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Engineering

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Engineering

Summer 2014

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THE GLAZEBROOK GAZETTE

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www.atogatech.org

ALUMNI REPORT

205 Fourth Street = Permanently Secure in Good Hands *Transfer of Facility to Richmond Property Group Ensures that ATO will Always Have a Place to Call Home at Georgia Tech*

By John Robertson '63, Secretary, Board of Trustees

ATO's house at 205 Fourth St. has been sold. Following careful research, discussion and collaboration amongst Beta Iota Corporation officers, the Board of Trustees transferred ownership of the house in February 2014 to Richmond Property Group - an entity of ATO that preserves and protects the real estate assets of our fraternity across the country.

It is important that I share the board's reasons for coming to this decision, which we unanimously agree is beneficial to our organization's future. As a board, we faced many challenges in upkeep of the facility, which has been the primary focus of our time, discussion and dollars. With the transfer to RPG, the BOT has been alleviated of bricks and mortar "headaches" tied to mortgage loan renewals, renovation plans, liabilities, rent collections and contract renewals. In a nutshell, we will no longer be putting our primary focus on being landlords. Now, our volunteers' time and capacity is freed up to focus on rebuilding the traditions of ATO and the bonds of brotherhood by bringing back reunions and other alumni activities - the very things that make our fraternity a thriving organization.

So far, alumni feedback on this decision has been overwhelmingly positive. For anyone who is unfamiliar with or reluctant to get on board with this decision, RPG's Chief Operating Officer Klaus Wittern (an ATO from the University of New Mexico), says this: "While RPG's name is on the deed and mortgage, it's still very much your house. It has and will forever belong to Beta Iota so you must continue to treat it as such. RPG will handle the facility maintenance, preservation and capital planning side of things so Beta Iota can focus on the membership, educational and

alumni side of things. Together we'll ensure that ATO always has a beautiful place to call home at GA Tech."



As a representative from the Beta Iota Corporation, BOT Chairman **Jamie Hamilton '93** adds "Now we can proactively put focus on bettering the chapter as a whole, not just the house. It's a tremendous opportunity for us. It will make the chapter stronger for years to come."

I ask that you join the BOT in doing *your* part to ensure that ATO does always have a place to call home at GA Tech. First and foremost, please continue your financial contributions. You'll read inside why alumni donations to fund renovations are a critical part of the equation. You'll also be asked to show your support of our annual fund, the operating budget that drives our communications program and funds alumni events, which we plan to heavily ramp up now that we have more time and focus. I hope to see you at a football tailgate this fall as we revitalize our connection efforts.

This issue of *The Glazebrook Gazette* is dedicated to providing you with much more information on RPG and what they do, why this is a beneficial transaction for all parties involved, and why we need you to stay involved now more than ever. If you still have any questions, concerns or feedback after reading

RPG Owns the Following ATO Properties...

Muhlenberg College
University of Kansas
University of Minnesota
Georgia Southern University
University of Georgia
Georgia Tech
University of Idaho
University of Michigan
Marshall University
Indiana State University
University of Maryland
University of South Carolina
Cornell University
Consultant House - corporate housing for ATO National Fraternity consultants and expansion staff

How You Can Get Involved

Join the fun! Now that we are removed from the day-to-day responsibility of maintaining the facility, we are seeking alumni to join the Board of Trustees as we revitalize our alumni relations program and our commitment to our active chapter. Opportunities include planning events, establishing programs with the active chapter (mentorship programs, guest speakers and career day), help in hosting a grand Homecoming celebration, etc.

If you're interested in getting involved during this momentous year for Beta Iota, contact John Robertson or Jamie Hamilton (find contact info on page 1).

Who Is RPG?

Richmond Property Group Protects and Preserves ATO's Real Estate Assets on Campuses Nationwide

Richmond Property Group (RPG) was created by the ATO National Board of Directors in 2001 to preserve and protect the real estate assets of ATO nationwide. They fill the shoes of a local housing corporation but have professional property management experience and are able to capitalize on greater economies of scale in all areas of property management.

To date, RPG owns and manages 14 properties in addition to Beta Iota, two of them being ATO chapters at UGA and Georgia Southern. It's a model that's proven itself over the past decade, and more chapters/housing corporations are jumping on board.

The most common benefits given by the participating groups we spoke with were along the lines of "...RPG knows what they're doing when it comes to property management and renovations. We don't have to worry about collecting rent or calling the plumber for a leaking shower, and the house is far better protected in the hands of an independently audited and regulated corporation than it ever was in our local 3-5 man house corporation."

For more information on RPG, contact Klaus Wittern at kwittern@rpg-mail.com.

What are the Benefits of the Partnership?

RPG Brings a Decade of Experience and Expertise in Professionally Managing ATO Facility and Property Management, Frees Up BOT to Focus On Advancing Beta Iota's Development

RPG brings over a decade of experience and expertise in maintaining thriving ATO houses on campuses nationwide, and has committed to professionally and effectively handle all aspects of facility and property management. Here are just a few of the benefits of RPG's involvement with Beta Iota. RPG will:

1. Ensure safeguards are in place regarding corporate and legal documents, deed and title.
2. Maintain appropriate insurance levels to insure the replication of our beloved home in the event of a disaster.
3. Promptly address day-to-day facility operational nuances, and ensure that there's no guessing on what types of materials should be used.
4. Hold the chapter accountable for damages caused, and ensure active brothers do their part to maintain the facility.
5. Ensure that ownership and control of the house will always remain in the hands of ATO, regardless of the chapter's status on campus.
6. Free up time for Beta Iota Corporation volunteers to focus on other critical areas of our organization's development, including reunions, alumni relations, networking opportunities, and leadership and personal development of active brothers.

RPG has made a commitment to maintain ownership and purpose identical to that of Beta Iota Corporation, and ensures that the house will forever be owned and managed for the exclusive benefit of ATO. In the event the chapter is kicked off campus and the house needs to be temporarily leased to another student organization, ATO will reoccupy The Flats upon its return to campus.

Moving forward, RPG will assume the responsibility of all fiscal, managerial and facility operations. Rent can only fund so much, so the need for alumni contributions is still a vital necessity, particularly for major upgrades. We are counting on your support year after year to help ensure that RPG can invest in upgrading the property to keep it on par with other Tech fraternities.



Beta Iota representatives with RPG at the closing.
L to R: John Robertson, Chris Ryan, Louis Todd, Klaus Wittern and Will Mizell.

How Will ATO be Funded Moving Forward?

Four-Pronged Approach Critical to Financial Stability

You likely have many questions surrounding the partnership with RPG, namely in terms of how current and future maintenance projects will be funded. It is important to note that RPG does not remove the financial burden of maintaining the house. Rather, they will assume the responsibility of making sure controls are in place to ensure the house is adequately maintained.

To continue upkeep at the house, we need to take a four-pronged approach with all stakeholders contributing. Learn more at www.atogatech.org.

1. Undergraduates: We plan to raise rent to a level sufficient to cover operational costs, without being subsidized by alumni donations, and ensure they are competitive on campus.

2. Reserve fund: Tap into the House Renovation fund that has grown to \$170K over the years, for use exclusively toward the “Educational %” portion of all work done on the house.

3. RPG: Utilize RPG’s management expertise and commitment to ATO housing to build a comprehensive long-term focus plan on the capital needs of the house. They’re able to do this and still maintain competitive rents because of their access to less expensive capital, economies of scale when purchasing materials, and knowledge of how to manage contractor pricing.

4. Our alumni: Your contributions will continue to be critical to our efforts to keep the chapter house competitive. If you have previously committed to a pledge through the *Preserving Your Legacy, Ensuring Our Future* capital campaign, please help us to cross the finish line on this initiative by paying the balance of your pledge. If you have not previously supported the campaign, consider making a one-time contribution toward the capital campaign to ensure funds are available for future projects. Or, get in the spirit of annual giving to build an operating budget for our revitalized alumni relations program, to fund improved communications and increased events and activities.

What Alumni are Saying about the Sale

“At the end of the day, RPG is in the business of owning and managing fraternity property and they have a track record of improving property, making the fraternity houses better and safer, which makes both the chapter and the alumni happy. This is a much better way to manage a significant piece of property like our chapter house, and I feel much better about it being around as the ATO house for years to come.”

- Louis Todd '82

“Essentially I think it is a great move to have a professional organization oversee the operation of the fraternity house. That being said, the local brothers have done an outstanding

job over the years of keeping things together. I would like to compliment the brothers who have spent so much time, energy, and financial support giving back to the chapter. I would like to especially thank John Robertson, who has been the leader for this whole process. I think that making the move to RPG is certainly a great one and should be a great asset for Beta Iota.”

- John Weitnauer '44

“This is the best chance that 205 Fourth St. will always be an ATO fraternity house through economic and social cycles.”

- Will Mizell '84

Join the discussion and share YOUR feedback on the sale of the ATO house at www.atogatech.org.

ONGOING PROJECTS

Although ownership of the house has been transferred to RPG, there are ongoing projects that are the responsibility of the Beta Iota Corporation to complete.

Projects we've finished (with RPG's oversight)

- Major exterior work (fire escape, gutters, dormers, flat roof, slate roof)
- Major interior work (fire sprinkler system installation, basement renovation, plumbing leaks, new fixtures in bathrooms, adding Hardi board to all the walls on the upper decks, and painting and patching all over)
- Redo of the 2nd deck showers
- Carpeting the 2nd and 3rd decks (“Thanks” to John Wells)
- New light fixtures on the hallways
- Chapter room furniture (1st floor)

Projects committed to or in progress

- New flooring, main level
- New bathrooms, main level
- Replace bedroom and fire escape doors
- Replace laundry equipment
- Fix fireplace
- Refurbish interior staircase

Necessary projects not yet committed or funded

- Redo of 3rd deck showers
- Landscaping
- Replacement of a major portion of the HVAC systems

Thank you to the capital campaign contributors who have made these projects possible. Your support has been critical in preparing our facility for this partnership, and will continue to be vital for the financial stability of our house corporation in the future.



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Inside: Full Details about the Future of the Beta Iota House

CHAPTER REPORT

Beta Iota Grows in Numbers with First Spring Pledge Class in Several Years *Five New Members Welcomed During Spring Rush, Chapter Sets Goal of 20 for Fall*

Beta Iota welcomed its first spring pledge class in several years, recruiting five new members through dinner “meet and greets” during rush week. The spring 2014 pledge class is a valuable addition to the respectful and handsome gentlemen of ATO. We have several summer rush events planned, with a goal of recruiting 20 new members in the fall 2014 pledge class.

Philanthropically, ATO brothers contributed more than 600 service hours and raised \$1,200 for Buzz Off, benefitting cancer research. The chapter also participated in events to promote HIV/AIDS awareness,



Active brothers Jonathan Radivoj, Chris Ryan, Carlos Gonzalez, Tan Alleman, Eric Martin and Travis Hanly after ATO won the co-rec soccer championship in Intramurals.

and is hoping to work with the Wounded Warrior Project this fall.

Academically, the chapter earned a 3.18 GPA, ranking 11th out of 32 IFC fraternities. Twenty-six brothers were named to the Dean’s list, with 8 earning Faculty Honors. The chapter credits back dues each semester for brothers who are named to the Dean’s list.

Finally, the chapter boasts two legacies: **Nick Bitzis**, son of **Charlie Bitzis ’88**, and **Steve Alexander III**, son of **Steve Alexander Jr. ’81**.

IN YOUR WORDS

What is the Most Valuable Part of the ATO Experience?

We recently asked brothers through our anonymous survey: “As an alum, what do you see as the most valuable part of the fraternity experience?” Thank you to the alumni who responded with some great feedback, including:

“Friendship, parties, shared experiences, and good deeds for community.”

“Having friends that think more or less like you do. You can count on their experience and varied knowledge to increase your learning experience.”

“The feeling of true brotherhood while at Tech, which still exists today.”

“My fraternity brothers and the friends that I have.”

“Lifelong friendships centered around some sound principles for life.”

We thank these alumni for their feedback, and look forward to fostering many more of the values, traditions and principles forged by ATO to further enhance your alumni experience. Read more alumni responses and share your own at www.atogatech.org.