# PRESIDENT'S LETTER

## A MESSAGE FROM OUR MNCREW PRESIDENT.

**Dear MNCREW Members,**
Let's be honest: summer is supposed to be our quiet season. July and August are when the calendar assumes you're at the lake, the cabin, or working remotely from a dock somewhere. So I was thrilled when our summer crowds politely ignored that assumption. You came, you connected, and you made these two programs some of my favorites of the entire year.

In July, we filled Westminster for **"Get Known or Get Passed Over: Building Your CRE Brand"** - a title that makes you sit up a little straighter. This one was fast, interactive, and refreshingly candid: roundtables rotating through social media strategy, business development, owner's perspective interview prep, AI, and the art of pitching well. My thanks to our terrific table leaders - Jen Bolstad (Kimley-Horn), Andrew Engel (Vnzo AEC), Nick Mazzocco (Nimble Project and Development Services), Jessica Mogilka (JLL), and Catie Wheeler (BKBM Engineers) - and to our event sponsor, Hillcrest Development LLLP. The energy in the room was exactly what you'd hope for, and the feedback was overwhelmingly positive.

August kept the momentum going with **"AI for Commercial Real Estate: Building Smarter Systems and More Efficient Workflows,"** presented by Ashlei Rolloff, CEO and Founder of Nerd Herd. Ashlei walked us through her "Six Levels" framework - essentially how to take AI from a "talented stranger" who knows nothing about your business to a trusted assistant that actually earns its keep.

She even closed with a live demo of an AI that plans your day and delivers a morning briefing, which set a bar most of us can only aspire to. Whether you're an AI skeptic or already using it daily, everyone left with a concrete next step - at a lunch program, in the middle of August. I'm still a little giddy about it.

And then there was our **Golf Classic** on August 4th at Bunker Hills - a wonderful day, and a record-setter where it counts most. Thanks to the extraordinary generosity of our sponsors, this year's event raised more money than any year in our history. To every sponsor who donated a prize or contributed financially: thank you. You directly fuel the programming, scholarships, and connections that keep this chapter thriving. We see you, we appreciate you, and we'd love to do it all again next year!

So here's my takeaway from summer 2026: our "slow season" is only slow if you weren't paying attention. None of this happens without our committee chairs, volunteers, sponsors, and the members who keep showing up - rain, shine, or lake weather. Thank you for making the quiet months anything but.

And if you thought I was done chasing the sun, think again – a wonderful contingent of us will trade Minnesota's lakes for the sand at the **Fontainebleau Miami Beach** this September for the **CREW Network Convention**. So, consider this both a thank-you for a remarkable summer and fair warning that my sunburned nose and I aren't quite ready to come inside yet.



KATRINA CADALBERT
*Assistant General Counsel*
*Sherman Associates, Inc.*

Now let's go make fall even better!

**Sincerely,**

Katrina

# A MESSAGE FROM THE COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

We want to extend a huge thank you to our Communications Committee for their dedication in bringing this newsletter to life. Our goal is to keep you **informed, inspired, and connected** to the latest industry trends, leadership insights, member spotlights, and professional development opportunities and connections. We are committed to making each issue even better, and we welcome your feedback and ideas for future editions or content contributions.

Thank you for being part of this incredible network and for your continued support of MNCREW. Here's to an exciting year ahead – let's continue to grow, lead, and shape the future of commercial real estate together! Stay connected, stay inspired, and we'll see you at the next MNCREW event!

## Thank you to our Communications Committee Members:

We are looking for new members to join our committee. Please reach out if you are interested in learning more or would like to attend our next meeting (lunch is provided!) No design or marketing experience is required to participate in our committee. We would love to connect!

### Co-Chairs



**MARI HANSEN**
EVP of Marketing
Cetra Partners



**CATIE WHEELER**
Director of Marketing &
Business Development
BKBM

### Committee Members



**ESTHER MICHAEL**
Social Media Specialist



**SARAH KUDERER**
Senior Operations Coordinator
Piedmont Realty Trust



**KRISTINE SALLEE**
Business Development
Director
McGough



**TANYA SCHULZE**
Marketing Manager
Mortenson

### Board of Directors Liaison



**KATIE NELSON**
Project Manager
Frauenshuh

# GET KNOWN OR GET PASSED OVER

## BUILDING YOUR CRE BRAND

July's program ditched the usual stage format for rotating roundtables — five conversations on brand, business development, and growth in commercial real estate, with members moving table to table over lunch. Held at Westminster Event Center and sponsored by Hillcrest Development LLLP, the format paid off: the result was less presentation and more candid, table-level dialogue about what is actually working right now.

**Social Media** — Andrew Engel, Vnzo AEC

- LinkedIn's role in CRE/AEC, it's where firms are actually building credibility now, not just posting for visibility.
- Content that performs, specific, story-driven posts consistently beat polished, generic ones.
- Company vs. personal, personal profiles carry more reach and trust; company pages should amplify, not originate.
- Team involvement, firms winning on LinkedIn have more voices posting, not one marketer carrying the load.

**Interviewing** — Nick Mazzocco, Nimble Project and Development Services

- 5Ps, Proper Planning Prevents Poor Performance.
- Bring the right group, tailor your team to the client's specific situation, not a default lineup.
- Lead with curiosity, approachable, likeable, and empathetic reads better than polished.
- Nerves are okay, even seasoned pros feel them — it's what you do next that matters.

**Networking** — Jen Bolstad, Kimley-Horn

- Prep matters, know the relationship history between your firms and their recent news before you walk in.
- Set your goal, be clear on what you want out of the conversation before it starts.
- Openers matter, use your prep to open the floor for a real conversation, not small talk.
- The recipe: Ask, Listen, Add Value, Follow Up — with your pitch landing subtly, inside the listening.

**Networking & Prospecting** — Jessica Mogilka, JLL

- Match strategy to career stage, early on, cast wide and meet as many peers in similar positions as possible — they become your people as you move through the industry.
- Later career, shift to Friend of a Friend thinking — don't overstay in one group, since most opportunity comes from loose, second-degree connections.
- Pitching with discipline, be no-nonsense, warm, and on the clock — time-check your team without over-questioning the prospect.

**AI in Business Development** — Catie Wheeler, BKBM Engineers

- Research first, pull a prospect's project history and recent changes before you chase the meeting.
- Know your own story, shape what's already true about your work instead of writing from scratch.
- Pressure-test your pitch, use AI to argue against you before a client does.
- Build systems, not one-offs, turn a good habit into something repeatable — quality shouldn't depend on who's doing it that day.

ARTICLE BY:
CATIE WHEELER







# AI FOR COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE

## TIPS AND TRICKS FROM NERD HERD CEO AND FOUNDER, ASHLEI ROLLOFF




MNCREW members gathered at Westminster Event Center on August 19 for an insightful program exploring the growing role of artificial intelligence in commercial real estate and the business functions that support it. Featured speaker, **Ashlei Rolloff, CEO and Founder of Nerd Herd**, shared practical strategies for moving beyond basic AI use and building systems that create meaningful efficiencies in both professional and personal life.

Drawing on her background in the commercial and industrial HVAC industry and her experience as an entrepreneur, Rolloff opened with a personal story about balancing business leadership with motherhood. She described how AI-powered systems help manage administrative tasks, prepare for meetings, organize communications, and automate routine work, allowing her to be more present in the moments that matter most.

The presentation centered around Rolloff's **Six Levels Framework**, which compares AI adoption to onboarding a new employee. Attendees learned that successful AI implementation isn't about selecting the perfect platform. Instead, it's about providing AI with the knowledge, context, and access needed to perform useful work.

ARTICLE BY:
MARI HANSEN

### The Six Levels Framework

- **Level 1, Hire:** Learn how to write effective prompts.
- **Level 2, Onboard:** Customize AI with your role, goals, and communication style.
- **Level 3, Office:** Organize projects, documents, and client information.
- **Level 4, Train:** Build repeatable processes and workflows.
- **Level 5, Keys:** Connect AI to calendars, inboxes, CRMs, and other tools.
- **Level 6, Org Chart:** Create automated responsibilities that run proactively.

### Practical Prompting Framework

One of the session's most memorable messages was that **"most people are asking a stranger to do an insider's job."** Rolloff explained that many users open a blank AI chat window and expect highly tailored results without providing the context an employee would normally receive during onboarding. The quality of AI output is directly tied to the quality of information and direction it receives.

Attendees were introduced to a practical prompting framework built around five elements: **Role, Context, Task, Constraints, and Format**. By establishing who the AI should act as, providing relevant business context, defining the task, setting guardrails, and specifying the desired output format, users can dramatically improve the quality and consistency of results.

Rolloff also shared a simple yet powerful prompt enhancement: adding the phrase **"Ask me high-impact questions first."** This encourages AI tools to gather missing information before generating a response, leading to more accurate and customized outcomes.

Another key theme focused on personalizing AI tools through memory settings, custom instructions, and project-based workspaces. Rolloff demonstrated how dedicated projects can be organized around specific clients, pursuits, or business functions to provide valuable context and improve results over time.

The session also addressed the importance of verification and human oversight. While AI can accelerate research and content creation, Rolloff stressed that professionals remain responsible for reviewing outputs, validating facts, and checking source material. She encouraged attendees to use AI as a tool for enhancing decision-making rather than replacing it.

A highlight of the event was a live demonstration of Rolloff's AI executive assistant, "Carrie." The audience saw how AI-powered workflows can automatically generate daily briefings, organize priorities, monitor calendars, summarize meeting notes, track follow-up items, flag important emails, and prepare users for upcoming meetings. The demonstration illustrated how AI can manage high-volume, repeatable tasks while allowing people to focus on relationship building, strategy, creativity, and client service.

Rolloff reinforced that AI is most effective when used to enhance human capabilities, not replace them. By automating routine processes and reducing administrative burden, professionals can dedicate more time to the **high-value work that drives relationships, innovation, and business growth.**

**LEARN MORE FROM NERD HERD**

# MNCREW Golf Classic | Bunker Hills Golf Course

## BRINGING OUR COMMUNITY TOGETHER ONE PUTT AT A TIME!

A heartfelt thank you again to everyone who attended and helped make this year's golf event such a success. We would also like to extend our sincere appreciation to our generous sponsors for their continued support and partnership.

Congratulations to all the golfers who played a fantastic round, and an even bigger congratulations to our raffle prize winners! We hope you enjoyed the beautiful day, the camaraderie, and the celebration.

















Photos: David Filak of Nelson

# SIGNATURE EVENT COMMITTEE OVERVIEW

## MNCork 2026: COME TO YOUR SENSES

The **Signature Event Committee** is responsible for planning and executing one of MNCREW's most anticipated annual events, MNCork. Each year, the committee works behind the scenes to create a memorable experience that brings members together through networking, relationship building, and unique event programming. Through months of planning and collaboration, committee members help bring MNCREW's mission to life by creating meaningful opportunities for members to connect, engage, and strengthen their professional networks.

This year's event, **MNCork 2026: Come to Your Senses**, will take place on October 8, 2026, at the U.S. Bancorp 30th Floor Amenity Space. Attendees will enjoy an elevated evening featuring immersive experiences such as a Silent Disco and Blind Wine Tasting, alongside exceptional wines, delicious bites, and stunning views of downtown Minneapolis. Designed to engage all five senses, this year's event promises a unique and memorable experience that combines professional networking with interactive entertainment.

One of the reasons MNCork continues to be such a highly anticipated event is the thoughtful planning and creativity invested by the Signature Event Committee. From developing engaging themes and coordinating event logistics to creating memorable attendee experiences, committee members work diligently to ensure each event is fresh, exciting, and delivers value for members and guests alike.

### Registration is Now Open

Space is limited. Join us for an unforgettable evening and experience MNCork 2026: Come to Your Senses.

### More Than an Event

The success of MNCork is made possible by a dedicated group of volunteers who contribute their creativity, attention to detail, and passion for delivering an exceptional member experience. Their efforts help create an event that strengthens relationships, elevates members, and showcases the power of the MNCREW network. Beyond event planning, committee members gain valuable leadership experience, strengthen industry relationships, and play an important role in shaping one of the organization's signature experiences.

### Get Involved

While the committee has a strong volunteer base supporting this year's event, planning for 2027 is already underway. The Signature Event Committee is seeking members who enjoy event planning, collaboration, creative problem-solving, and creating memorable experiences for others. Whether you are looking to expand your network, develop leadership skills, or give back to the organization, serving on the committee is a rewarding way to become more involved in MNCREW.

As part of ongoing succession planning, the committee also welcomes members interested in taking on larger leadership roles in the future. If you've ever attended MNCork and wondered what it takes to bring such a successful event to life, now is the perfect time to get involved and help shape the next chapter of this premier MNCREW tradition.



*SARAH KUDERER*
*Senior Operations Coordinator*
Piedmont Realty Trust

### COMMITTEE CO-CHAIRS:



*ANNA SIPPRELL*
*Manager of Brand Experience*
Parameters



*MEGAN SUDBECK*
*Business Development Manager*
Allsteel






# MINNESOTA COMMERCIAL MARKET UPDATE

## WHERE THE WORK IS RIGHT NOW

Minnesota's commercial development market is sending a clear signal this quarter: ***demand is real, but it's getting selective***. Capital and tenants are still moving — just concentrating in newer buildings, better-located submarkets and projects with a committed end user already attached.

### Industrial Still Leads, But the Easy Growth Is Over

Twin Cities industrial posted 1.05 million square feet of net absorption in Q2, pushing year-to-date absorption past 2.1 million square feet (Colliers, Q2 2026). Vacancy held at 4.9%, still tighter than the 20-year average of 5.1% (Cushman & Wakefield, Q2 2026). Minnesota construction employment rose 4.4% year over year in July, even after a 0.7% monthly pullback (DEED, July 2026).

Build-to-suit is driving the pipeline. More than 6.7 million square feet of Twin Cities industrial space is under construction, with 4.8 million tied to build-to-suit — including Amazon's 3.6 million-square-foot Project Nova (Colliers, Q2 2026).

Tenant-specific work is the opportunity, not speculative bulk — site readiness, power capacity, truck circulation and speed-to-delivery are where the value is.

Location matters more than it used to. North Central and Northwest submarkets are outperforming South Central and Southwest, where oversupply is stretching lease-up timelines (Colliers, Q2 2026).

### Healthcare Is Still Driving CRE Opportunity — Especially Outside the Metro

St. Cloud is the clearest example: CentraCare Plaza's 2026 expansion added roughly 225,000 square feet for outpatient surgery, orthopedics, neurosciences and rehab, making Central Minnesota one of the strongest non-metro healthcare targets (Minnesota Physician, 2026; McGough, 2026). In Duluth, Essentia's new Hillside hospital is opening the door to redevelopment of former campus properties into housing, hospitality, medical education and mixed-use support space (Essentia Health, 2026).

Rural providers are also investing — emergency access, operating rooms, specialty clinics and patient-flow improvements (KAXE, 2026; Glencoe Regional Health, 2026) — though the Minnesota Hospital Association's report of 31 financially distressed hospitals statewide, 18 at risk of closure, means this work will be selective. Expect the strongest opportunities in grant-ready capital planning, phased renovations, behavioral health, rural clinic reuse and workforce-linked housing near regional medical centers.

### Office Is Still the Weak Spot — But Not a Dead End

Minneapolis office vacancy dropped to 27.0% in Q2, down 60 basis points quarter over quarter (Cushman & Wakefield, Q2 2026) — improving, but far from a recovery. The real opportunity is repositioning, tenant improvement work and conversion analysis, separating Class A space that still clears the market from buildings that no longer will. Retail is softer too, with cautious lending and refinancing activity (Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis, Q1 2026).

### Public Infrastructure Is a Growth Channel

Rochester's 2026 program — Link BRT, downtown utilities, streets tied to Mayo and DMC — shows infrastructure functioning as active business development (City of Rochester, 2026). With rising cost pressure and tighter municipal budgets across the Ninth District (Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis, Q1 2026), the projects that move forward will favor teams that control scope early, phase around disruption and defend budgets up front.

### The Bottom Line

Minnesota has real demand and active pipelines, but capital isn't flowing everywhere equally. The firms that do best through year-end will be closest to funded users, healthcare anchors, infrastructure budgets and complex repositioning work.

### KEY TAKEAWAYS FOR CRE PROFESSIONALS

- **Chase committed users, not speculative space — build-to-suit industrial is where the real work is.**
- **Healthcare is a durable growth lane, especially St. Cloud and Duluth — but stay selective given rural hospital distress.**
- **Office means repositioning, not development — TI and conversion work, not new builds.**
- **Bottom line: follow funded users, healthcare anchors, and infrastructure budgets through year-end.**

ARTICLE BY:
CATIE WHEELER

# NEW FACES: MEET SARAH KUDERER

## A PASSION FOR REAL ESTATE, FAMILY, TRAVEL, AND CONNECTION

### What Brought You to MNCREW?

For Sarah Kuderer, joining MNCREW was a natural way to connect with other women in commercial real estate while becoming part of a supportive professional community.

She was drawn to the organization's focus on building meaningful relationships, learning from industry peers, and supporting the success of women across the commercial real estate profession.

### How Are You Currently Involved in MNCREW?

Although she is a newer member, Sarah has already embraced opportunities to get involved. She recently joined the MNCREW **Communications Committee** and is excited to contribute to the committee's initiatives while participating in MNCREW events, educational programs, and networking opportunities.

She looks forward to meeting fellow members and expanding her connections throughout the industry.

### Education/Career Path?

Sarah's career in real estate began immediately after college and has included experience in both **architecture and property management.** Her diverse background has provided a strong foundation for understanding the many facets of the built environment and real estate operations.

In 2019, she earned her MBA from St. Catherine University, a milestone that helped support her continued professional growth and advancement.

Today, Sarah serves as **Senior Operations Coordinator at Piedmont Realty Trust,** where she focuses on commercial property management and portfolio-wide operations, compliance, and reporting. Over the past two years with Piedmont, she has continued to build expertise while supporting the company's operational success across its portfolio.

### What Do You Enjoy Outside of Work?

Sarah enjoys spending time with her husband and their almost four-year-old son. Their family is also preparing for an exciting new chapter, as they look forward to welcoming a baby girl this October. When she finds a little free time, she enjoys traveling, reading, and making memories with family and friends.

### Favorite Place You Visited or Have Traveled to?

Travel has been one of Sarah's lifelong passions, and she has been fortunate to explore destinations around the world. Her experiences include studying abroad in Rome during college, multiple trips throughout Europe, and a honeymoon in Thailand.

While every destination has left a lasting impression, the **United Kingdom** remains a favorite. A family trip to London and Edinburgh two years ago stands out as especially meaningful, offering the opportunity to experience the rich history, culture, and charm of both cities together.

For Sarah, the combination of historic significance and family-friendly experiences makes the UK a place she is always eager to revisit.



*SARAH KUDERER, MBA*
*Senior Operations Coordinator*
*Piedmont Realty Trust*

### Favorite Mentor?

When asked about a favorite mentor, Sarah immediately points to her mother. A successful Financial Advisor, her mother demonstrated the **importance, influence, and resilience of women in the workplace.** Her guidance and perspective have played a significant role in shaping both Sarah's professional journey and personal growth.

Welcome to MNCREW, Sarah! We look forward to seeing your continued involvement and contributions to the organization.

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ARTICLE BY:
MARI HANSEN

# SAM DOFFING

## REDEFINING MARKETING'S SEAT AT THE TABLE (ONE RELATIONSHIP AT A TIME)

Sam Doffing has been in the room for a lot of firsts. As a tenured member of MNCREW and a marketing leader at MSP Commercial, she's watched the visibility of women in CRE grow from something quietly true to something loudly celebrated — and she's helped build a few of the platforms making that happen. In this issue's Member Spotlight, Sam gets candid about burnout, boundaries, the mentors who shaped her, and why she thinks marketing is becoming one of the most strategic seats in the industry.

**What's changed most for women in CRE since you started at MSP Commercial — and what hasn't changed enough yet?**

The visibility of women in real estate is one of the biggest changes I've noticed over the past decade. There have always been talented women in this industry, but today it's so much more evident and publicized how integral women are to driving growth, leading teams, and shaping business strategy. The rise of women-focused organizations like MNCREW has increased that visibility and empowered women to grow and support each other.

While we've seen progress, I'd still like to see **more women represented in executive leadership.** We've got momentum now, and I'm excited to see what the future holds.

**What's one thing you know now about negotiating or advocating for yourself that you wish someone had told you 10 years ago?**

**Advocating for yourself isn't just about asking for opportunities — it's also about setting boundaries.** Early in my career I said yes to almost everything, which taught me a lot but eventually led to burnout. Learning to prioritize and protect what matters most has been one of the most important lessons of my career.

**Who influenced you, and how are you paying that forward for women coming up behind you now?**

I've been lucky to meet professionals — many in marketing or BD who've been guiding lights over the years. Now I pay that forward through volunteer leadership, including the SMPS Twin Cities Board, where I help people newer to the industry expand their networks and **see opportunities in themselves they may not have recognized yet.**

**How has marketing's role in CRE evolved over your career — and where do you see it heading?**

It used to mean brochures, press releases, and transaction support. Now marketing is a strategic business function that helps drive company growth — sitting at the intersection of leadership, BD, and brand. Brand reputation and relationship building matter more than ever, since people form impressions long before a first conversation.

Looking ahead, I think employees will keep becoming companies' most effective ambassadors. **People connect with people far more than they connect with brands.**



*SAM DOFFING*
*Marketing Manager & Executive Assistant*
*MSP Commercial*

**If you had to give one piece of advice to a woman just starting out in CRE today, what would it be?**

**Say yes to networking opportunities and building relationships, even if it's hard or intimidating at first.** CRE is a relationship-based business — some of the best opportunities, ideas, and life lessons will come from the people you meet along the way.

Building a network is a skill like any other: practice, practice, practice. The relationships I've built through industry events, volunteer roles, and professional organizations have shaped me in ways I never imagined.

ARTICLE BY:
CATIE WHEELER

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## DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION PARTNERS

As MNCREW continues its journey to make our organization a more inclusive and equitable place, we are grateful to the companies who have contributed towards that mission.

Auromira Architects
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Mortenson
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## *Contributions? Questions? Comments?*

*Please contact the Communications Committee Co-Chairs:*

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