

September 2026



South Florida Chapter

THE APPRAISERS' APPRISER

President's Message - Matthew Roach, MAI



I hope everyone has had a chance to enjoy the summer and spend some time with family and friends. As we head into the final months of the year, I wanted to share a few updates on the exciting initiatives, events, and opportunities ahead for the South Florida Chapter.

At the national level, the Institute continues to focus on strengthening member value, expanding education, supporting the rollout of UAD 3.6 and the redesigned URAR, and addressing the long-term challenges facing the appraisal profession. National leadership recently reported encouraging growth in education revenue and participation, while continuing efforts to attract new entrants to the profession and enhance member benefits.

Here in South Florida, our Board has been focused on creating opportunities for members to connect, learn, and stay engaged.

One initiative I'm especially excited about is the expansion of our Coffee & Comparables series. While we'll certainly discuss market trends and valuation topics, the primary goal is to give members more opportunities to connect with one another. In a profession where many of us spend most of our time working independently, these informal gatherings provide a great opportunity to build relationships, exchange ideas, and strengthen our chapter community. Our next event is planned for Palm Beach County, and I hope you'll join us.

We're also launching a student outreach event at the University of Miami. One of the biggest challenges facing our profession is attracting the next generation of appraisers. This event will introduce students to careers in valuation and connect them with professionals who can share their experiences and insights about the industry.

Membership growth and retention remain top priorities for the chapter. We are continuing to develop mentorship opportunities for candidates pursuing designation, expand educational offerings, strengthen relationships with sponsors, and increase engagement with members throughout South Florida.

I'm also looking forward to attending the Appraisal Institute Regional Meeting in Orlando this September, where chapter leaders from across the region will discuss industry issues, share ideas, and collaborate on ways to better serve members.

I am also pleased to share that Braylin Schmader has been selected as the South Florida Chapter's new Executive Director. Braylin will succeed Debbie, whose dedication and service to our chapter have been invaluable. On behalf of the Board, I want to thank

Editor:
Claudia Vance, MAI

President's Message - Continued



Debbie for everything she has done for the chapter and welcome Braylin as we continue building on the strong foundation she helped create.

September will also bring one of our more enjoyable events of the year, our Bowling & Networking Social at Lucky Strike in Davie. This will be a great opportunity to spend time with fellow members in a relaxed setting, have some fun, and strengthen relationships within the chapter. It will also be a chance to meet Braylin, welcome her to the chapter, and spend time with Debbie before her retirement later this year. Whether you're a competitive bowler or just there for the conversation, I hope you'll join us.

Please mark your calendars for our year-end celebration on December 11 at Galuppi's in Pompano Beach. We will recognize Debbie's years of service, install our 2027 officers and directors, and officially welcome Braylin to her new role. It will be a fitting way to close out the year and celebrate the people who make our chapter successful.

Thank you for your continued support of the South Florida Chapter. I appreciate the professionalism, volunteerism, and engagement of our members, and I look forward to seeing many of you at our upcoming events.

Matthew Roach, MAI
2026, Chapter President
matt.roach@cbre.com

Join us for our Chapter Meeting - Lucky Strike, Sept. 15

Appraisal Institute
South Florida Chapter

BOWLING NIGHT

SEPT 15 **START AT 5:15**

LUCKY STRIKE | **8200 W. STATE RD 84 DAVIE, FL 33324** | **\$45**

INCLUDES FOOD | **FUN, FOOD & NETWORKING**

www.southflorida-ai.org

Come Out for a Night of Fun, Food, and Networking!

Join your fellow appraisers for an evening of bowling, food, and camaraderie at Lucky Strike in Davie.

Event Details

Date: Tuesday, September 15, 2026

Location: Lucky Strike - Davie

8200 West State Road 84

Davie, FL 33324

Arrival Time: 5:15 PM

Event Time: 5:30 PM - 7:30 PM

What's Included

- Pizza
- Wings
- French Fries
- Two Beverage Drink Tickets
- Bowling and Social Networking

Whether you're looking to reconnect with colleagues, meet new members, or simply enjoy a fun evening out, this is the perfect opportunity to relax and unwind with your South Florida Chapter community. We look forward to seeing you there!

Register today



Year End Event - December 11 @ Galuppi's



You are invited to the South Florida Chapter Event of the Year. On December 11, 2026, we will celebrate the retirement of Debbie McClave, our Executive Director. Debbie's career spans 38 years, first with the Greater Fort Lauderdale Chapter of the Society of Real Estate Appraisers, then with the South Florida Chapter of the Appraisal Institute. Whenever we had a question about membership, education, meetings or whatever, Debbie's friendly voice on the phone gave us the right answer. Nothing was too big or too small for Debbie to manage. Debbie's guidance made the South Florida Chapter the best in the Appraisal Institute.

- Installation of the 2027 Officers and Directors will be held at the meeting.
- Past Presidents will be recognized for their leadership.
- Ann Marie McCarthy Scholarship recipient will be announced.
- Anthony Graziano, MAI, Integra Realty Resources, Chief Executive Officer will offer observations on the upcoming real estate market.

Be part of the festive event. Reconnect with friends old and new. Enjoy the holiday vibe. Register for the meeting and luncheon at Galuppi's. See you there!

[Register Today](#)



[Bring a colleague - See you there!](#)

Coffee & Comparables **Networking Opportunity - All Are Welcome!**

Join us for a relaxed morning networking session where appraisers and industry professionals can connect, share insights, and build meaningful relationships.

 **Date:** October 2, 2026
 **Time:** 8:30 AM - 9:30 AM
 **Location:**
The Pouratorium
1016 Clare Avenue, 5A
West Palm Beach, FL 33401

This event is free of charge, and we warmly encourage Appraisal Institute members and non-members to attend. Bring a colleague who might also enjoy networking with peers in our appraisal community.

HELP SHAPE 2027'S KEY CONVERSATIONS - NEW ORLEANS, APRIL 27-28

What conversations should the appraisal profession be having next year? The Call for Session Proposals is now open for the 2027 Appraisal Institute Annual Conference, taking place April 26-28 in New Orleans. We're looking for sessions that challenge ideas, share practical solutions, and prepare appraisers for what's next, whether that's technical appraisal practice, business development, emerging trends, or a fresh perspective from outside the profession.

You don't have to be the speaker to submit an idea. If you know the right topic and the right person to present it, we'd love to have you send it our way. **Submit Your Proposal by September 12, 2026.**

Education - Irene Sokoloff, MAI



Learning is one of the most valuable benefits of membership, and we invite you to make the most of it this season. Our upcoming educational programs feature expert speakers, relevant topics, and opportunities to network with fellow professionals.

Don't miss the chance to gain fresh perspectives, strengthen your skills, and stay ahead in our ever-evolving profession. We hope to see you at an upcoming session!

2026 Chapter Education & Events

- **Sept 10** – 2026-2027 National USPAP Update - **Sold Out**
- **Sept. 15** – Chapter Meeting @ Lucky Strikes, Davie – In Person, 5:15 – 7:30 PM
- **Sept 17** – *Florida Appraisal Laws & Rules* – Advanced (4 CE), Nicholas Pilz, MAI, SRA, AI-RRS & Francois Gregoire, ASA, IFA, RAA, 12:30-5:00 PM, Live Stream
- **Sept 24** – *Essentials of Effective Communication* (3 CE), Nicholas Pilz, MAI, SRA, AI-RRS, 8:30 AM-Noon, Live Stream
- **Oct 8** – *Real-World Adjustment* (2 CE), Joshua Walitt, SRA, AI-RRS, 11:30 AM-2:00 PM, Live Stream
- **Oct 15** – *Florida Appraisal Laws & Rules* (3 CE), Nicholas Pilz, MAI, SRA, AI-RRS, 8:30 AM-Noon, Live Stream
- **Oct 22** – 2026-27 National USPAP Update (7 CE), Robert Moorman, MAI, SRA, AI-GRS, 8:30 AM-4:30 PM, Live Stream
- **Oct 29** – ChatGPT for Real Estate Appraisers: Beginning Edition (7 CE), Jason Tilleman, SRA, AI-RRS, 8:30 AM – 4:30 PM, Live Stream
- **Nov 5** – *Preparing a Fundamental Demand Analysis Complex Property Analysis* (4 CE), Vincent Dowling, MAI, SRA, 8:30 AM – 1:00 PM
- **Dec 11** – *Viewpoint of the Real Estate Market + Installation and Retirement Celebration*, In-Person @ Galuppi's Pompano Beach, (2 AI CE Only), Anthony Graziano, MAI, CRE

Register for classes



Irene Sokoloff, MAI
2026, Education Committee Chair and Treasurer
Irene.Sokoloff@cushwake.com

Search Online Education from
the Appraisal Institute

SEARCH TODAY



Important! Check online state approvals prior to registering

Region X Meeting - September 17 Westin, Lake Mary

Join fellow appraisers from across the region for the Region X Committee Meeting, featuring a social hour, group dinner, and an in-person business meeting with lunch included.

Meeting Schedule:

- Wednesday, 9/16 – Region social hour at the Westin, 5:00 – 7:00 p.m. (Casual/Poolside). Group dinner to follow for anyone interested.
- Thursday, 9/17 – The Q4 region meeting will be held in-person from approximately 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m., with lunch included. Exact time schedule to be determined soon. Contact the Chapter office if you would like to attend!

Government Affairs Update

Scott DiBiasio, Director, Government Affairs

Valuation Bias and Fair Housing Laws and Regulations

Florida Real Estate Appraisal Board Meetings

At its June 1 meeting, the Florida Real Estate Appraisal Board considered proposed rulemaking related to education requirements addressing valuation bias and fair housing laws and regulations.

The Board ultimately elected to postpone action on the proposal. Rather than moving forward immediately, members chose to wait and evaluate whether the Appraiser Qualifications Board (AOB) would modify these requirements in the next Exposure Draft of the Real Property Appraiser Qualification Criteria.

The Exposure Draft was expected to be released before the end of June. The chapter will continue monitoring developments and will share updates as additional information becomes available.

Florida Valuation Bias & Fair Housing Education Update

Many Florida appraisers have been concerned about the new Valuation Bias and Fair Housing (VB/FH) education requirements and whether they would have enough time to comply. Fortunately, there is some good news.

While the 2026 Appraiser Qualification Criteria became effective on January 1, 2026, appraisers are not required to complete the new VB/FH continuing education course until December 31, 2027, the end of the AOB's two-year implementation period. Additionally, compliance with the continuing education requirement will not need to be verified for license renewals until the renewal cycle beginning December 1, 2028.

In other words, there is no immediate deadline pressure for currently licensed appraisers.

At its August meeting, the Florida Real Estate Appraisal Board (FREAB) voted to move forward with proposed rules implementing the new requirements. The Appraisal Institute supports adoption of the qualifying education rules needed for individuals entering the profession, but has encouraged FREAB to delay finalizing the continuing education provisions until the Appraiser Qualifications Board (AOB) completes its review of potential changes to those requirements.

Another area of concern involves proposed Florida-specific course content requirements. As currently drafted, the rules could require education providers to create Florida-specific versions of courses that are already AOB-approved and accepted nationally. The Appraisal Institute believes this could create unnecessary administrative burdens, reduce consistency in nationally standardized education, and potentially limit the availability of approved continuing education courses for Florida appraisers.

The situation continues to evolve, but at this time appraisers should understand that the primary concern is no longer the implementation timeline. Instead, attention has shifted to how Florida will incorporate the new requirements while maintaining access to nationally approved education programs.

For additional information, members may review the applicable Florida Administrative Code sections:

- [Rule 61J1-4.001 \(Qualifying Education\)](#)
- [Rule 61J1-10.002](#)

Stay Connected - We will continue to monitor developments and provide updates as additional guidance becomes available.

Welcome New Members

Craig Williams, Associate Member
 Daniela Guadamuz, Candidate for Designation
 Nick Laubinger, Student Affiliate
 Doug Plaut, Student Affiliate
 Lindsey Zitani, Student Affiliate

Chapter Meeting & Elections, May 28 @ Galuppi's



Coffee & Compartables, June 18, Crema Gourmet Downtown Doral



Next
 Comparables
 Social Event
 October 2
 The Pouratorium
 WPB

Election Results - 2027 Officers, Directors, Regional Representatives and Alternates

At our May 28 chapter meeting the following members were elected. Their terms will begin on January 1st. Congratulations and thanks to our 2027 Chapter Leadership Team! By stepping forward to serve, you are helping shape the future of our chapter and strengthen our professional community. We appreciate your passion, commitment, and leadership, and we look forward to all that we will accomplish together in the coming year.

President

Ralph Pena, III, MAI

Vice President

Irene Sokoloff, MAI

Secretary

Scott Powell, MAI

Treasurer

Mark Lago, MAI

Directors 2025-2027

Inna Babakulieva, MAI
Michael Cibene, SRA, AI-RRS
Nancy Cruz, SRA
Matthew Roach, MAI
(Past President)

Directors 2026-2028

Edward Ames, MAI
Michael Goldstein, MAI, AI-GRS
Lister Rivera-Laborde, MAI, SRA

Directors 2027-2029

Michael Jacobs, MAI, SRA
John Lancet, MAI

Regional Representatives 2026-2027

Inna Babakulieva, MAI
Lister Rivera-Laborde, MAI, SRA

Regional Representatives 2028-2029

Ralph Pena, III, MAI
(2027 President)
Irene Sokoloff, MAI
(2027 Vice President)
Scott Powell, MAI

Alternate Representatives

Matthew Roach, MAI
Claudia Vance, MAI
Greg Becker, MAI
Michael Cibene, SRA, AI-RRS

RESULTS



AI Veterans Program

The Board has approved a full Veterans Program, including a dedicated landing page and a scholarship covering the first two trainee courses.

Results from a recent GI Bill readiness survey are helping shape future support and resources for veteran-focused initiatives.





LDAC 2026 - Overview

Inna Babakulieva, MAI - Ralph Pena, III, MAI

Jim Slawnikowski III - Acting CEO of the Appraisal Institute: It was communicated that Jim is serving as the new acting director, and at this time there are no plans to search for another candidate. The general sentiment in the room appeared supportive of Jim continuing in the role for the time being. Many attendees viewed him as a valuable presenter during the national events, incl. the Tennessee event this spring, and given his long-standing involvement with the Appraisal Institute, there seems to be confidence in his leadership.

- It was also noted that any formal search process for a permanent director would require the president to initiate that effort, and currently there are no plans to do so at this time. It appears likely that Jim will remain in the position unless confidence in his leadership changes.
- **LDAC Attendance and Appraisal Institute National Governance:** It was reported that approximately 100 individuals attended LDAC, with an additional 25 to 30 participants attending Legislative Day
 - Overall, the tone of the conference was optimistic. There was minimal discussion regarding the controversies and challenges the Appraisal Institute has faced in the past two years. Instead, much of the conversation focused on improving the organization and its systems, including potential bylaw revisions, regulatory improvements, and ways to continue adapting and strengthening governance processes.
 - Another major topic involved public comment participation. It was discussed that during public comment periods, often only around 200 practitioners nationwide submit feedback within the allotted 45-day period, and only a small percentage of those comments are directly responsive to the issues being considered. Because of this, there was significant emphasis placed on increasing practitioner engagement and encouraging chapter leadership to motivate members to provide constructive feedback and commentary to the national board.
 - The national board members consist of practitioners that were selected by the regional leadership. As such, the board members can not remove one another and the removal of any board member should be initiated on the regional level, where the appointment is issued.
- **LDAC 2026 Advocacy Topics:**
 - a. **HR 5520, The Portal for Appraisal Licensing act of 2025 ("PAL Act")** : One initiative strongly supported during LDAC was the development of a uniform platform for reciprocal state applications. Currently, appraisers must apply individually to each state, often requiring separate fingerprints, notarized paperwork, letters of good standing, and other repetitive administrative requirements. While attendees acknowledged that this is a long-standing issue that will likely take time to address, there was support for continuing to push for a more streamlined reciprocity process.
 - b. **Integrity of VA Appraisals:** advocacy and discussion surrounding the integrity of VA appraisal panels. Attendees emphasized the importance of preserving the current structure, which relies on qualified and vetted appraisers, and avoiding expansion of the AMC model into that process. Concerns were raised that broader AMC involvement could create additional risks, reduce the value placed on appraisers' expertise, and prioritize cost savings over appraisal quality and accuracy.
- Another recurring theme was the importance of maintaining ongoing communication with legislators throughout the year, rather than limiting outreach to the LDAC and Legislative Day timeframe. The emphasis was on keeping appraisal-related concerns consistently visible and on legislators' radar.
- Overall, it was a very productive and positive session with strong participation and constructive discussions focused on improving the profession and maintaining advocacy efforts moving forward.

Florida Real Estate Appraisal Board

Here are the dates for meetings and workshops, (subject to change as circumstances require), held by the Florida Real Estate Appraisal Board (FREAB). All meetings are held at the Division of Real Estate Chambers, in Orlando, unless stated otherwise.

The Board invites and encourages all members of the public to provide comment on matters or propositions before the Commission or a committee of the Commission.

Attend the Meeting

2026 General Meetings

October 5
December 7

2027 General Meetings

February 1
April 5
June 7
August 2
October 4
December 6

Help Shape the Future of the Appraisal Institute

Applications are now open for members interested in serving in volunteer leadership roles beginning in 2027.

Whether you're interested in serving on a national committee for the first time or your term ends December 31, 2026, and you are seeking reappointment to continue your service, now is the time to complete or update the [Leadership Resource Registry \(LRR\)](#).

When completing the LRR, be sure to use the "Additional Information" section to highlight your skills, experience, and interests. It's a great opportunity to tell the us more about yourself and how you'd like to contribute.

As the Appraisal Institute continues to evaluate its governance structure, some volunteer opportunities may evolve. Members are encouraged to complete the LRR based on their interests, and any changes will be communicated as the appointment process moves forward. Submissions must be in by September 16.

Knowledge. Experience. Integrity.

[MAI](#), [SRPA](#), [SRA](#), [AI-GRS](#) and [AI-RRS](#) Stand out from the crowd. Show your commitment to advanced learning and strong ethical professional practice with an Appraisal Institute designation. They stand for proven real estate valuation practice and demonstrate a commitment to professional ethics and standards. They signify to courts, governmental agencies, financial institutions and more that you are at the top of your game and set you apart from other appraisers.

2026 Officers

President

Matthew Roach, MAI

Vice President

Jose Cestero, MAI, SRA, AI-GRS

Secretary

Ralph Pena, III, MAI

Treasurer

Irene Sokoloff, MAI



2026 South Florida Chapter Leaders

President

Matthew Roach, MAI

Vice President

Jose Cestero, MAI, SRA, AI-GRS

Secretary

Ralph Pena, III, MAI

Treasurer

Irene Sokoloff, MAI

Directors 2024-2026

Scott Powell, MAI

Claudia Vance, MAI

Enrique "Henry" Casado, MAI, SRA,
AI-GRS, AI-RRS (Past President)

Directors 2025-2027

Inna Babakulieva, MAI

Nancy Cruz, SRA

Mark Lago, MAI

Directors 2026-2028

Edward Ames, MAI

Michael Goldstein, MAI, AI-GRS

Lister Rivera-Laborde, MAI, SRA

Region X

Regional Representatives

2025-2026

Matthew Roach, MAI

(President)

Jose Cestero, MAI, SRA, AI-GRS

(Vice President)

Mark Lago, MAI

Ralph Pena, III, MAI

Irene Sokoloff, MAI

Regional Representatives

2026-2027

Inna Babakulieva, MAI

Lister Rivera-Laborde, MAI, SRA

Alternate Representatives

Lee Smalley, MAI

Nancy Cruz, MAI

Luke Mittner, MAI

Andrew Rolf, MAI

Chad Stites, SRA

Committee Chairs

Appraiser Guidance

Sarah Brand, MAI

By-Laws

Luke Mittner, MAI

Education & Finance

Irene Sokoloff, MAI

Government Relations

Charles Badell, MAI

Newsletter

Claudia Vance, MAI

Nominating

Enrique "Henry" Casado,
MAI, SRA, AI-GRS, AI-RRS

University Relations

Mark Lago, MAI

Women's Initiative (WIN)

TBA



South Florida Chapter

Debra McClave, Executive Director

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