



The Superior Area Association of REALTORS® Newsletter April, 2009

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From the President -

Peggy Van Hollen-Kman



There has never been a more important time to voice our opinion! REALTOR® and Government Day is coming up on Wed. April 8th. This is always an important event, but especially this year with so many changes impacting our business. You can sign up on www.wra.org and I urge you to do so. I know Madison is a long haul, but there is strength in numbers and we so need to make an impact on our lawmakers. Some of the issues that will be discussed are; assessors being allowed on any property at any time without permission, increased capital gains tax, a new tax on rural development, and statewide purchase of development rights. I am going down to represent us, please join me!

My email address is peggykman@vanhollen.com.

Let's Bowl!

The Annual Bowlathon, Pizza Party and Silent Auction is scheduled for Friday, May 1 at the Incline Station in Duluth. This event fills up fast, so get your teams together and sent to the Association office.

Don't bowl? Join us for pizza and the auction!

[Click here for the registration form.](#)

All proceeds benefit the Northern MN/WI REALTOR Foundation.

REALTOR® & Government Day

Wednesday, April 8, 2009
12:30 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Monona Terrace Convention Center - Madison
Cost: \$25 in advance, \$45 day of event

REALTOR® & Government Day is your opportunity to help shape laws that impact you. Through lobbying efforts at the state Capitol, you'll meet state lawmakers and their staff and have a unique opportunity to advocate for issues that impact your business and the real estate industry in Wisconsin. Our success as an industry requires member activism. In 2008 the WRA and its membership demonstrated an impressive show of REALTOR® strength by bringing in more than 350 REALTORS® from all around the state. With your show of support and

advocacy, 2009 will be a day well remembered at the Capitol when key votes are taken.
This Year's Agenda Includes:
Eliminating the \$5.7 billion deficit without raising real estate-related taxes.
Foreclosure mitigation programs.
Reducing property taxes.
Campaign finance reform.

Log in to wra.org and register now! Or call 1-800-279-1972 to register by phone!

Right Tools, Right Now!



SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT FROM NAR:

In these uncertain times, NAR is here to help you succeed with the RIGHT TOOLS, RIGHT NOW. This initiative offers over 300 NAR products, publications and services FREE or AT COST. Look for this icon to identify a product or program within the RIGHT TOOLS, RIGHT NOW initiative.

Get what your business needs at

www.REALTOR.org/RightTools/Top10www.REALTOR.org/RightTools/Top10

Educational Tools and Publications

Take advantage of products and resources that will help you learn about Sales and Marketing, Legal Issues, Mortgage Issues and more for free or at significantly reduced prices.

Technology Services

Stay on top of the latest technology and technological resources, and help increase productivity and grow your business with technical tools offered by NAR.

Online Training

Discover high-value NAR online education courses and webinars offered to our members at greatly reduced prices.

Enhanced Services

Find new enhancements to NAR membership and services created and offered for free to members and Associations.

Convention & Events

Enjoy significantly reduced pricing on registration fees for valuable NAR events, conferences, seminars, meetings, symposiums and other networking opportunities.

Research Tools

Get the latest trends and market information for free or at significantly reduced prices.

Articles & Information

Get timely articles and important information on the current economy as it relates to REALTORS®.

What's all the Buzz about Social Media?

It can be overwhelming, trying to keep up with the many advances in technology and particularly with social media tools. Yet it's important to keep one's "ear to the ground" and know which [tools are gaining in popularity](#).

Although individual experiences vary, if you aren't already an active user of these tools, here are some reasons why it's important to at least be familiar with social media.

1- Consumers are social beings.

A [recent report](#) by ComScore shows that social sites are growing exponentially. At the end of 2008, Facebook was one of the top sites with 200 million unique visitors.

All this activity is a sign of connections being made and information being exchanged on social media sites. While this might be just friendly everyday chatting, in the long run you are establishing a connection and building them at a comfort level that may help you to stand out from the crowd. Whether you are observing, friending or tweeting someone - are you part of the conversation?

2 - Your friends and competitors are on social media sites.

Talk about a sphere of influence - social media sites are a good way to cultivate your networking base by engaging friends and competitors. The way this works is that your social media connections have followers who are likely to "tune in" to what you are saying.

Alternately, someone in your network may mention you in one of their social media posts. This expands your sphere of influence and increases the number of people who are paying attention to what you are saying or doing. Imagine, the next time you are helping a client relocate- you may know the REALTOR® to contact because of a connection made via a social

site. That's not to say that you may not already have established that relationship via other mediums, but social media is simply one more opportunity.

3 - The media may be looking for you.

Yes, they too pay attention to what's being said through social media. Keith Garner, VP of NAR ITS, pointed out that this is an important point to consider as social media grows. More and more media outlets are looking to interview local experts with specialties in different fields. One way they go about finding such experts is by searching the web and looking at blogs, for example. Here's how one real estate professional manages his relationship with the media; the Phoenix Real Estate Guy's blog page includes a tab called "[press room](#)."

As you can see, the tools we use to communicate are evolving. What works for you? Only you can decide where social media fits in your business plan. Most importantly, stay informed about what social media sites have to offer. Below are several resource links for your consideration.

NAR Social Media Resources & More

[Field guides](#)

[eBooks](#)

Other Sources

[Social Networking in Plain English](#)

[Twitter in Plain English](#)

[RSS in Plain English](#)

[Blogs in Plain English](#)

HUD Launches Site to Help Borrowers Understand Plan

HUD and the Treasury Department have launched a new Web site designed to help consumers understand the administration's loan modification program.

The site is MakingHomeAffordable.gov.

The site offers a number of tools to help borrowers determine if they're eligible to participate in the program. Borrowers can calculate the monthly mortgage payment reductions they could realize under the Obama program.

A HUD statement said more than 2,500 loan servicers, investors, representatives of non-profits and housing counselors already have been briefed on the program to assist borrowers.

NAR Warns of Rental Property Scam

The National Association of Realtors® name is being used as part of a property rental scam in which rental property is offered to consumers, who are led to believe that NAR is functioning as an intermediary to receive rental deposits from prospective tenants.

"NAR is not involved in this business and has contacted law enforcement officials to request that the matter be investigated. We encourage any consumers who may be affected to file a complaint," said NAR President Charles McMillan, a broker with Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage in Dallas-Fort Worth.

The scam claims that on receipt of a deposit, NAR will deliver the keys to the property to the tenant. Prospective tenants are instructed to send money via Western Union to NAR's purported agent in the United Kingdom.

Some of the listings have been posted on Craigslist, which reportedly has had difficulty in tracing the original listings. NAR does not have an escrow service, or function as an intermediary to receive rental deposits.

Some of the scam listings also refer to or propose using a "Residential Lease Package" that includes a form lease that purports to be a document prepared by or otherwise associated with NAR. NAR was not involved in creating or producing the "Residential Lease Package" or other lease form, and does not recommend, support, or encourage use of those documents.

Consumers who have encountered this scam may file a complaint with the Internet Crime

Complaint Center, sponsored by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the National White Collar Crime Center.

"Our mission is not only to protect consumers in the real estate transaction, but also guard them against fraud," McMillan said.

Paragon Tips and Tricks - Paragon Desktop

Missing the Quick Search area from the home page of Paragon Desktop 4.0?

In 2 simple steps - you can get it back!!!!

Step 1: Log into Paragon Desktop 4.0

Step 2: Go to Preferences and Select Quick Search

You can also minimize this area of the home page by hitting the arrows in the right on the Quick Search banner.

If you see Quick Search on the left of your screen, click on the arrows to restore it.

WHY DID WE CHANGE DESKTOP?

The Desktop Upgrade came from our MLS Software Vendor. We held off on the Upgrade from Desktop 2.0 to Desktop 3.0, but once they went to Desktop 4.0, we were required to upgrade. We can no longer get install disks and they will not support the old 2.0 program. While it still may work - there is no guarantee as to how long.

April's Green Tip - Get NAR's Green Designation

The National Association of REALTORS® Green Designation is the definition of green professionalism, excellence, and leadership for today's real estate practitioners. Specifically designed to address the educational needs of practitioners in residential, commercial, and property management markets, this training program is a true cross-over designation and the only green designation recognized by NAR. The Green Designation addresses the concerns of consumers that are seeking real green expertise, not just lip service. You can be the one they come to for answers. As a real estate professional, you can have a real and lasting impact. Get the designation that will help you make it happen. For more information on how to get your Green designation, follow the link below:

<http://www.greenresourcecouncil.org/>

Interested in working towards an ABR and Green designation at the same time? Check this out: http://rebac.net/green_designation.cfm

Are you missing out on important news and information sent from the Association office? Please take a moment to add the following email addresses to your contact list to ensure you are receiving all correspondence from the Association staff.

Tracy Huotari: Tracy@daar.com

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