



## The Property Line

Spring 2019

### “Old” but Important News!

Last December, at our staff’s Annual Holiday Luncheon, the Robert Rowland Award was presented to three – yes, 3! – employees: Dora Ajca, Matt Baumann and Laura Segarra (Matt & Laura pictured below).



The votes submitted by staff to acknowledge their co-workers’ “inspiring work, dedication and professionalism” and Robert Rowland’s legacy resulted in a three-way tie.

Congratulations to Dora, Matt & Laura!

### Commercial Entrance Upgrades

On the heels of the Soft Story ordinance, a new program has been implemented by the City of San Francisco to help commercial property owners comply with state and federal accessibility laws. The goal is to help people with disabilities gain greater access to goods and services offered by San Francisco businesses. The Accessible Business Entrance Program, or “ABE” Program, is being handled much like the Soft Story program with The City assigning categories/tiers to buildings based on certain specifications. The first applications for permits were due April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019. All commercial units will be involved in this program; however, some may be exempt. Property Owner-Clients will be updated as the projects progress.

### Commercial Property Update by Erston Percy

The San Francisco commercial market has reached an epidemic vacancy level in recent months. Many small retail businesses are struggling to compete with online shopping sources. Soaring rents and construction costs have been an additional factor adding to the vacancy rate. Recent articles in the S.F. Chronicle have reported the long and expensive permitting process as being another key factor in making it difficult for businesses to lease and develop retail spaces. The mayor and members of the Board of Supervisors are aware of the problem and are taking steps to streamline the permitting process. Cournale & Co. has experienced a rise in the number of vacant retail spaces in our portfolio in recent months. We are aggressively marketing these spaces in order to lease them in a timely manner.

### Soft Story Retrofit Update

Since the mandatory Soft Story Retrofit Program was created in 2013, our office has been working diligently to bring all buildings identified on the city list into compliance.

Twenty-two properties that we manage required the retrofit which includes the initial filing, the drawing of engineering plans that must be submitted and approved by the Building Dept. and, finally, the extensive work.

Work has been completed on twelve of the properties; five other properties have work currently underway and the remaining five are on schedule to be completed before the final deadline of September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

We look forward to wrapping up all seismic retrofit work next year!