



Alaska REALTOR®

FEBRUARY 2008

A PUBLICATION OF THE ALASKA ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®

2008 GRI Schedule

Convention Update

Real Estate Commission News



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Photo: Dog Sledding - Denali National Park

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President's Message

*By Shawn C. Paul
 2008 AAR President
 RE/MAX of Juneau*



Fellow REALTORS - In spite of repeated warnings about global warming trends, Juneau seems a lot more like Fairbanks this year than Seattle. Personally I'm waiting until it's a lot more like SoCal. That serves as a reminder, at least to me, that things aren't always the way they seem. While various "news" sources like to run op-ed pieces about housing issues and TV investment gurus have tiny sound bites full of hyperbole and fear, Americans continue to pursue their dreams of home ownership.

Not long ago I was asked to prepare testimony before a House committee on economic development. They wanted to know about the Alaskan housing market. Of course my first job is to explain there is no such thing as an Alaskan housing market. Housing, just like politics, is local. What our friends experience in Kodiak has little or no bearing on the supply or demand in Ketchikan. I received quite a bit of good data from brokers and executive officers and, as you might suspect, the conclusions were varied. However, one noticeable similarity appeared in responses from the three markets that had felt a tightening (by the way, the three that reported sales data of less volume than last year all still reported price increases). They all mentioned negative media coverage as a significant impact that they witnessed on their markets. Perception is half the battle.

With this theme in mind I urge you to follow the National Association of Realtors public relations agenda over the next year. NAR President Dick Gaylord has made getting the truth out about housing as his #1 agenda item. NAR is committing unprecedented resources and

(President's Message, continue on page 18)

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Real Estate Commission Update

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



December's Alaska Real Estate Commission meeting was held in Anchorage at the Atwood Building on December 13 and 14, 2007. 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

December's meeting was like most of our meetings; 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 this reporting period of August 22 through November 26, 2007 the Investigation Unit opened 12 cases and closed 9 cases. There are currently 26 open cases with litigation negotiations ongoing in two of the open cases, one case being reviewed by the Attorney General's Office, and Accusations are being prepared in three (3) of the open cases.

We reviewed and approved two Memorandum of Agreements. The first involved a licensee who delayed the deposit of an earnest money check for approximately seven days and failed to properly disclose her licensure status in writing as required by statute.

The second case involved broker supervision issues and an allegation that a licensee failed to return a client's property, including a tenant security deposit, in a timely manner following the

termination of a property management contract.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Concern has been voiced by some of our licensees that there is a trend brewing in the Lower 48 to allow "virtual real estate offices". These offices are promising to provide real estate services, for a fee, but there is not really an office or a specific person you are working with. The concern of our Commission and other State Commissions is the public is not being protected from potentially unscrupulous activity. Some states do not allow virtual offices. California Real Estate Law, specifically Section 10162 of the Business and Professions Code, requires real estate brokers to "...maintain a definite place of business within the state which shall serve as his or her office for the transaction of business". The statute requires that this office shall be the place where the broker license is displayed and where personal consultations with clients are held. While transactions can take place over the internet, all California Real Estate Brokers must have a physical location in California.

SURETY FUND CLAIMS

The Commission adopted the proposed decision of our Administrative Law Judge in two separate cases involving the same licensee. The licensee was involved in trying to sell nine four-plex properties in Anchorage. In both cases the judge determined that the claimants have "...proven by preponderance of the evidence..." that the licensee, "...while acting in his professional capacity as a real estate licensee, engaged in fraudulent conduct, made intentional misrepresentations in connection with the proposed real estate transaction and wrongfully converted the claimant's funds (which should have been placed into a trust account) to his own use". The damages paid were \$4,000 and \$12,000.

(AREC Report, continue on page 5)

(AREC Report, continued from page 4)

CURRENT REGULATIONS

I have mentioned in past articles the Commission's concern about how long the proposed regulation change process takes. We have several proposed changes that were proposed in September, 2006 that still have not been adopted. As a result, we have put together a spread sheet that will allow us and the other involved parties to track our changes through the office of the Regulation Specialist, Public Comment, the Department of Law and the Lt. Governor's office. We currently have 21 changes that are in various stages of the process that we are tracking.

LICENSING EXAMINER REPORT

Currently there are 2573 ACTIVE licensees. There are 490 Brokers, 434 Associate Brokers, and 1642 Salespersons.

EDUCATION REPORT

I hope everyone knows that changes to our pre-licensing and post-licensing requirements

are taking place effective February 1, 2008. Here is an excerpt from a letter sent to Instructors and Course Owners by Sharon Walsh, Executive Administrator, AREC, detailing the information:

Pre-licensing:

The new requirement for pre-licensing hours will increase from 20 to 40 on February 1, 2008. What does this mean to you? Increase in hours for your pre-licensing courses, the additional 20 hours of course material and instruction will be defined in regulation.

Post-licensing:

The new requirements for post-licensing education will increase the hours from 20 to 30 hours which must be obtained within 12 months of issuance of a real estate license. If licensees would like to qualify for PLE under the 20 hours then they must submit a completed PLE affidavit form, enclose fees and a copy of their certificate.

(AREC Report, continue on page 7)

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(AREC Report, continued from page 7)

The new requirements for post-licensing education will increase the hours from 20 to 30 hours which must be obtained within 12 months of issuance of a real estate license. If licensees would like to qualify for PLE under the 20 hours then they must submit a completed PLE affidavit form, enclose fees and a copy of their certificate.

Continuing Education:

There is NO change to the continuing education requirement. All licensees are required to complete 12 Elective Continuing Education (ECE) and 8 Designated Continuing Education (DCE credits before they can renew their license.


**RESIDENTIAL REAL PROPERTY
TRANSFER DISCLOSURE STATEMENT**

We spent most of the last day of the meeting discussing the State of Alaska Residential Real Property Transfer Disclosure Statement. It was our intention to clean up the statement to reflect current needs for disclosure and eliminating ambiguities. Each of you will have an opportunity to

voice your opinion when the document goes out during the Public Comment phase of the process. While we made some major suggested changes we encourage each of you to review the document and make sure it is reflective of our current market conditions and needs.

As part of this discussion, the Commission also reviewed a resolution of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly requesting the State of Alaska initiate a comprehensive planning process for the Matanuska River to address erosion mitigation, protection of public facilities and river management authority. Basically, the Matanuska-Susitna Borough is asking that we add disclosure of erosion hazards to the Residential Real Property Transfer Disclosure Statement.

NEXT MEETING

The Commission will be traveling to Juneau for our next meeting to be held on March 13 and 14, 2008. If you are in the Juneau area we would love to have you attend our meeting. 

Meet Our Anchorage Escrow Team



Robin Stout, Escrow Manager
Direct Phone: 777-0509
Fax: 222-7409
Email: robins@stewartak.com



Heather Stahn-Randell
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GRI, Graduate REALTORS® Institute



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. Upon successful completion, the student is a graduate of the REALTORS® Institute and is entitled to use the designation, GRI.

What is the GRI Designation

GRI stands for Graduate REALTOR® Institute and is one of the nation's most widely recognized real estate designations for REALTORS®.

You will earn your GRI only after successfully completing the extensive course instruction program designed to increase your industry skills.

Why Should You Take the GRI

The program is designed to increase your knowledge of all aspects of real estate and provide new skills to set you apart from the competition.

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

Many consider GRI to be the most comprehensive real estate education program available.

GRI Benefits

The GRI symbol after your name demonstrates nationwide to buyers, sellers and fellow agents you are a professional with a solid grasp of the fundamentals of real estate.

You will expand your network of real estate professionals through course contacts.

Improve your earning potential.

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MARCH

GRI 300

Thursday - Friday, March 6, 7, 27 & 28, 2008
Location: Kenai
Contact KPAR for information 262-1581

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

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



GRI 300 - Soldotna

Thursday –Friday, March 6, 7, 27 & 28, 2008
Aspen Hotel - 326 Binkley Circle

Residential Real Estate as an Investment

Thursday, March 6, 2008 Instructor: Vern Rush, Alaska Capitol Corporation 8:30am-5:00pm

The purpose of this course is to allow the participant to view investment real estate from several perspectives and evaluate properties, which may be appropriate investments for different buyers, including themselves.

Business Management Skills

Friday, March 7, 2008 Instructor: Traci Barickman, RE/MAX of Wasilla 8:30am-5:00pm

This course will give the students the tools to establish a success real estate career. The students will learn the fundamentals of business planning that will lead to increased profit and productivity.

Liability & Risk Management

Thursday, March 27, 2008 Instructor: Anita Bates, Bates & Associates, REALTORS® 8:30am-5:00pm

This course will cover federal and state laws as they impact the way the real estate brokerage business is conducted. It will review independent contractors and employees. Course topics include IRS status, human resource issues, sexual harassment, and employer and managers responsibility.

Taxation

Friday, March 28, 2008 Instructor: Ken Gain, Cash Now Financial Corp. 8:30am-5:00pm

This course will go beyond the basics of real estate taxation to a more advanced look at business and estate planning. Utilizing real estate to build the estate while minimizing the taxes paid is a method utilized for many years by the sophisticated and successful investor.

GRI 300 is co-sponsored by the Alaska Association of REALTORS® & the Kenai Peninsula Association of REALTORS®. Please call KPAR for additional information, (907) 262-1851.

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The Denali Alaskan Mortgage Team:
Katrina Walters, Kristin English-Bowden, Laurie Lyons



NAR Gives You Keys to Succeed in '08 Market

"Message from NAR President Dick Gaylord"

"We spend January 1 walking through our lives, room by room, drawing up a list of work to be done, cracks to be patched. Maybe this year, to balance the list, we ought to walk through the rooms of our lives... not looking for flaws, but for potential."

~ Ellen Goodman
Pulitzer Prize-Winning Columnist

As we kick off another year "All Together," it is easy to get caught up in news about what is wrong with the real estate market. The truth is that 2008 is shaping up to be a promising year for real estate, with plenty of opportunities to buy and sell in every market.

According to National Association of REALTORS® Research, there is significant pent-up housing demand that will begin to be unleashed into the marketplace in 2008. Many markets will see rising home sales and strengthening home prices. We believe that the worst of the credit problems are behind us. Great news for consumers and REALTORS®!

Thanks to NAR, you have a distinct advantage when it comes to growing your business in the current environment. We are pulling out all the stops in 2008 to give you the information and resources you need to understand what is really happening in your local markets and to keep your clients informed. Check out our newest resources:

• **Local Market Reports** – In addition to our national indicators and forecasts, REALTORS®

now have access to more than 70 local market reports. With insights on sales, prices and economic factors, these reports will give you everything you need to counter negative news and tell consumers what is really happening in real estate. They are available free of charge to all NAR members. Just visit www.realtor.org/marketreports to find your local market.

• **Surround-Sound Media Outreach** – NAR also has developed a new "Surround-Sound" media outreach toolkit for states and boards, which can help spread the word about all of the great opportunities to buy and sell real estate. This toolkit complements our national media outreach efforts and includes talking points, story ideas and tips for working with the media. The Surround Sound toolkit will be available online at www.Realtor.org in early February.

• **Research Studies** – In 2008, NAR will be producing several new research reports that can help you grow your businesses. For example, our Profile of Vacation and Investment Home Buyers can help you tap into new markets. The Homebuyer and Seller Profile also can tell you exactly what consumers are looking for in a home and what they expect from you in the transaction. All of our reports and surveys are available at www.realtor.org/research.

Many markets will see rising home sales and strengthening home prices. We believe that the worst of the credit problems are behind us.

Again, these are just a few of the outstanding resources available exclusively to NAR members. We urge you to visit www.Realtor.org often in 2008 and use all of the information and services available to you.

Since 1908, REALTORS® have worked hard to earn a reputation as America's leading community builders and dream makers. Today,

(NAR Report, continue on page 11)

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(NAR Report, continued from page 10)

the “Voice for Real Estate” is stronger than it has ever been, speaking for millions of consumers in neighborhoods across America. And, we’re just getting started.

Thanks to your participation in our advocacy efforts, NAR made tremendous strides on the public policy front last year, passing legislation in three key areas that will preserve the long-term value of real estate and help you grow your businesses:

- **Mortgage Relief** – We achieved a major victory for consumers caught in costly mortgages, when President Bush signed the Mortgage Cancellation Tax Relief Act in December. We also are making affordable financing available to potential buyers through landmark FHA Reform. We expect this bill will go to conference early next year.


- **Terrorism Insurance** – NAR also worked with Congress to keep the commercial real estate market strong and stable well into the future. President Bush recently signed a bill that continues the Terrorism Risk Insurance Program for seven years.

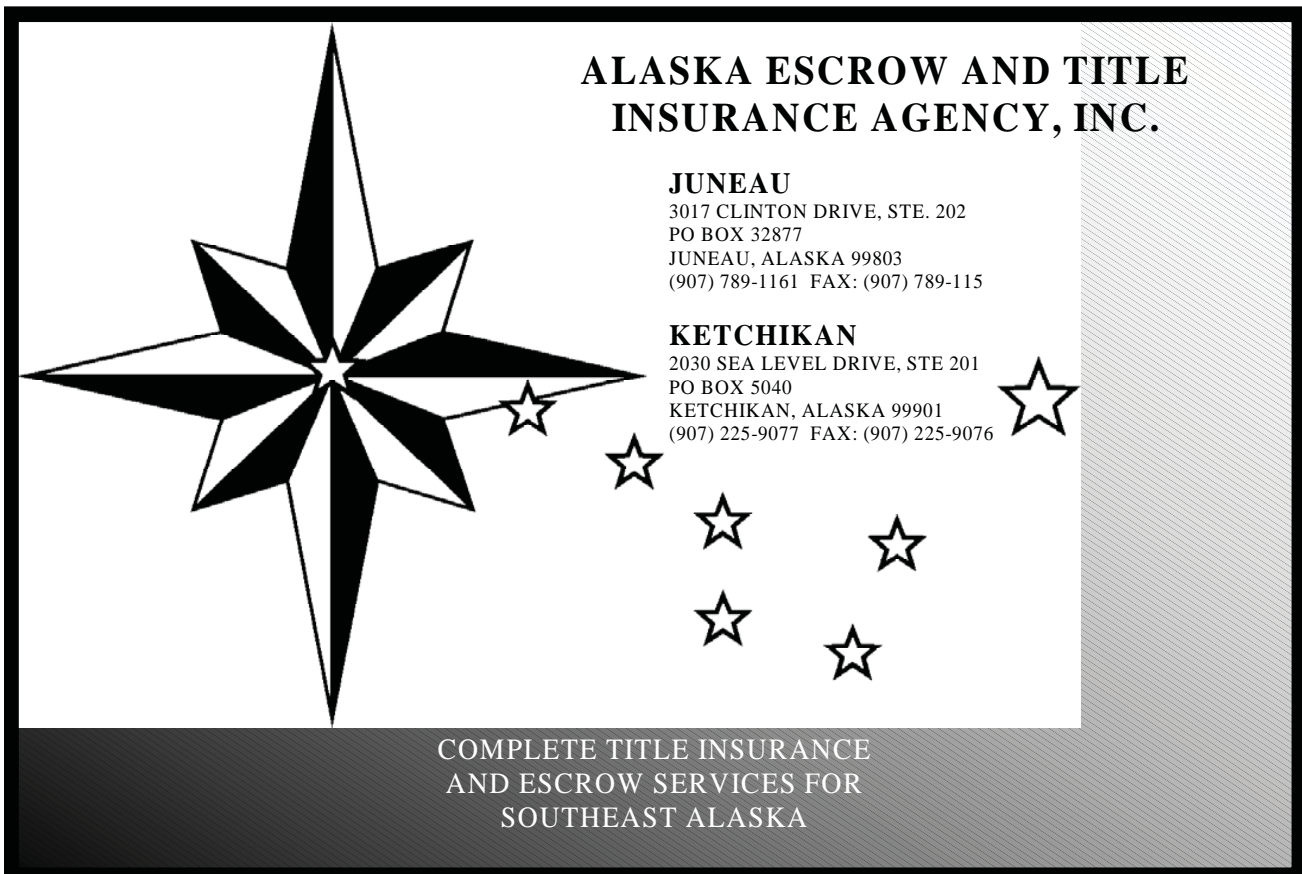
- **Banks in Real Estate** – For the first time

ever, Congress also passed a two-year moratorium on banks entering the real estate business, which will take effect early next year. We also have record support for a permanent ban through the Community Choice in Real Estate Act.

Thanks, again, to your hard work, REALTORS® are in a prime position to succeed on many other key priorities in 2008, including GSE Reform, Flood Insurance Reform, Natural Disaster Reform, Affordable Housing Trust Fund and Mortgage Reform. All of these issues are critical to our professional success, a healthy real estate market and strong communities. Please keep up the great work on both RPAC and grassroots.

NAR is constantly working on your behalf, and we want to hear from you. Please do not hesitate to contact us with your thoughts and suggestions. With your help, we will show consumers across the nation that now is a great time to invest in real estate. We are in this “All Together!”

Wishing you a happy and prosperous New Year,
Dick Gaylord, 2008 NAR President 



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2008 Annual Convention

"September 16th - 20th at Mt. McKinley Princess Wilderness Lodge"

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.

From the moment you arrive at Mt. McKinley Princess Wilderness Lodge you know you're somewhere special. Located in Denali State Park on the banks of the Chulitna River, this lodge is a true wilderness retreat with a host of recreational activities, exceptional amenities and awesome views of Mt. McKinley.



Schedule - Please note the convention ice breaker will be on Tuesday, September 16, 2008 with the last evening function on Friday, September 19, 2008.

Tuesday, September 16th - Ice Breaker
Wednesday, September 17th - Affiliate Night
Thursday, September 18th - RPAC Night
Friday, September 19th - Awards Night

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).

Guest 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 out 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.



He was educated at Georgetown University and Cornell University, and holds a doctorate in economics. 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.

Kenneth R. Trepeta Esq - Ken has been the Director of Real Estate Services for the National Association of Realtors® since June of 2007.



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

federal housing policy.

From 2005 to April 2006, Ken was a Vice President for Government Relations at JP Morgan Chase where he tracked tax policy, housing and mortgage issues.

Association News

2008 Legislative Summit

The Alaska Association of REALTORS® Board of Directors and RPAC Trustees will travel to Juneau March 11 and 12, 2008 for the Association's annual Legislative Summit and Board of Directors Meeting. The summit is an opportunity for the REALTOR® delegation to meet personally with each legislator to discuss issues that impact the real estate industry.

Leadership Conference

The Alaska Association of REALTORS® recently held a two-day Leadership Conference at the Dimond Center Hotel in Anchorage. Over forty attendees in various REALTOR® leadership roles throughout the state attended the conference.

Speakers participating in the conference included Region Vice President Mike Flynn from Washington, AAR Lobbyist Wendy Chamberlain, Megan Stapleton gave a presentation on working with the media, and former Senator Tim Kelly talked about

being effective at the grassroots level in Juneau.

The Conference also included an RPAC reception for RPAC contributors, State senators and representatives.



2008 AAR Board of Directors

Standing L-R: Shawn Paul, Judy Cloud, Don McKenzie, Joni Schneider, Jean Kay, Art Clark, Eva Loken, Cody Gibson, Sue Nix, Dale Bagley, Joyce Porte, Gina Pelaia, Amy Krier and Brad Cole. Front Row: PeggyAnn McConnochie, Janie Strong and Grant Shields. Not pictured: Dave Somers, Michael McLane, Helen Jarratt and Kathryn Clark.

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Pre-registration required and can be done online or email: register@ahfc.state.ak.us. For more information call 907-330-8437 or 800-459-2921 (from outside Anchorage).

Public Awareness Campaign Update

Each year the National Association of REALTORS® conducts a tracking study of member attitudes and awareness regarding the association and its communications programs. The objectives of the study are to measure:

- Membership awareness, attitudes, and support for the Public Awareness Campaign;
- Awareness of NAR's communications program to the general public promoting the value and benefits of using a REALTOR®; and
- Satisfaction, attitudes, and beliefs regarding NAR membership and the efforts of the association.

Methodology

The study was conducted online among 1,500 members selected at random from NAR membership lists between September 17 and October 26, 2007. The sample was weighted to reflect the proportion of the total membership regarding gender, specialization and classification – in other words, brokers and sales agents, commercial and residential agents, and men and women were represented in proportion to their actual presence in the association.

Summary of Key Findings

The Public Awareness Campaign is one of the most popular programs among NAR members - in 2007, 98 percent of REALTORS® favored the advertising program, and 93 percent wanted to see more advertising like it. Nearly four out of

every five members rated the campaign's effectiveness as "good" to "excellent."


In 2007, more than three in every five new member respondents agreed that the Public Awareness Campaign influenced their decision to join NAR, and fully two-thirds of members believe that identifying themselves as REALTORS® differentiates them from other real estate professionals - an all-time high.



The survey also examines REALTORS®' satisfaction with the Association. A high percentage of members strongly agree that NAR is:

- Succeeding in federal lobbying efforts on behalf of the real estate profession (73 percent);
- Promoting high standards for the industry (69 percent);
- Providing leadership on real estate issues (65 percent);
- Promoting the value of using an agent who is a REALTOR® (62 percent); and
- Committed to its members (61 percent).

This year's campaign aims to give consumers the facts about the long-term value of real estate and current market conditions to balance the sometimes incomplete and sensational information presented in the national media.

The campaign launched nationally on January 14. The TV and radio ads will air more than 10,000 times on national TV and radio outlets from January through November, continuing the campaign's on-air presence for 11 months of the year. 



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REALTORS® Of The Year

"2007 Local Board/Association"



**Alaska Association
of REALTORS®**

2007 REALTOR® of the Year

Denny Wood
Prudential Jack White Vista RE
Anchorage



Viki Kaas
Homes Unlimited
Anchorage Board



Chick Wallace
Wallace, Wallace & Wakefield
Greater Fairbanks Board



John Calhoun
Story Real Estate
Kachemak Board



Issabella Grossi
Freedom Realty
Kenai Peninsula Association



Shawn Paul
RE/MAX of Juneau
Southeast Board



Jo Sonerholm
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Hartig Rhodes Hoge & Lekisch, P.C. Attorneys at Law

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The 2008 RPAC (REALTORS® Political Action Committee) Fund-raising Conference was held in Washington D.C. January 7 and 8. I attended and felt very fortunate to be there representing Alaska. This will seem like name dropping...but, while there...touched base with Mike Flynn, our Region 12 Vice President. He was a speaker at our 2008 Leadership Meeting in Anchorage. I also visited with Gary Wright, Region 12 RPAC Chairman. Gary and his wife Donna attended the Alaska convention in Girdwood last year.

While attending a “how to have a successful wine tasting event” at the NAR D.C. building, I spent a little time with Pat V. Combs, NAR Immediate Past President. Those attending the Alaska convention will remember the special honor we felt by having the National president in attendance. She had glowing memories of her trip to Alaska and wanted me to especially thank Sandy Eherenman for the gift of Christmas ornaments. She said they were her and her husband, Guy’s, first ornaments acquired as a couple and they will always be special. I do not want to imply that it was all social as our agenda was full, very well organized and geared to learning the do’s and don’ts of successful fund-raising, followed by how to legally accept and transmit RPAC contributions.

We were in breakout sessions where, at some point, we mixed with all the participants. Some of the best or more successful fund-raisers are already in play in Alaska. They highly recommended the RPAC auctions, diamonds and champagne, which the Fairbanks Board initiated with great success at their installation banquet in December. It was noted that many states implement dues billing with the proper disclaimer, of course.

Much emphasis was put on the 1/3 rule. Ask your local RPAC Trustee about this. Educating the membership was emphasized as crucial if you expect to receive contributions. As you know, 30% of our RPAC funds go to National and 70% stay in Alaska.

The big challenge extended by the NAR 2008 RPAC fund-raising chairman, Moe Veissi, was to raise \$10 million in 2008. So, of course his mantra, tied together with his name was “MO money”. He is very enthusiastic, focused and feels sure we will meet the challenge. The dollar goal of the National RPAC is \$15 per member. I know as Alaskans we will do our share. However, I can’t give away too many fund-raising secrets as the Fairbanks Board wants to again be the most improved board with regards to annual RPAC Investments. 

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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 sponsor for the Anchorage Board a day-long seminar featuring a national trainer. We will pass along details as they become available.

Alaska Multiple Listing Service is awarding governmental affairs funding to selected boards. 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, demonstrated ability to coordinate efforts with AK MLS and other industry applications and increases or decreases in governmental affairs budgeting and the reasons therefore.

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.

ABR participated in the Alaska Association's Leadership Conference in November. Through ABR's Operation Alaska Cares, we have shipped 824 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 20-23 and GRI 300 November 11-14.

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

Fairbanks

The first few weeks of 2008 have been spent planning and setting goals for the rest of the year.

Our Board of Directors met for their annual orientation and goal-setting meeting. They focused on implementing the goals set forth in our strategic plan. One major focus in this area will be improving contact between the board and our members. The directors have divided up the offices and will be making visits to the brokers throughout the year. We will hear committee reports from each of our committee chairs at our General Membership Meetings. We have begun a two prong public relations campaign. The first will focus on our local housing market offering sales data to show the community how home prices have grown over the past several years. The second will be a public image campaign, focusing on showing the commu-

nity how our members give back to the community by supporting local charities and non-profit agencies.

Our education committee will be revamping our new member orientation program and developing our pre- and post-licensing education programs. Our RPAC Committee has some great new plans for raising funds in 2008.

Finally, our MLS Committee is off and running in full force. They will focus their efforts in 2008 by bringing our rules and regulations up to date. We have a full slate of education offerings in place for the year, and look forward to a fruitful 2008.

Valley

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

2007 was a year of change given that we negotiated the sale of our MLS. We also spent considerable time developing our Strategic Plan for 2008 and, thanks to the involvement of our Education Committee, we have seriously ramped up our education program. In 2007 we successfully accomplished our goal of offering all three GRI modules and an ABR course for the first time. In 2008 we plan to build on our Designation courses, and hope to bring CRS to the Valley.

As one would imagine, 2008 will be a year of challenge because we

(Newsbites, continue on page 18)

(Newsbites, continued from page 17)


must now discover how to generate new non-dues based revenue. We will be considering EVERYTHING. Stay tuned, we're sure to create some fun, new programs. Additionally, we will be focusing on completing the details of our 2008 Strategic Plan. And, let's not forget that VBR is hosting the State Convention this year. We're working on securing fantastic keynote speakers, entertainers and programs.

We expect to see the Valley continue to grow in 2008. We have some exciting commercial development that is just starting and the groundbreaking for the new prison in Pt. McKenzie will happen this year.

Our forecast is that 2008 will be stronger than 2007. We have a really good group of Board Members and they are dedicated to improving services to our membership. We extend our best wishes to everyone in the state for health, prosperity, and happiness. Have a great New Year!

(President's Message, continued from page 3)

manpower to the effort. But the truth is, this will only succeed if a grassroots effort mirrors the professional effort. A common refrain we've heard at the national level when lobbying Congress or the administration is, "Well, that's nice that you have 1.4 million members. Where are they?" It's similar to the message we'll hear in varied voices from our clients. "Well, that's nice that NAR thinks the economy is robust. What about MY house?" This is my job, the state and local board's jobs and particularly, YOUR job. It's imperative that we tell the public the rest of the story and why it's a great time to buy, how interest rates are great, how our local economies are strong, how, even though our markets may not look exactly like they looked during this boom or that boom, they are still performing better than most years in the last few decades! We will continue, as individuals and at various levels of the association, to need to educate the public. Whether we're talking about our local economies, or a bigger picture issue like real estate as the most fundamental long term investment, we will always be the teachers. We are, afterall, the ones on the ground, the ones who know when things really are as they appear through someone else's fogged lens.

For more information about the just-launched NAR public awareness campaign, check out www.housingmarketfacts.com and www.realtor.org/awareness_campaign. 




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- Eliminating sales resistance
- Creating trust and loyalty from buyers
- Negotiating skills

Course Topics:

- Customer service
- Sales
- Negotiation

<p>Course Dates and Times February 11 & 12, 2008 Registration Starts @ 8:00 AM Class Hours: 8:30-5:00 Course Cost \$375 <i>Lunch is included both days</i></p>	<p>Class Discounts</p> <p>Alaska CRS Chapter MEMBERS \$30 after Chapter paid status verified</p> <p>Alaska CRS Chapter DESIGNEES \$50 after Chapter paid status</p>	<p>Instructor Mike Selvaggio, CRS 2008 CRS President</p> <p>Class location O'Malley's on the Green Anchorage, Alaska</p> <p>12 ECE Credits 2 CRS Credits</p>
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CANCELLATION POLICY:

Students who cancel 15 days prior to class will receive a refund (less \$50 cancel fee) or credit certificate toward any other Alaska CRS sponsored class within 18 months. No refunds will be made within 15 days of class, however, a credit certificate will be issued (less \$50) toward any Alaska CRS sponsored class. "No Show/No Notice", fee is forfeited!

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President's Message

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

Here we are in the brand new year: 2008. I am honored to be able to serve as your Alaska CRS Chapter President again. It has been ten years since I last held that office. I am very happy to have an outstanding Board of Directors to work with. These are people who ask what needs to be done and step up to the plate to do the task. A president could not ask for better people to serve as officers and directors. We also have great board representation from all over the state. If you have any questions or ideas that you would like us to know about, go to www.alaskacrs.com or contact a CRS representation near you. You can always send comments or questions to me at denny@akhomes.com.

What are you going to do with your year? Are you going to do the same thing and expect different results (that happens to be the definition of insanity) or are you going to look to different and more efficient ways to do your business? You could look for new and better ways to work for your sellers, or possibly find a better system. Or you could find a system to keep track of your business to make it possible to have something worth selling as part of your exit strategy when you are ready to change directions and sell your business to retire. How about finding a way to get more referrals so you don't have to spend so much time procuring new clients? Any one of these ideas could make you more money.

This year your CRS Chapter will be sponsoring classes on Sales Strategies in February with

National CRS Council President Mike Selvaggio, Marketing with Microsoft Office in August with long time CRS Instructor Pat Zaby, and Building an Exceptional Customer Service Referral Business in October with senior Instructor Frank Serio. I know all of these instructors personally and know you will learn more than your money's worth at the courses.

We also have wonderful sponsors whose help allows us to put on events and courses for you. Many thanks to the 2007 sponsors:

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First National Bank Alaska
Homes and Land of Greater Alaska

We still have open events for sponsorship in 2008. If you are interested in being a CRS sponsor please give us a call.

The most important thing is to use what you have learned, set up systems in your business to make your life easier, and get out there and sell some property.

MAKE YOUR HOME ENERGY-EFFICIENT

BY KATHY SCOTT

According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Americans spend an average of \$1400 a year on energy bills, 45 percent of that comes from the heating and cooling of their home. Increasing the efficiency of your heating and cooling appliances can substantially reduce your annual costs up to 30 percent per year. Even more importantly, making your home energy-efficient helps to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improves the quality of our air.

More than a decade ago, the EPA launched the Energy Star program, voluntary labeling designed to identify and promote energy-efficient products. Today, more than a thousand companies and organizations have partnered with the federal government labeling energy-efficient appliances, office equipment, home electronics and more. Since that time, Americans have purchased more than one billion products with the Energy Star label.

If you're building a home or in the market for new appliances, make sure the product you purchase has the Energy Star logo on it. For those not currently in the market for new heating and cooling appliances, there are still many ways to improve your home's energy-efficiency.



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First, have your heating and cooling equipment serviced annually and change your air filters monthly. A dirty filter can stall the circulating air flow, requiring more energy to cool or heat your home. Air escaping through doors and windows can make a room feel colder or warmer in the winter and summer months respectively and requires your system to work overtime as well. Weather stripping or caulking around doors and windows is an inexpensive way to keep air from leaking and disallows the outside air to filter in, which is a major cause of room variations, and a great way to reduce your energy bills. Insulating ceilings is another cost-effective solution, reducing heat loss and gains and providing a more even temperature distribution around the home.

The EPA and the Department of Energy also advises that homeowners consider replacing their thermostat with a programmable model that can store as many as four or more temperature settings daily, adjusting the temperature lower or higher while the home is empty.

Other products in your home can also drain energy, though none as much as your heating and cooling system – water heater (11%), washer and dryer (10%), lighting (7%), refrigerator (6%), dishwasher (2%), television/VCR/DVD (2%), computer and monitor (2%), and others include various household products such as stoves, ovens, microwaves and small appliances (15%). Use Energy Star backed products when purchasing or replacing these items. While taken individually, the change in your energy costs may be limited, the EPA claims that if "half of all American homes replace one standard television with an Energy Star model, the change would be equal to shutting down a power plant."

The home mortgage industry is now starting to take notice of energy-efficient homes as well. Since the cost of utilities can often be one of the homeowner's highest monthly costs, borrowers may qualify for higher loans if their home meets or exceeds the requirements of an energy-efficient home.

To learn more about lowering your home energy costs, visit www.EnergyStar.org. The site offers unbiased information for hiring contractors, energy auditors and more, and provides useful quizzes for consumers to determine their energy needs and how to avoid repair nightmares.



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