our lives. As many conference participants from across the country noted,

that can be especially difficult for credit unions, which have in large part relied on face-to-face interactions with members. But it has also forced a needed acceleration in the transition to technology that is needed to compete into the future.

Among other topics, the conference looked at how the pandemic has influenced risk management, the handling of high loan volume and the hiring/working environment.

SESSION CAPSULES

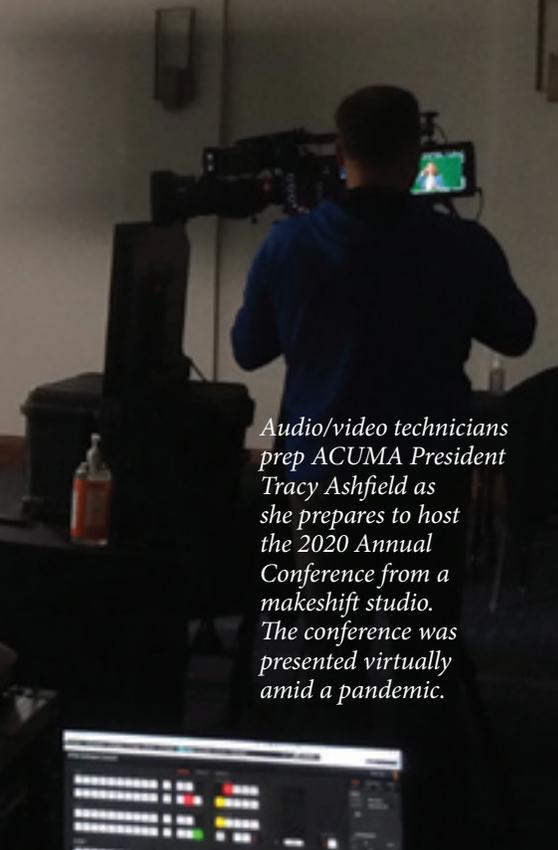
Recordings of many conference sessions are available in full on the acuma.org website for members to view at their convenience. Go to the Member Only page to log in and select the recordings from the Member Resources pull-down tab. What follows is a brief recap of sessions.

“How to Manage High Volume dur-

ing a Pandemic” featured Bernie Chavira, Senior Director of Define Mortgage Solutions, engaging Herb Behrens, VP of Real Estate Lending at BCU, and Ryan Doehrmann, SVP of Mortgage Lending at GreenState Credit Union, in a discussion about the ways each credit union responded to the challenging situation, offering advice and explaining their decisions affecting both employees and members.

“Enterprise Risk Management” focused on how CUs used and adjusted disaster recovery and business continuity plans to keep data safe and employees productive, including third- and fourth-party due diligence. The session panel featured moderator Beth Millstein, Principal of Millstein Consulting; Gwen Muse-Evans, President & CEO of GME Enterprises; and Tim Mislansky, Chief Strategy Officer at Wright-Patt Credit Union.

“Should You Adopt New Tech or New Processes? Or Both?” explored in detail the approaches two CUs took for ongoing projects interrupted by the pandemic. Moderator Will Vickers, VP of Industry Technology for Arch U.S. MI, discussed the challenges and responses with Michelle Burke, VP of Mortgage lending at Westerra CU; and Altra CU’s VP of Real Estate Craig Sacia and Manager of Real Estate Operations Andrea Ratajski. One



Audio/video technicians prep ACUMA President Tracy Ashfield as she prepares to host the 2020 Annual Conference from a makeshift studio. The conference was presented virtually amid a pandemic.

Can Your Credit Union Do to Promote Homeownership and Close the Housing Gap. Moderator Geoff Cooper, VP of Product Development for MGIC, led a panel discussion with Sean Moss, SVP at Down Payment Resource; James Hunter, Director of Real Estate Lending at New Orleans Firemen’s FCU; and Rod McGinniss, SVP of Business Development for Homeownership Preservation Foundation and GreenPath Financial Wellness. The panel members emphasized increasing awareness of resources and explaining options for financing.

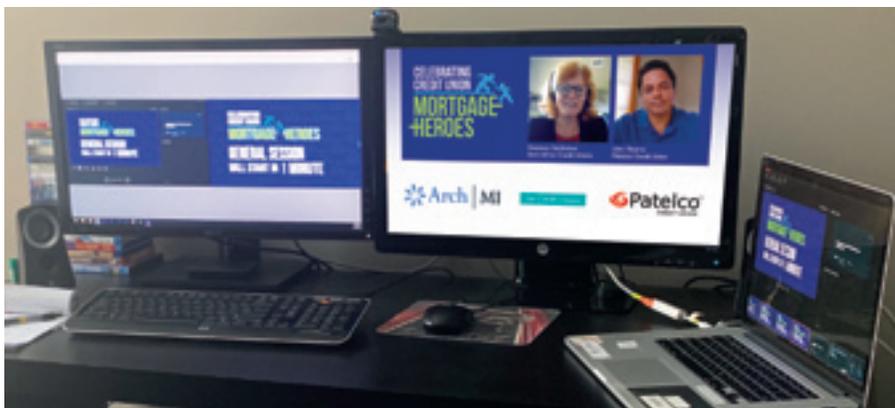
Continuing the thread, **“Connecting with the Emerging Majorities”** discussed changing U.S. demographics and the need for businesses—including financial institutions—to understand and reach out to diverse communities now and into the future. Gail Cox, VP of Research & Strategic Planning for AC&M



A featured session brought together five mortgage leaders to discuss the industry’s future.



The AV technicians made everything “virtual” work smoothly.



The conference theme celebrated “Mortgage Heroes” who went above and beyond to serve members during the pandemic. Short video clips were shown to highlight the heroes.

CU is working toward at 25-day loan close; the other is pushing ahead with an LOS change.

Michael Neal, Senior Research Associate for the Housing Finance Policy Center at the Urban League, spoke on **“Housing Policy, Demographics and Minority Homeownership.”** He provided supporting data and proposed credit union and regulator actions to close the housing/mortgager gap between whites and minorities. His recommended solutions include downpayment assistance, counseling, home maintenance financial products and forbearance extensions.

In a related session, a panel discussion took up **“Affordable Lending: What**

Group, shared strategies for connecting with these communities and emphasized how crucial it is for your future growth to make these connections.

In another widely attended session, a group of industry leaders offered insights on the mortgage industry for credit unions during a session titled **“From the Desk of the President,”** which included moderator Scott Happ of Optimal Blue, Michael Schmeiser of Arch U.S. MI, Mark Casale of Essent, Sal Miosi of MGIC and Derek Brummer of Radian. As ACUMA founder Bob Dorsa noted, the session should be required viewing for all CU leaders since it “laid out the playbook for the future.”

Topics of other conference sessions included:

- “The ‘New Normal’ – What It Means for Quality Control and Compliance.”
- “The Trifecta: A Pandemic, Record Low Mortgage Rates and the Highest Unemployment in History ... What’s the Long-Term Impact?”
- “Loan Processing and Underwriting Retooled.”
- “The Forbearance and Referral Process Retooled.”