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REALTOR®

APRIL 2008

A PUBLICATION OF THE ALASKA ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®

Legislative Priorities

Convention Registration

Real Estate Commission News



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Real Facts About Real Estate

The National Association of Realtors® is reaching out to consumers with the facts about homeownership and the value of real estate as a long-term investment. Would-be homeowners who are uncertain about their home buying plans can learn more about the options available to them and the long-term benefits of owning a home through a new advertising campaign that will provide current, relevant housing data to help them make informed decisions about buying a home.

Over the past 30 years, the median price of existing homes has increased an average of more than 6 percent every year, and home values nearly double every 10 years, according to historical data from NAR's existing-home sales series. A Federal Reserve study has shown that the average homeowner's net worth is 46 times the net worth of the average renter. Despite this and other research, some potential home buyers are being kept on the sidelines as they react to national media reports about the housing market.

"Nobody buys a home in the national real estate market," said NAR President Dick Gaylord, a broker with RE/MAX Real Estate Specialists in Long Beach, Calif. "All real estate markets are local, and buyers and sellers who are thinking about making a move should consult with a Realtor® in their local market to learn about conditions specific to the area. It's also advisable to look beyond the immediate horizon – real estate has proven itself to be a good long-term investment and a safe, secure way to build long-term wealth."

According to NAR's most recent forecast, existing-home sales are likely to total 5.66 million in 2007, the fifth highest on record, rising to 5.70 million in 2008 and 5.91 million in 2009. Existing-home prices are likely to be down 1.9 percent

(Real Facts, continue on page 5)
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Legislative Priorities Report

By Dave Feeken
 Industry Issues Chair
 RE/MAX of the Peninsula
 Kenai



HB 357 Surety Fund and Mandatory E & O has passed House Labor and Commerce and Finance Committees. There has been no opposition to the bill. The issues resolved center on state administration of the E & O Insurance. The state has never done this before so the Division of Insurance, Division of Occupational Licensing and the Department of Law were all involved in making sure the language in the bill was correct. This bill is scheduled for the House floor the week of March 24 and is already scheduled for Senate Labor and Commerce for March 27th. There is widespread support for this

bill and it should pass.

HB 175 Extending Eminent Domain to second homes and cabins: This bill is involved in a little political wrangling that I hope we have worked out. An amendment was added last year on the House floor which we do not support, so the bill is being held in Senate Finance. It looks like we have a compromise worked out and the bill should pass this year.

HB 349 Frivolous Lawsuits: Needless to say this is causing controversy without even having a hearing. This bill requires the plaintiffs' attorney to pay the defense attorney's bill if the judge rules the suit to be frivolous. Art Clark met with the Anchorage Chamber of Commerce this week and had a "good" discussion with board members. The attorneys there are open to discussing this is-

(Legislative Report, continue on page 5)

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(Legislative Report, continued from page 4)

sue further and I plan on pursuing that avenue.


We support the Alaska court system as a venue of “honest” disagreement and settlement, and the court’s position that both sides have the right to their day in court. The problem is “dishonest” claimants bringing cases forward to “dishonestly” enrich themselves. Businesses are different in their ability to absorb these costs. Retail can spread the cost over the entire product they sell. A service business, on the other hand, does not have that mechanism. Large retail businesses can absorb these losses a lot easier than a small service business. There is a big difference between Wal-Mart writing a check for \$5000 to settle a frivolous lawsuit than a real estate agent with an average income of \$50,000 writing a check for 10% of their income. It is estimated in Minnesota every person spends \$1,200 per person every year in what has been called a hidden liability cost. Whether that is 50 percent of the cost of a new football helmet, \$500 off the sticker of a new car or boat, one-fifth of the cost of a step ladder, or \$8 of an \$11.50 dose of DPT, lawsuit abuse is adding a significant amount of money to the price of goods and services. It rewards undeserving lawyers and plaintiffs. Plaintiffs who refuse to take responsibility for their own actions are constantly being rewarded with attention or money. Consider the teenagers who sued McDonald’s for making them fat or the people who smoke for decades who sue the tobacco companies when they get lung cancer. Who is really responsible for the damage? Rewarding people like these sends a message that self-control and personal responsibility mean nothing in this country anymore. As long as we continue to reward attorneys that file these suits, we’re only going to invite more.

Where you can help. We need examples of frivolous claims made that brokers/licensees paid to settle because the cost of defense exceeds the cost of settling. AAR will continue to work on this issue; it is costing good business too much money to let lie. 

(Real Facts, continued from page 3)

to a median of \$217,600 for all of 2007 which is good news for buyers; prices are expected to hold steady in 2008, and then rise 3.1 percent in 2009 to \$224,400.

The campaign includes a new Web site, www.HousingMarketFacts.com, which provides more information about the benefits and value of owning a home, identifies current public policy issues of importance to consumers in the real estate transaction.

The ads are part of NAR’s Public Awareness Campaign. For more than a decade, the Public Awareness Campaign has helped millions of consumers realize the value of using a Realtor® to help them buy or sell real estate, and is now educating consumers about the value of housing as a long-term investment. In 2008, campaign ads will be broadcast nationwide from January through November and will air more than 10,000 times on national TV and radio outlets. To learn more about the national Public Awareness Campaign, visit www.realtor.org/awarenesscampaign. 

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Real Estate Commission Update

"March Meeting in Juneau"

By Brad Cole
Real Estate Commissioner
RE/MAX of Wasilla
Kristan Cole Team



The March Alaska Real Estate Commission meeting was held in Juneau at the State Office Building in Juneau, Alaska on March 13 & 14, 2008. The following is not an official publication of the Alaska Real Estate Commission. For a full report of the meeting, please contact the Commission Office.

MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

Our meeting this month followed the quarterly AAR board meeting and the legislative visits with our Representatives. Like other meetings, we dealt with the following; the approval of Previous Meeting Minutes, the Investigator Report on any administrative action taken, Public Comment on various subjects, Surety Fund Claims, Current Regulations projects, Licensing Examiner Report, Education Report, Executive Administrator's Report, and of course, discussion of any New Business.

INVESTIGATOR REPORT

During the reporting period of November 26, 2007 through February 27, 2008 the Investigation Unit opened 8 cases and closed 7 cases. There are currently 27 open cases and litigation has been initiated in one open case and litigation negotiations are ongoing in two of the open cases and another one is under review by the Attorney General's Office.

We reviewed and approved one Memorandum of Agreement. The case involved a licensee who was indicted on six counts of federal wire fraud charges in which it's alleged that the licensee falsely inflated the sales prices on six properties, causing lenders to provide larger loans than necessary for the purchase of the individual properties. It also alleged that after closing, the buyers received cash back from the proceeds of the inflated loan.

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In addition, it is further alleged that this licensee submitted false repair and remodeling invoices for work that was never performed on the properties. The amounts charged for the falsified repairs and remodeling were then given to the buyers without the knowledge of the lenders. The alleged fraudulent invoices exceeded \$129,200.

Another very important opinion came out of the Attorney General's office during our meeting. Several licensees had asked whether a State business license was required to operate as an independent contractor. The opinion from the AG's office is as follows: All licensees operating in the State of Alaska and conducting business as an independent contractor must have a State business license.

PUBLIC COMMENT

The members of the AREC were extremely pleased with the response to the request for public comment on the changes to the State of Alaska Residential Real Property Transfer Disclosure Statement. These comments were reviewed and changes were made to accommodate the many recommendations.

SURETY FUND CLAIMS

Two Surety Fund Claim dispositions were reviewed by the REC. The first claim against the Real Estate Surety Fund was seeking compensation for a broker's failure to tender the earnest money to the Seller. The case involved a transaction that DFT'd because of an unacceptable well inspection. The judge found that the buyers had every right to rescind their offer based on the unsatisfactory well report but, the judgment also stated, "...even if the buyers did not have a right to rescind, their agent's conduct did not amount to an actionable conversion of trust funds. The sellers have not established grounds

(AREC Report, continue on page 7)

(AREC Report, continued from page 6)

for a claim against the Real Estate Surety Fund.”

The second case involved a transaction in which the claimant alleged that the licensee engaged in intentional misrepresentation in the transaction for an unimproved piece of land. When the listing was placed in the MLS the licensee had stated that “...the road is maintained year round.” The buyers built a small residence and that winter found out that the borough did not plow their road because it did not meet minimum borough standards. The licensee thought that the street was maintained because he drove by the street regularly for several winters and the street was always plowed. What the licensee could not see was that the parcel he sold was on an extension of the street he had been looking at and did not know that it had not been approved by the borough. The judgment stated that while the listing licensee did make a misstatement about the road being maintained year round, he had not “...intentionally misrepresented facts in connection with the proposed real estate transaction.” To help rectify the situation for the buyers, the selling licensee actually had the road plowed

at his expense for the balance of the winter until the developer and the borough could figure out a long term solution. Both claims were denied.

CURRENT REGULATIONS


The regulation covering remote supervision, 12 AAC 64.126 SUPERVISION OF LICENSEES IN REMOTE AREAS is abrogated on March 27, 2008.

Please be aware that a salesperson may continue practicing real estate in a location away from the broker’s principle office as long as said salesperson meets supervision requirements stated in 12 AAC 64.125, keeps all trust monies in the broker’s trust account, and does not operate a branch office.

Other regulation reviews, and possible changes, include the following:

- | | |
|---------------------|------------------|
| 12 AAC 64.059(d)(5) | 12 AAC 64.440(c) |
| 12 AAC 64.063(a) | 12 AAC 64.440(d) |
| 12 AAC 64.075(b) | 12 AAC 64.440(f) |

(AREC Report, continue on page 19)



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NAR Director's Report

"Teaching in Georgia & Azerbaijan"

By PeggyAnn McConnochie
NAR Director
ACH Consulting, Juneau



S ometime in January I received an e-mail from Norm Flynn, past president of the National Association of REALTORS® asking me if I might be interested in traveling to Eastern Europe to give a real estate seminar on behalf of (and paid by) the International Real Property Foundation. (The IRPF was established by Norm in the late 1990s.) I responded that I would love to; it just depended on the timing for travel. After some back and forth we established the time frame, what types of courses they wanted, and which countries I would travel to, Georgia and Azerbaijan. I was given a basic outline and I set about designing a course schedule with 2 days of brokerage management and one day of sales training per their request.

With reservations made my passport at the ready and with one small suitcase plus my computer packed, I was set to go.

Friday 3/22/08 My adventure starts. First to Seattle to stay overnight to catch the early plane down to LA for the trip half way around the world. Smooth flight. So far I am calm.

Saturday 3/23/08 I get to the airport in Seattle 3 hours early for my flights – with all the flying I

have done I know that it helps to get there early to make sure that the international flights are squared away. My journey today will take me from Seattle to LA to Heathrow to Tbilisi, Georgia. Overall the journey takes about 18 hours in the air; then add in the time waiting in airports and my total trip time will be somewhere around 30 hours.



View of Tbilisi


Monday 2/25/08 I am finally about to land in Tbilisi! It is around 6 am and I am unbelievably actually “on” their time zone; they are 13 hours ahead of us. Quite a change! Upon arriving in Tbilisi, Lela Shatirishvili, the translator for this part of the journey, meets me at the airport and takes me to the Marriott Hotel where I will be staying. (By the way Tbilisi is pronounced ti-bli-si with no accents on any syllables. Lela tells me that the Georgian language does not have accents on any syllables. It is originally from the Samarian language which may be the oldest language in the world.) The hotel is gorgeous – very old world European. At first glance it looks in excellent condition for a building that is over 200 years old. It is only when you spend the time looking around that you start to see some of its faults. But it is beautiful and I am in need of a shower and some food. After I eat breakfast I work through the day on my courses, making sure that I added notes where reasonable for a non-English speaking audience. Lela has the only title company in Georgia – now, don’t get excited, they are just getting started understanding how important it is to have a chain of title and the need for a title policy when transferring ownership. Lela is familiar with many aspects of real estate in the US but I know that there will be many questions for me at the courses and I want to be ready.

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Tuesday 2/26/08 Through the next day I continue to work through markups on the remainder of the courses. Lela and I speak several times discussing her loaning me a converter for my computer and also about the location of the seminars. It seems that my converter is the wrong shape for Georgia. Lela has an American friend who will loan me one for my stay. The seminars will be held on the lower floor of a contractor's building. We go there to see the site and make sure that the LCD projector will work with my computer and that sufficient power will be available. The room has a marble floor with infloor heating. But the ceilings are high and I know I can make the room work. The drive there is very interesting; they drive without regard to the lanes or lane lines, or speed limit – it is obvious they need to be offensive drivers. Honking is used to let people know you are coming through – no matter what. There are many high rises going up throughout the downtown area (some of which do not look as if they have been worked on for years), and on every major European store (United Colors of Benetton, Prada, etc.) there are permanent signs indicating “50% off.” Interesting juxtaposition.

Wednesday 2/27/08 Lela picks me up at 8:30 to make sure that we are there early enough to get the room set up. (By the by she does not drive. Although women have been allowed to drive for 25 years in Georgia, few women do. Most hire a driver. Interesting – I can see that driving would be an interesting adventure.) We get the LCD projector and my computer ready, and then set up the chairs for the participants, about 25 people. Lela has prepared books and name tags for everyone. About 9:45 most of the people are there so we start. Day 1 starts off well; however from the questions they are asking I quickly figure out that the participants have no idea how REALTORS® work in the U.S. I spend the next hour explaining what a real estate license is, how they get it, and that each state in the US has different pre-licensing education standards and that then they have to take a test, and then they have to work for a broker for a set period of time before they can take the education, pass another test and go off and work on their own. 

The continuation of PeggyAnn's article will be featured in the June, 2008 Alaska REALTOR®.

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2008 Annual Convention

"Mountain High Celebration"

The Alaska Association of REALTORS® 2008 annual convention will be held September 16-20, 2008 at the Mt. McKinley Princess Wilderness Lodge. The Valley Board of REALTORS® will be the host of the 2008 convention.

The Mt. McKinley Wilderness Lodge is located in Denali State Park on the banks of the Chulitna River, approximately 20 north of the Talkeetna turn-off on the Parks Highway.



Speakers

John Tuccillo is one of the foremost real estate and housing finance economists in the United States. His current consulting practice is focused on strategic and business planning, and his experience and counsel are sought by trade associations, major real estate and other private firms. His presentations on the economic outlook, real estate markets and change in the real estate business are invariably witty, informative and accessible to both lay and professional audiences.



From 1987 to 1997 he was Chief Economist for the National Association of REALTORS®. He now runs his own consulting business, specializing in strategic and business planning. His clients have included Fannie Mae, Microsoft, GMAC, Prudential Real Estate Associates, RE/MAX Cendant and a host of large inde-

pendent real estate firms, as well as state and local REALTOR® associations.

John's Session - Eight Important Trends That Will Shape the Future of the Real Estate Business. This compelling session will open your eyes to powerful new business models emerging in real estate. Statistics, demographics, consumer desires, broker needs, merging of services and much more will shape the real estate business of the future. We'll look at the trends and how REALTORS® can adjust their businesses to take advantage of the coming changes to make more profits.

Ken Trepeta is the Director of Real Estate Services for the National Association of REALTORS®. He is charged with covering the broader real estate industry for NAR.

Prior to this, Ken was the Regulatory Policy Representative for NAR handling regulatory and administration relations on business issues and federal housing policy.



Ken's Session - RESPA Dos and Don'ts. In this session, Ken will cover avoiding illegal kickbacks and schemes, what HUD and others are doing about Real Estate Procedures Settlement Act (RESPA) violations, affiliated businesses do's and don'ts and sham affiliated businesses. He will also give an update on the new RESPA reform proposals.

Room Reservations

The lodge is now accepting room reservations for the convention. The room rate is \$99 per night plus \$4.95 tax. To reserve a room, call 1-800-426-0500, go to conference/convention reservations. Please reference group code TNF L8260 (REALTOR Convention).

2008 State REALTOR® Convention Registration Form

All Events are sold on a First-Come, First-Serve basis and are non-transferable.

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Room Reservations

This year's convention is at the Mount McKinley Princess Wilderness Lodge. The room rate is \$99 per night plus \$4.95 tax. To reserve a room, call 1-800-426-0500. Please reference group code TNF L8260 (REALTOR Convention).

*Registration Day Rate

Registration Day Rate A day rate is available for \$99 for anyone who would like to attend only one day. Meal tickets can be purchased separately.

Cancellation Policy

All cancellations must be received in writing. If registration is cancelled before August 25th, there will be a \$25 cancellation fee.

If the request is received after August 25th, no refund will be made.

CONVENTION REGISTRATION

	Circle Choice	REALTOR®	Aff/Guest
Full Convention Package - Includes registration, all meals education and hosted events			
Postmarked by 7/15/2008		250	200
Postmarked After 7/15/2008		275	225
At the Door		300	250
Registration Only - Included education & hosted events			
Postmarked by 7/15/2008		150	100
Postmarked After 7/15/2008		175	125
At the Door		200	150
Day Rate - Includes Education and hosted events			
		99	99
Tuesday, September 16, 2008			
6:00 pm	Ice Breaker Reception (hosted)		
Wednesday, September 17, 2008			
8:00am	Breakfast	\$15	\$15
11:30am	Past President/REALTOR® of the Year Luncheon	\$25	\$25
5:00pm	Affiliate Appreciation Party (hosted)		
6:30pm	Dinner	\$40	\$40
8:30pm	Affiliate Night		
Thursday, September 18, 2008			
8:00am	Breakfast	\$15	\$15
11:30am	Lunch	\$25	\$25
3:30pm	Trade Show & Reception (hosted)		
6:30pm	Dinner	\$40	\$40
8:30pm	ARPAC Night & Auction		
Friday, September 19, 2008			
8:00am	Breakfast	\$15	\$15
12:00 noon	CRS Luncheon	\$25	\$25
5:00pm	ARPAC Reception (hosted)		
6:30pm	Dinner	\$55	\$55
8:30pm	Awards Presentation		
Saturday, September 20, 2008			
8:00am	Continental Breakfast	\$10	\$10
REGISTRATION + OPTIONAL EVENT TOTALS		\$ _____	= \$ _____ + \$ _____

PAYMENT METHOD ALL FEES ARE US DOLLARS

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AAR is NOT responsible for lost registration forms or incomplete applications.

Association News

Great Shot

Has anyone ever said to you “Great Shot”? If so, we would be interested in featuring your photo on the cover of Alaska REALTOR. Starting with this issue, we will be featuring photos from REALTOR® and Affiliate members to feature on the cover of the publication.

Cover shots must be strong verticals, with bright and vibrant color. Focus must be razor-sharp—no soft-focus shots will be accepted. It will be the editor’s decision to use the photo submitted. Please include your name, company, brief description of photo and location. All photos should be depicting Alaska subject matter.

- Resolution: 4 mega pixel camera or better
- Formats: jpg, tiff
- File Size: ~ 2 mb or less
- Vertical photos are preferred
- Send only one photo (multi-photo attachments are too large and will not be accepted)
- Name the attachment with your last name (example: smith.jpeg)

Send to: Sandy Eherenman, seherenman@alaskarealtors.com

In Memoriam

Vincent Guzzardi - Longtime Fairbanks resident Vincent Peter Guzzardi, 83, passed away peacefully February 19, 2008. Vince was president of the Alaska Association of REALTORS in 1970. He was also president of the Greater Fairbanks Board of REALTORS and named Fairbanks Board REALTOR of the Year.

Audie Moore - Longtime Anchorage resident Audie Lee Moore, 95, died of natural causes March 15, 2008. Audie was president of the Alaska Association of REALTORS in 1971 and Alaska Association REALTOR of the Year in 1973. He was also president of the Anchor-

age Board of REALTORS and named Anchorage Board REALTOR of the Year.

Leadership Conference

The Alaska Association of REALTORS 2009 Leadership Conference will be held Monday – Tuesday, January 12-13, 2009 at the Dimond Center Hotel.



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(Eye on the Hill, continued from page 14)

National Flood Insurance Program Re-authorization (NFIP) The House of Representatives and Senate have passed NFIP reform bills. Because of the significant differences between H.R. 3121 and S. 2284, a reconciled bill must be passed by a House-Senate Conference Committee. In order for the NFIP to be reauthorized by Congress, a bill must be presented to President Bush for signature into law, on or before September 30, 2008.

Property Insurance Maintaining access to affordable property insurance is critical for every real estate transaction in the country. High cost insurance is forcing people out of their homes or limiting home purchase options. NAR is committed to working with Congress to keep insurance available and affordable. A natural disaster bill has passed the House and awaits Senate action.

Small Business Health Coverage NAR will continue to raise the importance of passage of legislation to correct the inequities in the nation's health insurance delivery system and work with the House and Senate to introduce legislation for consideration.

Appraisal/Mortgage Reform (anti-predatory lending) The subprime mortgage crisis is not entirely the result of bad underwriting decisions. More and more evidence of predatory lending practices have generated a call for new lending guidelines. On November 15, 2007, the House of Representatives passed H.R. 3915, the "Mortgage Reform and Anti-Predatory Lending Act of 2007." NAR, working with Congressional allies, scored a major victory by amending the legislation to exempt persons only engaged in real estate activities from a national licensing registry for mortgage loan originators. 

Meet Our Anchorage Escrow Team



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GRI, Graduate REALTORS® Institute



In today's competitive business environment you need more than just motivation and initiative to succeed, you need the advantage of the education you receive in the GRI program.

The purpose of the Institute is to provide a common body of knowledge and professional competence for progressive real estate professionals in the State of Alaska. The Institute is sponsored by the Alaska Association of REALTORS® to offer a well-rounded program of instruction and practical training in all fields of real estate.

The Graduate REALTOR® Institute (GRI) designation indicates to buyers, sellers and other real estate industry professionals that you have made the commitment to provide a high level of professional service to your clients by securing a strong educational foundation.

The GRI designation is obtained by attending a specific, intensive series of a minimum of 90 hours of classroom instruction covering subjects in contract law, professional standards, sales and marketing, finance and risk reduction. The subject matter has been chosen to educate practitioners about local, state and national real estate practices that affect them and their clients. GRI courses are taught by leading real estate professionals in Alaska.

The REALTOR® Institute is more than twenty-five years old and has graduated thousand of REALTORS®. These professionals find the GRI designation a powerful tool for attracting and building new business.

GRI graduates are the top performers in most real estate offices. Statistics show that on average they earn 35% more than non-designees.

Set yourself apart. Earn the designation that makes a difference and increases your income.

Registration forms are available at www.alaskarealtors.com under calendar.

2008 GRI Schedule

APRIL

GRI 200

April 10, 11, 17 & 18, 2008

Location: Wasilla

Contact VBR for information 376-5080

APRIL

GRI 100

Monday - Thursday, April 14, 15, 16 & 17, 2008

Location: Anchorage

Contact ABR for information 561-2338

APRIL

GRI 300

Tuesday - Wednesday, April 22, 23, 29 & 30, 2008

Location: Fairbanks

Contact GFBR for information 452-7743

JUNE

GRI 300

Scheduled for June, 2008

Location: Wasilla

Contact VBR for information 376-5080

OCTOBER

GRI 100

Scheduled for early October, 2008

Location: Wasilla

Contact VBR for information 376-5080

OCTOBER

GRI 200

Monday - Thursday, October 20, 21, 22 & 23, 2008

Location: Anchorage

Contact ABR for information 561-2338

NOVEMBER

GRI 300

Tuesday - Friday, November 11, 12, 13 & 14, 2008

Location: Anchorage

Contact ABR for information 561-2338

News Bites from Around the



Anchorage

Peggy Looney of Stewart Title of Alaska was awarded REALTOR® AFFILIATE of the Year at the December luncheon. Congratulations, Peggy! Mayor Mark Begich was the featured speaker.

Alaska USA Mortgage will again generously sponsor a day-long seminar – this year featuring the national trainer, Walter Sanford. This exciting opportunity will be held at the Loussac Library auditorium on Thursday, June 5. The day will be divided into two sessions. A four-hour course credit and a three-hour course credit will be issued. Details will follow as they become available.

Alaska Multiple Listing Service is awarding to selected boards political activity grants. Disbursement will be quarterly and based on each board's membership count. Alaska MLS makes funding decisions based on many different criteria and considerations, which may include, without limitation, the following: previous government affairs activities; forecasted governmental affairs activities; demonstrated fiscal responsibility; number of AK MLS members and subscribers who also are members of the local Association making application for funding.

The Annual Market Forecast luncheon was held at the Downtown Marriott on January 9th with 140 in attendance.

The quarterly Broker Forum was held in December and 10 brokers

attended. November, December, and January brought continuing education marathons.

Outlining REALTOR® benefits and answering questions, Art Clark, (2007 Board President), has been visiting the larger brokerages to explain REALTOR® benefits and to answer Realtor's questions.

Through ABR's Operation Alaska Cares, we have shipped 842 personal care boxes to Alaskans in military service overseas.

ABR will present the GRI series in 2008 as follows: GRI 100 April 14-17; GRI 200 October 21-23, GRI 300 November 11-14.

Fairbanks

Fairbanks has been making a very concerted effort to counteract the negative national media coverage regarding the housing market. We have partnered with our local newspaper, the Fairbanks Daily Newsminer, to run ads highlighting that, overall, our local sales prices remain strong. The space and color charges for these ads were donated to us by the Fairbanks Daily Newsminer, and we want to say thanks to them for their efforts to help us educate Fairbanks regarding the local real estate market. In addition to these ads, we have other ads that feature the organizations that Realtors support in our community. We are also running several different radio spots that focus on using a Realtor when buying or selling a home and others that help reinforce that now is still a good time to buy. This ad campaign reinforces a similar campaign that our local build-

er's association is running. We are also keeping in close contact with our local media, who have been very receptive to receiving market information and helping us get this information out to the public.

Southeast

Submitted by Sue Nix, President 2008

The SEABR had 99 renewing members and RPAC donations paid at renewal were at 66%. Twelve affiliates have renewed their 2008 memberships.

2008 officers are: Sue Nix, President; Debbie White, President Elect; Debbie Daniels, Vice President; Anne Bennett, Treasurer; Gwen Place, Secretary; and Greg Wagner, Past President. They began work by setting the 2008 Goals. The quest is to improve membership participation in all areas of the organization, increase fundraising to help offset costs, and to become more visible in the community by involvement as a group.

Orientation classes will be held in April for members and Ketchikan and Sitka classes will be held later in the spring. This has not been done on a formal basis for several years and is the first step in encouraging active participation by members.

Donations of \$4,000 were given throughout Southeast Alaska. Ketchikan gave \$500 each to the Hos-

(Newsbites, continue on page 18)

(Newsbites, continued from page 17)

pital Foundation and the Cancer Survivors; Sitka donated \$500 each to the Cancer Survivors group and the Fine Arts Camp; Juneau donated \$500 each to the SE Alaska Building Industry Assn. Student Chapter, Southeast Alaska Independent Living, the Glory Hole homeless shelter and adopted a cabin at the Boy Scout Camp.

Valley

Submitted by Brad Cole, President 2008 & Julie Nolen, Executive Officer


The residential market in the Valley continues to perk along. We currently have 596 active residential listings on the market and through March 15, 2008 we have sold 357 properties. That compares to 418 properties for the same period 2007. Of the current sales, 303 were priced below \$300,000 and 125 were built in 2007 or newer. Slightly over half of the properties sold this year that were priced over \$300,000 were new construction or were built in 2007.

VBR is pleased to announce the launch of our new website, www.matsurealtors.com. We hired a national company that specializes in creating websites for Boards of Realtors. The new site offers features that have never before been available to VBR members, including: ability to pay dues online, register for class-

es, review class history, purchase Board Store items, and so much more. In addition, the sophisticated website software allows our administrative staff the ability to enter data once, as it ties in to the NAR database, Quickbooks, and a group email program. The new site is an excellent tool for our members, our staff and the public. Check it out today!

Our Education Committee is working on developing a new scholarship aimed at high school seniors who are enrolled in college next Fall. To view the application please visit www.matsurealtors.com.

The VBR leadership team, along with the Alaska Association of Realtors, traveled to Juneau last month for our annual legislative fly-in. We were pleased to meet with all of our Valley Representatives and Senators. In addition, we were invited to meet with Senator Ted Stevens for a small, informal discussion on the state of the real estate market in the Valley.

We're starting to move into full-swing planning the State Realtor Convention at the McKinley Princess Wilderness Lodge. The keynote speakers have been secured along with some education. Now we're rolling up our sleeves to start creating new, exciting entertainment and programs. Keep your eyes open for more to come soon. 

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(AREC Report, continued from page 7)

12 AAC 64.115(3) 12 AAC 64.990(b)
12 AAC 64.420(g)

These changes have been reviewed by the Attorney General's office and will now go to the Lt. Governor.

LICENSING EXAMINER REPORT

Currently there are 2311 (down from 2566 in November) ACTIVE licensees. There are 463 (down from 490) Brokers, 405 (down from 434) Associate Brokers, and 1438 (down from 1642) Salespersons.

CONTINUING EDUCATION AUDIT REPORT


In November the AREC created a random, computer-generated list of continuing education audit candidates from all REC licensees having the expiration date of January 31, 2008. After February 1, 2008 licensees selected for the continuing education audit whose license had not been renewed and their license had lapsed were separated from the audit list. These licensees may reinstate their license within the next 24 months and one of the requirements is proof of 20 hours of continuing education.

On February 22, 2008, 199 audit letters were mailed out to selected candidates giving them 30 days to respond to the continuing education audit. As of February 27, 2008, we have received 69 responses.

Residential Property Transfer Disclosure Statement

The AREC was very pleased with the number and quality of the public comments about the recommended changes to the State of Alaska Residential Real Property Transfer Disclosure Statement. We made many modifications to the language and it has gone back to the Department of Law to review the additional changes that were made.

NEXT MEETING

The Commission will be traveling to Fairbanks for our next meeting to be held on June 18 and 19, 2008, at the Springhill Suites Discovery Conference Room. If you are in the Fairbanks area, don't miss the opportunity to attend our meeting and get some CE credit. 

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The detailed, step-by-step workbook illustrating all of the procedures taught in the class will help you and your team members shorten your marketing time so you can spend more time with buyers and sellers.

Maximize the effectiveness of e-mail by utilizing more features.

Maintain your customer database in Outlook along with their e-mail correspondence.

Establish recurring contacts for birthdays and anniversaries.

Create a prospecting system a year in advance.

Identify more time in your week to work with buyers and sellers.


Maintain a single calendar and address list on both your computer and PDA.

Reduce your marketing costs with the HTML mail features of Word and Excel.

Transfer your database to Outlook without retyping the names.

Provide financial information worksheets for buyers and sellers to make better decisions.

Develop multimedia presentations for buyers and sellers, and a pre-listing package.

<p>Course Dates and Times August 21, 2008 Registration Starts @ 8:00 AM Class Hours: 8:30-5:00 Course Cost \$175 Lunch is included</p> 	<p>Class Discounts</p> <p>Alaska CRS Chapter MEMBERS \$15 after Chapter paid status verified</p> <p>Alaska CRS Chapter DESIGNEES \$25 after Chapter paid status verified</p>	<p>Instructor Pat Zaby, CRS Class location Centerpoint Training Room 3801 Centerpoint Dr. Anchorage 6 ECE Credits 1 CRS Credit Snacks courtesy of HOMES&LAND</p>
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BONUS CLASS On RESPOND 5:30-7:30 No Extra Charge

For additional information about the class, contact Kay DuBois at kdubois@anchoragealaska.com or call 907-561-2338

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President's Message

*By Denny Wood, CRS, GRI
Prudential Jack White Vista
Real Estate*

As I write this we still have snow on the ground but we are over the long dark days and we are gaining daylight. The CRS Sellabration in Honolulu was superb. The speakers were not national instructors, but working Certified Residential Specialists who have made their mark on the industry, including our own Kristan and Brad Cole from Wasilla. The resounding message from Sellabration was to get out there and keep in touch with your members and create systems to make that easier for you. It is a changing market place but you can improve your bottom line if you learn to work efficiently. I wish I could say the right words to convince everyone to attend the next Sellabration in San Francisco February 5-7, 2009. I can guarantee if you attend and bring something back that you put into practice, you will make many times more than the investment to attend. Hope to see you there.

The CRS 202 Sales course was quite a success. Thanks go to RE/MAX for the use of their classroom, First American Title, our course sponsor, First National Bank Alaska, our lunch sponsor, and Homes and Land Magazine, providing refreshments and snacks. Mike Selvaggio and Rich Sands did a great job with their tag team instruction and we gained some new members.

We followed the class one week later with the 1st quarter CRS Luncheon with Corky Caldwell, Director, Federal Security Alaska Divi-

sion, TSA. This man is serious about his business and passed a lot of knowledge along with entertainment. Thanks to our lunch sponsor, The Real Estate Book.

Congratulations go out to our newest CRS Designees in 2008, Kylie Wise of Prudential Jack White Vista Real Estate and Marianne Hamilton of Dynamic Properties, for joining the top 3% of REALTORS® in the US.

The market is changing and it always will, but if you are prepared to run your business as a business and use great tools you will always be above the rest. Things look pretty good for 2008, so go out there and make it happen.

If you are working on your CRS designation, keep going, it is well worth it. Those who have earned their CRS designation, congratulations and I encourage you to bring someone with you into the fold and continue to enhance our professionalism. Get involved in your chapter and make it even better than it is. Thank you all for your support of the Alaska CRS Chapter.

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ALARM SYSTEMS

ONE OF THE BEST INVESTMENTS A HOMEOWNER CAN MAKE BY KATHY SCOTT

Few industries enjoy a high positive customer relationship like that of alarm companies. According to a study done by Dr. Simon Hakim, director of the Center for Competitive Government at Temple University, 94 percent of alarm owners are satisfied with their systems. With one in five homes currently electronically protected, that's a pretty amazing statistic.

According to FBI statistics, a home is burglarized every 14 seconds in the United States. Dr. Hakim's study reported that homes without security systems are nearly three times more likely to be broken into than homes with security systems.

Security Systems Save Lives and Property

Alarm systems are no longer simply a first line of protection for burglaries. Many safety related features have been added to the main alarm system like carbon monoxide (CO) detectors, smoke detectors and flood detectors for high risk areas. Even low temperature sensors are available which will alert the alarm company if the temperature within a home drops below a preset level. There is also more sophisticated equipment such as closed circuit television (CCTV), video cameras connected directly to a television or VCR, which provide additional surveillance.

Choosing the Right Alarm Company

With hundreds of companies and plans to cull through, choosing the right alarm company can often be overwhelming. Fortunately, the NBFAA offers help and a

checklist on choosing the right system for you and your family. Not all alarm companies are created equal. When interviewing different companies, make sure to follow these simple steps:

- Contact your insurance agent, the NBFAA or your local police department's crime prevention unit for names of security system companies.
- Make sure the alarm company is licensed in the state.
- Ask if pre-employment screening is done on all their employees such as background checks.
- Ask the salesperson for a free security inspection and system recommendations.
- Get a written estimate for the entire system including monthly monitoring fees.
- Compare similar systems and pricing.
- Determine if you will own the system or lease it from the alarm company.
- Make sure your system will be monitored around the clock (24/7) by the central station.
- Negotiate. Most alarm companies will negotiate on system add-ons, providing a free motion detector, additional keypads or even one month free monitoring service.
- Make sure the system you choose is equipped with a battery for backup power.

Once your system is installed, choose a user-friendly code that everyone in the family can remember. Let your insurance agent know that your home is being monitored, and additional insurance discounts may be available. Check to see if your municipality requires homeowners with security alarms to register with the local police department.

Monitored alarm systems are one of the best investments a homeowner can make. Not only does it provide security but it can provide safety-nets.

Article provided by:

HOMES & LAND
OF GREATER ALASKA

DID YOU KNOW?

The NBFAA is a valuable resource for homeowners researching systems for their home. Many alarm companies are members of the organization, meaning they adhere to a National Code of Ethics and pledge to render alarm services at the highest level of quality possible.

To learn more about home security systems, call the NBFAA Marketing Department at (301) 585-1855 for a FREE consumer brochure or visit the NBFAA on the Internet at www.alarm.org.



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