

REAL ESTATE WEEKLY

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ICSC RECON

Faith Consolo's guide to getting the best out of RECon

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It's here — well, almost! Most of us who regularly attend the International Council of Shopping Centers' annual RECon conference at the Las Vegas Convention Center are packing our bags and all-important appointment lists, and getting ready to depart for this critical meeting, which begins Sunday, May 17 and ends on May 20.

ICSC has estimated in the past that 25 percent of all leases have some connection to RECon, as the deals are negotiated there, closed there, or begun at a booth meeting or casual conversation at one of the many after-hours parties that keep the Strip humming.

That's why it's important to have a plan to make the most of this show.

So, for the uninitiated, some tips on surviving and thriving at this strenuous conference, and for all, what I'm looking forward to seeing and experiencing there.

Wear comfortable shoes. This is the single most important piece of advice I give anyone attending this show. The LVCC is approximately two million square feet (about the size of Macy's Herald Square flagship), three-quarters of which are on one level, and it's all carpeted concrete.

In 2001, a friend who was then on the ICSC staff wore a pedometer at the show and clocked 19.4 miles on the day before the Leasing Mall opened, and when exhibition space was half the size it is now. You really want to do this with sore feet?

Hot shortcut. I'm assuming you've booked your appointments and are now figuring out how to get between the two most distant halls quickly because you're running late.

Do not go through the Central Hall. Proceed outside and pass by the shuttle bus station – you'll miss the air conditioning, but cut your walking time in half.

Drink water. You're in the desert, running around for hours on end, not sleeping much, and eating at odd hours. Stay hydrated.

Bring cell phone chargers. For some reason, Las Vegas drains cell batteries quickly, and you'll need to recharge at some point during these very long days. ICSC has had charging stations in the past, but as you can imagine, they're quite popular. Bring your own source of power.

Take the time to learn something. RECon is more than just Deal Making; there's a significant educational component as well. Take an hour or three from Sunday through Tuesday to learn more about the trends that will affect your business now and for years to come.

And in fact this leads us to the first thing I'm looking forward to experiencing at RECon: the Commercial Real Estate Women's Network-sponsored Blockbuster Session "Executive Women in Real Estate," be held on Monday, May 18, from 11:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. at the Westgate Hotel (once known as the Las Vegas Hilton), adjacent to the LVCC's North Hall.

CREW 2015 President Lori Kilberg will offer a brief introduction before the panel, and then Moderator Kristin Mueller, Executive Vice President and COO of JLL, will be joined by speakers Collete English Dixon, Executive Director, Transactions of Prudential Real Estate Investors; Lyn Kirby, Chairman and CEO of Beauty Brands Inc.; and Jodie McLean, President and Chief Investment Officer of EDENS.

The discussion will be wide-ranging about trends in the industry from very different points of view – if you can only attend one panel, this is it!

I'm also looking forward to seeing the new projects that will be presented at the many booths my team and I will visit – yes, there are new projects.

Most will mix uses, and likely will be located in urban areas. It's extraordinary to see this industry rebound and adapt to a changing universe. And let's not forget the new services that will be on display at Marketplace Mall, the chance to see the new retailers at Forum Shops, Fashion Show, Crystals and other centers in the region, the parties, and more!

And of course, I'll meet old friends, make new acquaintances, and do my best to support CREW Network, which I proudly serve as a National Director.

To learn more about how CREW membership can help you and your company expand your network and increase your business, stop by our booth N2467 in the North Hall. Just remember to wear comfortable shoes!

This is the best time and place to make that next deal, begin or reinforce that all-important relationship, and get a real sense of where the industry is today and will be tomorrow.