

OPAL DISTRESSED HOUSING CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

Proven Strategies to Sell and Move Troubled Assets Highlighted.

(New York) OPAL Group sponsored a timely industry symposium on **Distressed Housing** focusing on residential and commercial assets for leading investors and developers. The international summit held at the **Ritz Carlton-Miami**, attracted over 150 leading developers/investors focused debt relief, and distressed asset solutions.

Trends Highlighted at the Conference included:

- Record foreclosures with no end in sight
- 150 B into ½ trillion sub-prime write-down
- The cycle is still in its early stages and predicts a distressed market until 2010-2011.
- Capital markets on sidelines-waiting for true value—corrections minimum 40%
- Exit strategies with top sales firms and local experts critical
- Reaching International Buyers key to success

Investors struggled with overvalued product and unrealistic sellers causing deep money to stay on the sidelines. **John Bielefeldt of Crown Realty Advisors, focused on the bid-ask spread, “the clear focus is buying right, with qualified investors and realistic sellers. Sellers must have compelling deals with strong fundamentals, job formations, top locations and good amenities to be most successful,” says Bielefeldt.** Secondary, Resort or non MSA product will be the last to recover due to lack of demand drivers and the recent equity loss of main street buyers.

Most important in buying product is to, **“begin with the end in mind,” says Al DiNicola of The Pinnacle Performance Group. “Who will be the end buyer when the music stops?” highlighted DiNicola. “The current market is great for buying opportunities, but make sure you have good experienced sales teams who market aggressively, know the local market and have strong proven investor pipelines,” added DiNicola.**

Mark Partin of Sotheby’s International in Toronto, reinforced the trend of international investors looking to the US for top opportunities, especially in growth and destination markets. **“The currency rate, stable US government and long term fundamentals make the US market very attractive,” says Partin. “We moved over \$ 2.2 billion in product last year... many were international investors looking for discounts thru our VIP buying clubs...it’s a great time to be buying the US at half off...everyone knows the US market is still long term the best in the world,” Partin further quipped.**