

New Member Highlight

by John Lydon, JLL



Clare Lydon: ViaWest Group

A Phoenix native and Northern Arizona University graduate, Clare Lydon began her CRE career in Chicago as a broker, with a specific market focus on the northwest suburbs. Two years and two Chi-berian winters later, Clare is back home in the desert. Since thawing out, Clare has made the leap from brokerage services to asset management for ViaWest Group. She was nice enough to take some time to talk to me about her career experiences thus far.

1. Can you talk a little about the path you took to get to where you are now?

I accepted my first position out of college as an account executive at Yelp. It was here where I learned my true passion for business consulting and solutions-based marketing working with small businesses in the Houston, TX area. Soon I was offered an incredible opportunity to become a broker for a commercial real estate firm serving the northwest suburbs of Chicago, a tier one market. Working in a larger, sophisticated market provided me the opportunity to refine and enhance my marketing skills. After almost two years with the firm, I relocated back to Phoenix and was fortunate enough to affiliate with the terrific group of people at ViaWest Group where I currently serve as an Operations Assistant on our Asset

Management team.

2. Can you speak to some of the differences and similarities between working for both sides (brokerage/owner)?

Both the brokerage and ownership ends of the industry are truly fascinating to me and I'm fortunate enough to have experience in both. From my experience, the most significant difference that separates ownership from leasing brokerage is the go-forward obligation/responsibility for stewarding both occupier and the hard asset. The leasing broker is critical to creating the solutions for space, economics and location amongst other things that create or lead to a stabilized asset, creating value. Even before the ink dries on a lease agreement the proactive property owner is coordinating the various financial, construction, entitlement and other related commitments that will be required prior to occupancy. Once in the space, the owner and its agents oversee tenant satisfaction over the term of the lease. To me, the most exciting aspect of commercial real estate is the consultative/value-add aspect – and regardless of the side you serve, it is what drives our success. Whether looking from the ownership or brokerage perspective, one must gain a thorough understanding of how their client operates on both a micro and macro scale. This allows for both the owner and broker to effectively consult with their prospective client/tenant and ensure the highest and best use of a particular facility. This, to me, is the foundation of CRE and is the driving force connecting owners and brokers. At ViaWest, we value our relationship with the brokerage community for this very reason. The relationship / transactional intersections weave in and out of one another, but typically, I've found that the spirit of collaboration between the

parties can complement one another while creating value for the client occupier.

3. Have you seen notable differences between Chicago and Phoenix – do you feel either city holds an advantage over the other in terms of conducting CRE related business?

The differences between the two cities are notable. First, there's the fact that I can spend my paycheck on something other than rent in Phoenix. As you might guess, the cost of living here is significantly lower in comparison to Chicago. This is something that I, myself, and many other Phoenix transplants are excited about. The size and age of the cities is yet another significant difference. Metropolitan Chicago is a +/-150-year-old city with +/-10.5MM people. Phoenix is about half its age and population. Chicago enjoys a deep roster of larger, global employers, including 33 Fortune 500 HQ's, while Phoenix is becoming a preferred destination for many of the dynamic, new economy employers – many of whom have created some of the 67,000 new jobs over the past year. Phoenix offers its residents an incredible "quality of life" that is difficult to duplicate in most areas of the country. It's an amazing city with a lot to get excited about and I love getting to be a part of it!

4. What are some things we would most likely find you doing during your weekend and time off?

My friends and family are extremely important to me, so you will often find me out with some of them enjoying a dinner, listening to live music or having a night on the town. Community service is also something I highly value. I'm active with the Arizona Chapter of the National MS Society so you can find me in their Phoenix office volunteering or at our annual Walk MS event which takes place in November at Papago Park. ■