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ASSOCIATION MAN SETS SAIL

Chris Ruditys breaks away from Realtors association.

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Up Front

NEWS, INSIGHT AND PEOPLE

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Ruditys starts own association firm

Realtors group rankled at his pursuit of clients

BY KATHY BERGSTROM

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The executive who ran the Commercial Association of Realtors Wisconsin has started his own association management company and has brought three staff members and two associations with him.

Christopher Ruditys, who was executive vice president of the group, is the chief executive officer of Wisconsin Association Management L.L.C. Ruditys, 33, had been with the Commercial Association of Realtors since late 1992.

“We’re very concerned with this.”

John Savage
Building Owners & Managers Association

Ruditys said he proposed in fall 2002 forming his own association management company to provide management services for the Commercial Association of Realtors and the seven other real estate groups that the association managed. His proposal would have saved the association about \$27,000 annually, he said.

The board rejected the idea in April, and



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Chris Ruditys . . . “We have an excellent, proven record of success.”

Ruditys said the board asked him to resign in May. He said he declined to resign and the board terminated him but has since agreed to honor his contract, which expires Oct. 1.

Dan Jessup, the Commercial Association of Realtors board president, declined to comment on Ruditys’ employment status.

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RUDITYS: Starts own firm

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John Periard, who was the association's director of public affairs, has been named the new executive director.

The Commercial Association of Realtors had management agreements with seven other real estate-related groups: the local chapter of the Institute of Real Estate Management, Building Owners & Managers Association Wisconsin, Wisconsin Commercial Real Estate Women, the Wisconsin Chapter of the Appraisal Institute, the local chapter of the Association for Facilities Engineering, the Wisconsin Chapter of Certified Commercial Investment Member organization and the Real Estate Alliance for Charity.

Ruditys' new company is now managing the Appraisal Institute and the Association for Facilities Engineering. Ruditys is marketing his company to the other groups.

The new company will focus on getting contracts with real estate associations at first but will broaden its focus to other associations, Ruditys said.

"We have a young entrepreneurial staff that's extremely successful with what we've done," he said. "We have an excellent, proven record of success."

Two former Commercial Association of Realtors employees have joined the new company: Doug Stango is chief financial officer and Heather Westgor is director of communications. A third employee, Brian Parrish, will leave CAR at the end of June and become director of business development.

Wisconsin Association Management will

be financed with revenue from Ruditys' real estate holdings, silent partners, and Ruditys' father, Joseph, a former president of the Milwaukee firefighters' union.

HIRING REPLACEMENTS

Jessup said CAR has temporary staff and will hire permanent staff.

Jessup said it's disappointing that Ruditys' initial staffing and marketing plan includes the "aggressive pursuit" of association employees and groups managed by the association.

It would have been better for all of the real estate organizations to remain under the same umbrella, he said.

"The synergies that are achieved through our association affiliation have been very positive on a lot of different fronts," he said.

The change in leadership provides the opportunity to evaluate policies and procedures and do some strategic planning, Jessup said. The group will work further to improve on current member benefits and services, he said.

Janelle Cox, president of the Building Owners & Managers Association Wisconsin, said the board is keeping its current contract in place with CAR. The existing contract expires at the end of the year.

John Savage, the immediate past president of the Building Owners & Managers Association Wisconsin, said his group has concerns about the staff changes.

"Because our success is so intertwined with the management of our association, we're very concerned with this," he said.