

MDU Broadband Visionaries

BROADBAND COMMUNITIES recognizes 18 forward-thinking individuals who have helped lead the way toward fiber-borne ultra-broadband in multiple-dwelling-unit buildings and commercial space.

By Steven S. Ross / *Broadband Communities*

Here are 18 broadband visionaries with skin in the game. As employees, executives or partners at real estate developers and investment companies, they create and advocate for business plans that push the limits for flexible, reliable and bountiful broadband.

This is the first time in four years that **BROADBAND COMMUNITIES** has published a list of MDU broadband leaders. In the interim, the industry has changed, as have our rules for inclusion. The most important rule remains, however: This list honors individuals, not organizations. Because **BROADBAND COMMUNITIES** now honors MDU broadband suppliers and consultants in the Top 100 MDU Technology Providers list, the visionaries list includes only those who work for organizations that build, fund or manage MDUs.

Nominations came from many quarters, including **BROADBAND COMMUNITIES** staff and a panel of consultants, legal experts and technologists. We were struck by how many winning nominees came from companies involved with student housing – clearly, students are a prime market for technology amenities – and by how many work for real estate investment trusts. Because investors compare REITs based on the level and consistency of their yields, REITs’ decisions to invest in fiber-borne ultra-broadband are an endorsement of that technology as a value-adding component of any property.

MARK TORO AND SHAWN MCINTYRE

Founded in 1954, North American Properties is a privately held, multiregional real estate operating company that has acquired, developed and managed more than \$4 billion of retail, multifamily, mixed-use and office properties across the United States. Shawn R. McIntyre and Mark Toro are both NAP partners. “Especially in the realm of information technology and service, if you are providing the normal commercially available status quo, your product is obsolete in its first years of service,” says McIntyre.

One recent project showed the power of FTTH in student housing. Working with the city of Tallahassee and its Community Redevelopment Agency, NAP redeveloped three brownfield, blighted sites into premier, mixed-use projects. “In this case, with a heavy emphasis on student housing and the demands of young men and women whose generation has grown up with exponentially increasing demands for speed and data,” says McIntyre, “we knew we had to find, install and economically offer 1 gig Internet service in a fiber and wireless environment. We also knew that HDTV channels would be in high demand in our student apartments, in clubhouses and with our retail customers.”

The project, Stadium Centre, includes three sites with a total of 386 units containing 710 beds, as well as 40,000 square feet of retail and two public parking garages. “We explored the

local providers and found them to be status quo,” McIntyre said. “Through my business partner in Atlanta, Mark Toro, we were introduced to Hotwire Communications, which provided fiber optic Internet and TV hard-wired service to each and every unit of our student housing project. Fiber runs to a smart panel in each unit. Within the smart panel is a wireless router and a system that supplies each unit with wireless and then splits into CAT 5e cable to each bedroom and living room. Our retail customers also enjoy this service. This is especially important as more retailers require Internet connections to banks and credit card companies.” The project opened on time with 94 percent occupancy.

CARLIE CRESSE AND DAVID PIERCE

Inland American Communities is another major force in off-campus student housing and has a reputation for listening to communities and students as well as to college administrations. It manages about 4,000 units (almost 11,000 beds) in a dozen states. Carlie Cresse, senior vice president of operations at Inland, and David M. Pierce, senior vice president of development, are included in this year’s list.

NICK ANDERSON

Another student-oriented developer is Nick Anderson, co-founder of Residential Housing Development (RHD). Along with Lloyd Ecclestone and Derek Anderson, Nick established the firm in 2003 to develop and acquire student communities across the United States. By 2003, the Andersons had successfully co-developed \$75 million in student housing assets in Texas, Tennessee and Michigan. Since then, the team has aggressively pursued additional development opportunities, most notably a 924-bedroom community in Morgantown, W.V.

KATHLEEN AUSTIN

Kathleen Austin is assistant vice president for revenue strategy at Equity Residential, the giant student housing firm founded by the legendary and



Kathleen Austin

controversial Sam Zell and Bob Lurie. There, she manages several ancillary income programs, including telecom, renter’s insurance and laundry.

MARCO CEDRONE

Marco Cedrone, director for design and construction at Kayne Anderson Real Estate Advisors, is the only winner this year from the financial side of real estate. The private equity firm seeks opportunistic investments in niche real estate sectors, such as student housing, senior housing and medical offices, all sectors in which reliable bandwidth is a key marketing point.

“A big part of revenue generation starts with tenant satisfaction and attractive amenities. In student housing especially, Internet is viewed as a necessity, but lightning-fast Internet could be viewed as an amenity,” he says. “But underperforming Internet ... can severely impact leasing and renewal efforts.”

Little more than a decade out of college himself, Cedrone is responsible for monitoring development projects, overseeing due-diligence inspections of acquisitions and coordinating value-add capital improvements. He has already overseen more than \$2 billion in developments and buildouts, and his design and construction expertise covers retail, high-end single-family,

multifamily, medical office, health care and student housing properties across the country.

Prior to joining Kayne Anderson in 2011, Cedrone was a site superintendent, a project manager and an estimator at Bovis Lend Lease and Michilli Inc. At McCarter English LLP, his design and construction knowledge helped identify construction defects in connection with litigation arising from projects such as the Massachusetts Central Artery Project (the Big Dig) and the Massachusetts Convention Center.

Cedrone pushes for “a value-engineered but robust Internet design” that “is a staple part of our properties. The right Internet design ensures tenant satisfaction during the operating period and safeguards our being well-equipped for future demand.” In other words, as an investor, he warns against stinting on broadband.

CHERYL BARRACO

Cheryl Barraco is well known to attendees of the **BROADBAND COMMUNITIES** Summit each spring in Texas, where she co-chairs the program committee for MDU owners and managers. She’s senior director, corporate and investment services, at AvalonBay Communities in San Diego. AvalonBay, an equity REIT, has



Cheryl Barraco



Mike Smith

a history of investment in properties that are sustainable and offer ultra-broadband to ensure value over the long term.

MIKE SMITH

Mike Smith, another regular at the Summit, is vice president, building technology services group at Forest City Enterprises. The firm owns, develops and manages a diverse portfolio throughout the United States and has assets of well over \$10 billion in two strategic business units (MDUs and retail malls and office space). Smith is well known as a strong advocate for fiber.

LEEANN MOREIN

Leeann Morein is senior vice president at Aimco, one of the largest owners and operators of apartment communities in the United States. An article about one of her projects, the rehab of the Lincoln Place Apartment Homes in Los Angeles, appears on p. 20. The work included installing a FiOS network.

SUE ANSEL

Sue Ansel is executive vice president and chief operating officer at Gables Residential, an award-winning, vertically integrated real estate company that specializes in the development, construction, ownership, acquisition, financing and management of multifamily and mixed-use

communities. Gables, a privately held REIT, manages approximately 35,000 apartment homes and 400,000 square feet of retail space. Its investors include major domestic and international financial institutions.

ED BAILEY

Ed Bailey is controller at Management Services Corporation (MSC), the largest property management firm in Central Virginia; its portfolio includes more than 4,250 units across Virginia and in North Carolina. With other groups specializing in construction and finance, MSC is one of the Caton Companies.

Bailey handles all the cable, telecom, and broadband relationships and strategy for MSC. He has successfully worked with private cable operators, as well as with large cable, telco and fiber providers on MSC's diverse portfolio. Said his nominator, "Ed looks at broadband technology as a component of a larger



Scott Casey

strategy to add value to his communities. He looks at each community with an eye on delivering a highly valued Internet and digital cable package offered by the best provider that meets his overall business objectives."

SCOTT CASEY

Scott is chief technology officer and senior vice president of strategic business development at EdR, one of the largest owners, developers, and managers of collegiate housing. EdR is a self-administered, self-managed real estate investment trust that owns or manages 77 communities with nearly 43,000 beds serving 58 universities in 23 states. It started the current academic year with more than 96 percent of its beds leased.

MARK RIDGELY

Mark Ridgely was honored for his work as executive director of The Virginian, a FiOS-powered, continuing-care retirement community that this magazine detailed in 2013. In addition to the Verizon FiOS network, The Virginian deployed the Healthsense broadband-enabled monitoring system to enhance its level of resident care. Ridgely told this magazine, "Data capacity requirements are growing exponentially, demanding powerful data networks, and smart health technology is the wave of the future. Implementing

SPECIAL THANKS

Henry Pye and Steve Sadler, both now at consulting firm RealPage (one of the Top 100 MDU Technology Providers), appeared on this list in earlier years and urged **BROADBAND COMMUNITIES** to continue its tradition of recognizing the men and women who advocate for broadband, even though, as consultants, they would no longer be eligible for the list. Both started their careers working for developers and property managers and were major forces behind this magazine's success in creating Summit programs that attract property owners and managers from around the world.

They also have been among the industry's strongest advocates for great broadband, using a wide range of technologies. They were among the earliest in their industry to advocate for fiber to the home.



1200
square feet
of
downloading, streaming
and watching.

Give residents all they're looking for with AT&T U-verse® from AT&T Connected Communities. When they have digital TV, high-speed Internet and Wi-Fi service, more people will be coming to your property. And more will be staying. Learn how you can attract more residents and earn more revenue today at att.com/livedigitally.

All-in-one digital TV • High-speed Internet • Total Home DVR® • Wi-Fi access • Additional income for you

a robust aging services technology platform will result in a significant savings in labor.”

TOM BUMPASS

Tom is managing director and CIO at Greystar, which manages and invests in more than 1,500 apartment and student-living communities nationwide and does substantial business in Latin America and in Europe.

JORGE DE CARDENAS

As chief technology officer and senior vice president at American Campus Communities, de Cardenas shapes broadband strategy for a company that has developed properties worth more than \$4.2 billion for its own account and for university clients. In 2004, ACC became the first publicly traded student housing REIT. It has been awarded more than 70 on-campus projects in addition to the 23 projects it developed off campus.



Jorge de Cardenas

GREG SINGLETON

Greg is president of Metro Development Group, a Florida-based developer that is building several

master-planned communities near Tampa and contracting with Bright House Networks to provide gigabit-speed networks under ULTRAFi branding. He commented, “Technology is now an amenity, and ... fiber to the home and superfast Wi-Fi are what people are going to demand for 4K TV and smart-home technology. Everyone else will be living in the Stone Age. We have to plan for it now because it’s really tough to do it later.”

GREG VESTRI

The president of Aspen Heights has overseen annual doubling and redoubling as the company grows its portfolio of managed student housing nationwide and in Africa, from its inception in 2006 to 15 communities in 2012 and more than 20 today. The communities feature great broadband. ❖

Corporate editor Steve Ross can be reached at steve@bbcmag.com.

MDU BROADBAND VISIONARIES 2014

Nick Anderson	Partner	Residential Housing Development
Sue Ansel	Executive Vice President and COO	Gables Residential
Kathleen Austin	Assistant VP, Revenue Strategy	Equity Residential
Ed Bailey	Controller	Management Services Corporation
Cheryl Barraco	Senior Director, Corporate and Investment Services	AvalonBay
Tom Bumpass	Managing Director and CIO	Greystar
Scott Casey	Chief Technology Officer and Senior Vice President of Strategic Business Development	EdR
Marco Cedrone	Director, Design and Construction	Kayne Anderson
Carlie Cresse	Senior Vice President of Operations	Inland American Communities
Jorge de Cardenas	Chief Technology Officer, Senior Vice President	American Campus Communities
Shawn McIntyre	Partner	North American Properties
Leeann Morein	Senior Vice President	Aimco
David Pierce	Senior Vice President of Development	Inland American Communities
Mark Ridgely	Executive Director	The Virginian
Greg Singleton	President	Metro Development Group
Mike Smith	Vice President, Building Technology Services	Forest City
Mark Toro	Partner	North American Properties
Greg Vestri	President	Aspen Heights