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Northern California's Women of Influence Continue to Push Forward

By *Natalie Dolce*

SAN FRANCISCO--"We are in for a wild ride, but I invite everyone to hang on." So said Jodi Meade, vice president of the investment properties group, and founder and director of CB Richard Ellis Inc.'s automotive properties group, at GlobeSt.com's inaugural Northern California's Women of Influence luncheon. Meade kicked off the event, held in San Francisco, which



WOI Honorees

recognized just how important women have become in the industry by honoring 36 women who have made an outstanding contribution to the Northern California market in 2008.

Meade--who is focused on solving the acquisition, expansion, leasing, relocation, disposition and auto mall development needs of owners, tenants, investors, developers, manufacturers, and franchisees--began by discussing how she is determined to look at the glass as half full rather than half empty, despite what's happening in the economy and in her specialty, the auto industry. By using GM's recent **bankruptcy** as just one example, she discussed the affect it could potentially have on the real estate industry. "Yes, there will be dealership closures," she said, but she noted that there are also opportunities. "Owners can redevelop or reposition the lots," she said. "It is about coming up with creative solutions once the automotive closures flood the industry."

Following the insightful opening, a panel comprised of five of this year's honored nominees, continued discussing the current economic environment. Moderator Sonia Ransom, a partner at Allen Matkins Leck Gamble Mallory & Natsis LLP, began the discussion asking panelists what triggers they are looking out for that might suggest that the markets are stabilizing. The general consensus was that job creation was the key ingredient.

"I am waiting for job creation to peak its head around the corner...that will be the key indicator," said panelist Jeanne Myerson, president & CEO of the Swig Co. LLC. Ginger Bryant, CFO of Sares Regis Group of Northern California, Pam Duffy, a partner at Coblenz, Patch, Duffy & Bass LLP, Cathy Greenwold, executive vice president at TMG Partners, and Nancy

Morse, a senior vice president at Grubb & Ellis Co., agreed that job growth and confidence will help turn things around.

"The industry will probably get a little leaner and meaner," said 21-year veteran Morse, who explained that there might be more mergers, as companies change the way they are doing business to come through on the other side.

As for smaller development companies, Greenwold explained that they are in the position to have great opportunities. "We stopped buying and as a result, we are prepared to move forward on projects quickly."

"We are seeing that the risk will be different going forward," noted Bryant, "but this too, shall pass."



#29 Rebecca Rogers



Portfolio Manager, RiverRock Real Estate Group

In addition to overseeing the operational, financial and administrative functions for RiverRock's NorCal practice, Rogers monitors, supervises and trains staff. She also supervises the preparation of annual business plans and operating budgets for clients, which include market analyses, property profiles, lease assumptions and income and expense projections. Rogers has been instrumental in obtaining, transitioning and implementing the management of approximately three million square feet of property into the RiverRock portfolio over the last 12 months. Rogers is a member of God Loves Kids, which provides daily care and education to orphaned children around the world. Among the challenges the market faces, she says, are "tenant retention, downturn in cash flow, and loan rate adjustments just to name a few. No one is immune. These challenges affect property owners, financial institutions and receivers."