



Gables CEO Sue Ansel: Multifamily Ripe For Disruption

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Multifamily might not be quite the investors' darling it was in the heady mid-2010s, but even so the industry is fundamentally strong — and fundamentally changed from only a few years ago, with new technologies poised to drive further change.



We asked **Gables Residential** President and CEO Sue Ansel, one of the industry's **power women** and a speaker at **Bisnow's Multifamily Annual Conference South** June 28 in Dallas, about the changes she has seen in the industry, and those she expects.

Early this year, Ansel became chairwoman of the National Multi Housing Council. "The possibilities ahead for us are enormous," she said when she was elected to the NMHC post.

"There is \$2B in venture capital focused on our industry, up from \$400M two years ago. Emerging technologies will change the way we build, manage and monitor our communities, how we interact with our residents and much more."

Bisnow: What's the most significant change in the apartment industry that you've seen over your career?

Ansel: That renting is now seen as a desirable housing choice, not just housing of last resort option.

This is a result of the industry building and operating communities that provide attractive alternatives to people who could afford to buy. We're delivering the amenities and technology, and offering the flexibility that are a better fit for many of our residents' lifestyles.

Bisnow: What's the most significant change the industry will see in the near to mid-term?

Ansel: Innovation is going to drive our industry moving forward. After overlooking us for years — because we have been laggards in adopting technology — Silicon Valley has taken notice of us as an industry ripe for disruption and innovation.

What's called PropTech will change the way we build our communities, how we do our deals, how we monitor and manage our buildings, as well as how we interact with our residents. Virtual reality, blockchain, augmented reality. These are all terms that are going to become part of our daily lexicon.



Bisnow: If you could have Congress do one thing regarding the apartment industry, what would it be?

Ansel: First, I would like to recognize a favorable result, which is the recent tax reform. The landmark legislation signed into law late last year is positive for our industry. It's certainly not where we feared we might be when the issue first came up and had flashbacks to 1986 tax reform, which was very challenging for business.

One significant issue that remains ahead of us is housing finance reform. Our industry lives and dies on our access to capital. The industry has always known this and has spent an incredible amount of time educating lawmakers about the successful [government sponsored entities] multifamily operations since the global financial meltdown in 2008.

Bisnow: What advice do you have for a young woman, or young man for that matter, starting in the industry now?

Ansel: I would recommend young people get exposure to as many parts of the industry [as they can] when they are in the early years of their career. A strong understanding of the many aspects of our industry will create a solid foundation for a robust career. Join a company whose culture and beliefs are similar to your own.

Try to surround yourself with passionate, diverse and smart colleagues. Dive in with both feet. As an industry we address a true need for our residents — shelter — and as a result we provide important services that impact the lives of our customers. It's fun, it's challenging and it's changing. Make the most of it.

Ansel will be the keynote interviewee, and more than 30 other apartment pros will speak, at *Bisnow's* **BMAC South event** at the Westin Galleria Dallas on June 28.

See Also: [50 Years Later, The Fair Housing Act Continues To Evolve](#)

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