

REAL ESTATE LEADER

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF REAL ESTATE

Fall 2008

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The *Leadership*MAR honors experience

Back to basics

Going green

Housing & Economic Recovery Act

SPECIAL SECTION: MAR Convention & EXPO Guide

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REAL ESTATE LEADER

A PUBLICATION OF THE MISSISSIPPI ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®

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Fall 2008

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On the cover:

Special thanks to Steve Finch, Store Director, and Academy Sports for providing life jackets and boat paddles for use by *LMAR* participants in the cover shot.



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PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE



In these uncertain economic times, we need to put our brave faces on and take bold steps to secure our business futures. Easier said than done, I know! We are all in need of a little inspiration about now. That's why I was so encouraged to hear of the courageous journey 14 Mississippi REALTORS® took last month to stretch their bodies, their minds and their

leadership abilities.

On the cover of this issue of *Real Estate LEADER* you'll see the smiling faces of our *LeadershipMAR.h* Honors Class of 2008. These LMAR alums embarked on a whitewater rafting and ropes course adventure and learned valuable life lessons in the process. They've all walked away from this experience, they say, feeling empowered to tackle challenges in their businesses – and in their daily lives.

Also in this issue, we take you "back to the basics" as REALTORS® around the state remind us of the skills and sales strategies that are the very foundation of a successful real estate career.

You'll also learn more about the details of the Housing & Economic Recovery Act signed into law by President Bush, including specifics about the \$7,500 first-time home buyer tax credit. Get further details by visiting realtor.org.

Home buyers are more aware than ever of the benefits of going green – and not only because it's good for the planet. Are you paying attention to the green movement and how you can incorporate some environmentally friendly measures into your business practices? On page 10, the Mississippi Association of REALTORS® staff leads by example and demonstrates some easy green steps to take around the office.

We also include a special pull-out section on the 2008 Convention & EXPO. If you haven't registered yet, take a moment to review the many programs and events we have planned for you in my hometown of Hattiesburg this December. I look forward to seeing you there.

Gwen James
President

Word on the Street

REAL ESTATE NEWS BRIEFS

Time remains to register for the 2008 NAR Convention & EXPO

REALTORS® can still register to attend NAR's largest event, the 2008 Convention & EXPO, Nov. 7-10, in Orlando, Fla. A one-day pass is available for \$130. Full Convention registration is only \$330. The convention offers over 200 programs with something for everyone from brokers and sales agents to commercial practitioners and property managers. Learn the latest ideas and techniques for selling in today's challenging markets, recharge your batteries with motivational speaker Lance Armstrong, and network with REALTORS® from across the country. Register today at realtor.org.



NAR encourages responsible RESPA reform

The National Association of REALTORS® testified recently on the critical importance of reforming the Real Estate Settlement Procedures Act in a way that benefits home buyers by reducing costs, simplifying the closing process, and making closing cost disclosures more consistent and understandable. NAR expressed concern over the current HUD proposal for RESPA reform, which NAR says will lengthen an already long process and ultimately increase closing costs.

NAR and the Center for Responsible Lending recommended that HUD develop a one-page summary GFE to help buyers comparison shop, accompanied by a full GFE that includes all closing costs to reduce confusion. NAR also supports improved disclosures of mortgage terms and settlement services.

NAR offers FHA tool kit

The economic stimulus package enacted earlier this year includes a major expansion of FHA to help troubled borrowers replace their subprime loan with safe federally backed financing. NAR's new FHA tool kit includes a video of frequently asked questions about FHA, a flash media presentation of agency loan programs, brochures, reference guides, and links to other resources. U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Secretary Steve Preston joined NAR to announce the launch of the tool kit. The FHA tool kit is available for purchase at the REALTOR® Store at realtor.org.

Family is theme of NAR parade of roses float

Construction has begun on NAR's float for the 2009 Tournament of Roses Parade on Jan. 1 in Pasadena, Calif. The Pasadena Foothills Association of REALTORS® is coordinating volunteers' decorating efforts beginning Dec. 20. The theme is the importance of family pulling together to build a home for strength and solace. If you plan to be in Pasadena, volunteer to help decorate at www.pfar.org/rose_parade.asp.



LEGAL EASE



BY RON FARRIS, ROBINSON, BIGGS, INGRAM, SOLOP & FARRIS, PLLC

MREC and the changing rules of disclosure: What you don't know could hurt you

Following on the heels of major revisions to the MAR Standard Forms and Commercial Forms sets, recent changes relating to Mississippi Real Estate Commission forms require REALTORS® to stay on their toes.

Most notably, the Property Condition Disclosure Statement ("PCDS") already in use is now supplemented by a second form. Effective July 1, 2008, an Informational Statement for Mississippi Property Condition Disclosure Statement must be executed by the seller, the buyer and their representatives in every transaction where disclosure is required by Miss. Code Ann., § 89-1-501 (Supp. 2008). This form essentially informs the parties to a transaction of their rights with regard to disclosure laws currently in place.

As REALTORS® should know by heart, the PCDS must be delivered by every transferor of real property to a prospective transferee through the broker obtaining the offer whenever a licensed real estate broker or salesperson is involved in a sale, exchange, installment land contract, lease with option to purchase, any other option to purchase or ground lease coupled with improvements of real property on which either a dwelling unit is located or where there is a residential stock cooperative containing one to four units unless the transaction falls within the exclusions listed in § 89-1-501 (2).

The form is not required in transactions which include the following

- Transfers pursuant to a court order, a writ of execution, a foreclosure sale, a bankruptcy, an eminent domain proceeding, transfers from a decree for specific performance, transfer by the administration of a decedent's estate, a guardianship, a conservatorship or a trust
- Transfers from one co-owner to another
- Transfers from one spouse to another, transfers to spouses as a result of a divorce or separation, transfers to a person in the lineal line of consanguinity
- Transfers by a mortgagor who is in default, any sale pursuant to a decree of foreclosure or by means of a deed in lieu of foreclosure
- Transfers to or from governmental entities or transfers on which no dwelling is located

MREC's new Informational Statement form adds to the disclosure already required several points of information contained in existing law:

- Delivery of the PCDS after the transferee has made an offer gives a transferee three days after delivery of the PCDS to withdraw the offer without penalties and receive a full refund of any earnest money (or five days if delivery is by mail). These provisions cannot be changed by the contract wording. (Current law requires delivery of the PCDS before execution of a contract).
- Real estate licensees have a duty to inform clients of their duties and rights with regard to the PCDS, and failure to do so can expose the salesperson and broker to serious penalties including censure, suspension or license revocation.
- Licensees are not liable for any error, inaccuracy or omission in a PCDS

unless the licensee has actual knowledge of the error, inaccuracy or omission by the transferor.

- The PCDS is not a warranty, not a part of the sale contract, not a substitute for an inspection and not intended to create rights or transfer personal property, such as appliances.
- In instances where the transferor has not occupied the dwelling, disclosure on all or part of the PCDS may still be required where repairs have been made, mechanical equipment has been replaced, any action or activity has been initiated covered by items on the PCDS or where the transferor has actual knowledge of information which might impact a transferee's decision to purchase.
- Signature of the PCDS by the transferor is required when the transaction is finalized to confirm no material changes to the property.

The new Informational Statement form provides for signature by the seller(s) upon listing and by the buyer(s) before an offer, as well as signature by those representing both. It does not have signature lines for a seller upon finalization of the transaction, but provision is made on the PCDS for signature of both parties at closing.

It is important to note that MREC's forms and existing disclosure statutes

- Do not remove common law disclosure requirements applicable to all transferors of interests in real property. As always, failure of a seller or its representative, including its salesperson or broker, to fully disclose known material defects remains a ground for an aggrieved buyer who discovers defects post-closing to seek damages for fraud, misrepresentation or deceit by the seller, his agent or both, depending on who knew what.
- Do not alter limitations on liability for listing or selling agents for erroneous disclosures under certain circumstances.
- Do not change laws relating to nonmaterial facts or suspicions

Delivery of the new Informational Statement is apparently now required in every transaction where a PCDS is required, which appears to satisfy the requirement in existing law that a broker responsible for delivering required disclosures inform a transferee of their rights when the broker cannot secure a PCDS from the transferor. ■

Ron Farris is MAR's Legal Hotline attorney and general counsel.

Call MAR's Legal Hotline

MAR's Legal Hotline (800-747-1103, ext. 25) offers free and confidential legal information relevant to broad-based real estate practices and applications, including MAR Standard Forms and Contracts, to MAR members, and is available Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Calls received after 3:00 p.m. will be returned the following business day.





FOR THE COURSE OF YOUR CAREER



BY JOHN PHILLIPS

Time is money

Many of us were attracted to the real estate profession because of the flexibility it allows in our lives. There are no timecards to fill out, we can come and go as we please, and, as independent contractors, there is no supervisor looking over our shoulder to direct our actions. In short, we can make each day pretty much whatever we want it to be. The downside to this is that, unless we use our time wisely, we don't make much money.

Unfortunately, most real estate agents don't have the time management skills they need to focus on those activities that will make them productive and successful. In a typical day, agents cross their fingers, hope the phone rings, hope they get the call, and hope the person on the line wants to buy or sell some real estate. In the business world, "hoping" doesn't pay very well. Planning your work, then working the plan, is where the big bucks come from.

There are proven correlations between the skills you use in your work, how much time you spend working, and how successful you are in your profession. A simple example of the importance of sharpening your skills is a survey taken in 2007 by the National Association of REALTORS® which shows that the average agent with no designation makes \$33,200 per year while an agent with a GRI designation makes \$69,800, over twice as much. An agent with a CRS designation gets \$90,500 and a CRB designee earns \$102,000. The investment of money and time in training pays large dividends.

Since independent contractors don't get paid by the amount of time they spend in the office, it is essential that real estate agents have a clear understanding of what constitutes "work" in their profession. Most agents would be shocked to know how little time they actually work. I challenge you to check your time and actions for a day or two. Take a piece of paper, place blocks in 15 minute increments from the time you start work in the morning until you stop work in the evening, write in the blocks exactly what you were doing in that time interval, and determine how much real estate work you are actually doing. Be honest with yourself, and you will find that much of the time you consider as working and being on the job is not conducive to your income or success.

In real estate there are three kinds of time: "A" time is the time you are physically working with sellers and buyers getting listings and showing and selling properties. "B" time is time you use to prepare for "A" time such as doing CMAs, searching for properties to show buyers, and setting appointments. "C" time is for other real estate related activities like writing ads,



prospecting, working phone duty, and getting real estate skill training. In the time/action study aforementioned, much of an agent's work day consists of "D" time which is not related to achieving success in real estate. Just being at your desk in the office is just not enough if you want a serious real estate career.

A real estate agent I admire very much has a note taped to her desk telephone so she is forced to see it over and over all day. The note says, "Is what I am doing right now part of the plan to achieve my goal?" This serves as a reminder to focus

on those actions that will contribute to the amount of money she intends to make that year.

Most of us know the general direction we want to go, toward money and success, but have no plan or schedule to get there. Our days consist of handling the problems and opportunities that show up. Time management means being proactive in planning and scheduling, not just reacting to events as they occur.

The 17 percent of real estate licensees who earn 85 percent of the commission dollars can not abide blank spaces on their calendars. They not only know what they are going to be doing hour by hour today and tomorrow, but they already have their time scheduled weeks and months ahead.

The least agents should do, at the end of their business day, is to have the next day's activities planned and scheduled. If you do not know today what you will be doing at 10:00 tomorrow morning, the chances are huge that you will not be doing anything meaningful to advance your career or income.

To excel in real estate there is no better path to take than learning new real estate skills, sharpening skills you already have, and becoming a serious manager of the time you have to use in the pursuit of success in your real estate profession.

In Mississippi, the sole provider of the GRI designation is the Mississippi REALTOR® Institute. The GRI designation is a basic requirement for achieving other NAR designations like CRS, CRB, CCIM, etc.

To learn more about time management, go to realtor.org, search for "time management", and you will get 11,400 results. This alone might be an indication of how important this is. ■

John Phillips, a Hall of Fame inductee and Past President of MAR, is the Vice President of Professional Development for the Mississippi REALTOR® Institute. E-mail him at jphillips@realtorinstitute.org



CAPITOL WATCH

UPDATE ON LEGISLATIVE ISSUES IMPORTANT TO YOUR BUSINESS



Remember to vote on Nov. 4!



Wicker

MARPAC endorses Wicker, urges REALTOR® support

MARPAC proudly endorses Senator Roger Wicker in his effort to continue serving the people of Mississippi in the United States Senate. MARPAC urges REALTORS® to show their support by casting a vote for Wicker in the general election on Tuesday, Nov. 4.

Governor Haley Barbour appointed Senator Roger Wicker to the United States Senate on December 31, 2007, to fill the position vacated by Senator Trent Lott. The appointment marked a new chapter in Wicker's long history of dedicated service to Mississippi and the nation. Prior to his Senate tenure, Wicker served seven terms in the United States Congress, having been re-elected in 2006 with more than sixty percent of the vote.

Over the past 12 years, Wicker has supported steadily issues important to REALTORS®. He has worked hard to create a favorable economic development environment through policies that support strong schools and tax incentives for new businesses.

Judicial candidates gain MARPAC endorsements

MARPAC has endorsed four candidates for positions on the Mississippi Supreme Court. These races will appear on the general election ballot on Tuesday, Nov. 4. MARPAC believes that the following candidates will bring a commitment to a fair legal environment that is conducive to a thriving business environment. On Election Day, MARPAC encourages REALTORS® to cast their vote of support for the following Supreme Court candidates.

Chief Justice James W. Smith, Jr. – District 1, Place 3

Chief Justice James W. Smith, Jr. was elected to the Mississippi Supreme Court effective January 1, 1993. Beginning in 1973 and continuing until 1980, he was City Prosecuting Attorney for the City of Pearl and was also Rankin County Prosecuting Attorney in 1976. From 1977 to April 1982, he served as district attorney for the 20th Circuit Court District. From April of 1982 until his election to the Mississippi Supreme Court, he was County Court Judge for Rankin County. He was elected to the Mississippi Supreme Court in 1993. He became Chief Justice of the Mississippi Supreme Court on April 1, 2004. Justice Smith served three years in the United States Army and four years in the Army Reserve.



Smith

Justice Ann Hannaford Lamar – District 3, Place 1

In May 2007, Governor Haley Barbour appointed Justice Ann Lamar of Senatobia to the vacancy created by the retirement of Presiding Justice Kay B. Cobb. Justice Lamar previously served five and a



Lamar

half years as a circuit judge from the 17th Circuit Court, which is made up of DeSoto, Panola, Tallahatchie, Tate and Yalobusha counties. She is the third woman to serve on the Mississippi Supreme Court.

Judge Randy “Bubba” Pierce – District 2, Place 2

Randy “Bubba” Pierce of Leakesville is currently serving as a Chancery Court Judge for Greene, George and Jackson Counties. Before Governor Haley Barbour appointed him to the post, Pierce practiced law and represented District 105 in the Mississippi House of Representatives. In the House, Pierce chaired the House Education Committee and Appropriations Subcommittee on Public Education. He also served on the Agriculture, Corrections, Transportation, Forestry and Judiciary committees.



Pierce

Judge David Chandler – District 3, Place 2

Judge Chandler represented the Board of Supervisors in Choctaw County from January until December 2000. He also served as municipal judge for his hometown of Weir from 1999 until 2001, when he assumed his duties as Judge on the Mississippi Court of Appeals. Judge Chandler was reelected to the court in 2006 without opposition and continues to serve in that position. He has authored professional articles in the field of education as well as in the legal field.



Chandler

Legislative & Regulatory Affairs Committee forms Education Work Group

Upon recommendation from the Legislative & Regulatory Affairs Committee, the MAR Board of Directors approved a policy at its June meeting that "Education is a priority of the Mississippi Association of REALTORS." To that end, a work group was formed. The work group is charged with researching how MAR can play a role in promoting quality education initiatives.



Wilson

The group met for the first time in Jackson on August 28 where they heard from Blake Wilson, President of the Mississippi Economic Council. Wilson spoke of the active role the Mississippi Economic Council has taken in education policy initiatives and improving education opportunities in Mississippi.

In upcoming meetings the group plans to hear from State Education Superintendent, Hank Bounds as well as Forrest Thigpen, Executive Director of the Mississippi Center for Public Policy.



Bounds



Thigpen

Members of the education work group include Chair, Chris Wilson, First Choice, PLLC, Laurel; Vice Chair Tony Jones, Century 21 #1 Realty Group, Olive Branch; Bruce Kammer, Coldwell Banker Country Properties, Picayune; Reid Guy, Prudential Gateway Real Estate, Madison; Judy Corts, Re/Max Real Estate Partners, Hattiesburg; Keiko Palmero, Keiko Palmero Associates, Gulfport; Kathy Adkins, Denton Adkins Realty, Jackson; and Bethany Harless, Coldwell Banker Graham and Associates, Madison.

Guice wins special election to the Mississippi House of Representatives



Guice

On September 23, REATOR® Jeff Guice won a special election to represent the people of House District 114 in the Mississippi House of Representatives. Guice is a broker with Century 21 Guice and Associates in Ocean Springs. House District 114 includes portions of Ocean Springs and

Vancleave, as well as part of Harrison County. Guice will replace his cousin, Danny Guice, who served as the District 114 representative for 24 years. Danny Guice resigned in August after accepting an appointment to the State Parole Board.

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The Housing and Economic Recovery Act

What it means for you and your clients

By Derek Easley

The Housing and Economic Recovery Act of 2008 (HERA) is now law. The legislation contains significant modifications to the FHA housing program, some modification (but not elimination) of down payment assistance programs, a new regulator for Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, a contingency plan to shore up Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, new programs to assist distressed borrowers in refinancing their mortgages to avoid foreclosure and a new \$7,500 tax credit to provide an incentive for first time homebuyers. The massive legislation has numerous retroactive, immediate and prospective effective dates, depending on the provision.

Assistance for first time buyers

The centerpiece of the Housing and Economic Recovery Act is a temporary, \$7,500 tax credit for first-time home buyers. Consumers purchasing their first home between April 9, 2008, and July 1, 2009, are eligible for this temporary tax credit. Congress designed this tax credit to provide a significant financial incentive for homebuyers in an effort to stimulate home buying, reduce excess supply in housing markets and shore up home prices.

Key provisions of the tax credit

- Establishes a refundable tax credit for first time homebuyers equal to 10 percent of the purchase price of a principal residence, not to exceed \$7,500
- Phases out the credit for taxpayers with incomes over \$75,000 (\$150,000 for joint returns)
- Allows the credit for purchases on or after April 9, 2008, and before July 1, 2009
- Requires taxpayers receiving the credit to repay it over 15 years in equal installments by imposing a surcharge on the taxpayers' annual income tax

GSE reform – including a strong independent regulator, and permanent conforming loan limits up to the greater of \$417,000 or 115% local area median home price, capped at \$625,500. The effective date for reforms is immediate upon enactment, but the loan limits will not go into effect until the expiration of the Economic Stimulus limits (December 31, 2008).

FHA reform – including permanent FHA loan limits at the greater of \$271,050 or 115% of local area median home price, capped at \$625,500; streamlined processing for FHA condos; reforms

to the Home Equity Conversion Mortgage (HECM) program, and reforms to the FHA manufactured housing program. The down payment requirement on FHA loans will go up to 3.5% (from 3%). The effective date for reforms is immediate upon enactment, but the loan limits will not go into effect until the expiration of the Economic Stimulus limits (December 31, 2008).

Additional Property Tax Deduction – HERA provides a one-year benefit that will be available to all homeowners. Under current law, property taxes are deductible only if an individual itemizes his/her deductions on Schedule A of the tax return. The new provision will permit a deduction of up to \$500 (\$1,000 on a joint return) for all individuals who utilize the standard deduction and do not itemize. Instructions will be provided on the 2008 tax return when it is distributed at year-end.

FHA foreclosure rescue – development of a refinance program for homebuyers with problematic subprime loans. Lenders will write down qualified mortgages to 90 percent of the current appraised value and qualified borrowers would get a new FHA 30-year fixed mortgage at 90 percent of appraised value. Borrowers will share 50 percent of all future appreciation with FHA. The loan limit for this program is \$550,440 nationwide. Program became effective on October 1, 2008.

Seller-funded down payment assistance programs – codifies the existing FHA proposal to prohibit the use of down payment assistance programs funded by those who have a financial interest in the sale. The program does not prohibit other assistance programs provided by non-profit organizations funded by other sources, churches, employers or family members. This prohibition became effective on October 1, 2008.

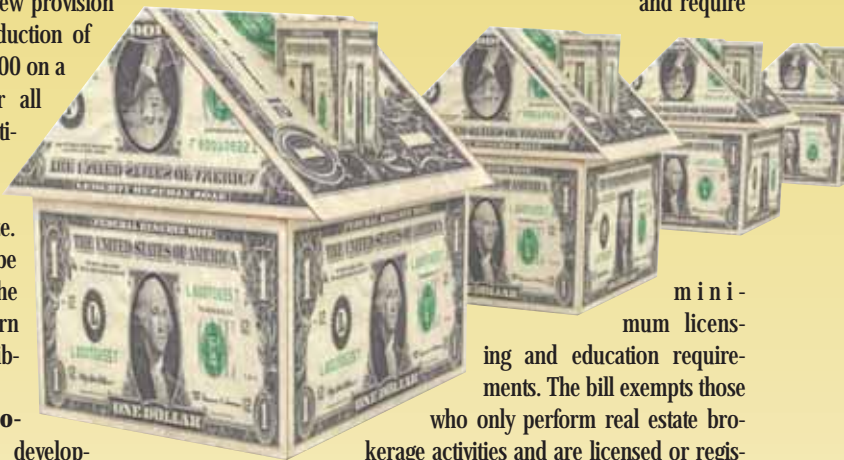
Mortgage Revenue Bond Authority – authorizes \$10 billion in mortgage revenue

bonds for refinancing subprime mortgages.

CDBG funding – provides \$4 billion in neighborhood revitalization funds for communities to purchase foreclosed homes.

LIHTC – modernizes the Low Income Housing Tax Credit program to make it more efficient.

Loan originator requirements – strengthens the existing state-run nationwide mortgage originator licensing and registration system (and requires a parallel HUD system for states that fail to participate). Federal bank regulators will establish a parallel registration system for FDIC-insured banks. The purpose is to prevent fraud and require



mini-
mum licens-
ing and education require-
ments. The bill exempts those
who only perform real estate bro-
kerage activities and are licensed or regis-
tered by a state, unless they are compensated by
a lender, mortgage broker or other loan origina-
tor.

Modification of \$250,000/\$500,000 exclusion – The sole real-estate related "pay-for" among the tax incentives modifies the \$250,000/\$500,000 exclusion of gain on the sale of a principal residence. Beginning in 2009, the exclusion, as it applies to a second home (or rental property) that is converted to a principal residence will be allocated. When the second home is sold, any gain attributable to use as a second home (or rental property) will be taxed at capital gains rates. Any gain attributable to use as a principal residence will remain excludable, up to the \$250,000 and \$500,000 limits. ■

Seeing and saving

MAR staff leads by example

By Tracee Walker

This season green is the new black. Green is hot and cool. It's phat and sweet. It's the bomb and it's fierce. Seriously. No matter how your generation describes it, going green has become the buzzword of the day.

Marketing gurus are cashing in on the concept using it to sell everything from organic vegetables to glass cleaner and everything in between. With a little effort, you too can reap the returns of going green.

The Mississippi Association of REALTORS® staff began doing its part to bring more green to the association and the environment. While no one has purchased a hybrid car or installed solar panels on the roof just yet, the staff has found that starting small is relatively effortless and inexpensive and can lead to big results.

Don't go it alone

You will have better success if everyone buys into your green initiative from the top down. A little friendly competition can get everyone into the spirit of saving energy and reducing waste. You can even make your commitment official by joining the Energy Star Challenge as part of their "Bring your green to work" program which challenges businesses to reduce their energy usage by 10 percent. The website at www.energystar.gov/smallbiz offers resources, tips and even technical advice for going green.

Easy ways to go green

- Turn off lights and equipment when not in use
- Enable power management features on computer equipment to cause computers to sleep or hibernate when not in use for a set period of time saving energy.
- Install a programmable thermostat to more efficiently manage your climate control system.
- Replace traditional incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescent bulbs (CFLs). CFLs use 75 percent less energy than traditional bulbs and last 10 times longer.
- Install switch plate occupancy sensors in appropriate locations that will turn lights on when someone enters a room and turn them off when no one is present.
- Control the sunlight coming through windows depending on season and climate. Open blinds to make use of natural daylight. In the summer, close blinds to keep out heat and reduce air conditioning costs. In the winter open blinds during the day to help heat a space with the sun's warmth.
- Schedule a tune-up for your HVAC system. A system that is serviced regularly runs more efficiently and uses less energy.

MAR's Vice President of Professional Development John Phillips (a.k.a. staff rebel) tries to slip out without switching off the lights, but Deputy Della Turner stops him in his tracks.



MAR's Vice President of Administration William Fulton keeps an eye on MAR's energy usage with a programmable thermostat that saves green while keeping everyone cool.



green



The Mississippi REALTOR Institute's CE Course Manager Brinda Boutwell knows a bright idea when she sees it. Switching to compact fluorescent bulbs saves 75 percent in energy costs over traditional light bulbs.



A tree-hugger at heart, MAR's Communications Manager Tracee Walker cannot contain her excitement at MAR's new commitment to recycling.

Ready to see more green in your business?



Enroll in one of the newest and greenest classes from the Mississippi REALTOR® institute and get ready to tap into the green market of real estate.

**Sustainable Housing and Building Green:
What Agents Should Know**

Date: January 21, 2009

Time: 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Location: Mississippi Association of REALTORS®, Jackson

Cost: \$65

- Learn the fundamental basics of sustainable housing and building green as it relates to real estate and your clients.
- Discuss key topics and issues including the role of the real estate licensee, addressing consume concerns, energy audits, Energy Star, LEED certification and more.
- Learn from real-life case studies to gather a real-world perspective on important green concepts.

*Reserve your space today and get ready for a greener tomorrow!
Contact a course advisor at 1-800-747-1103 or
www.realtorinstitute.org*

The Mississippi REALTOR® Institute's Course Advisor Della Turner and MAR's Bookkeeper Sheila Roden prove that paper recycling can be fun and feisty with a little friendly colleague competition.



- Change/clean filters regularly during peak heating and cooling seasons. Dirty filters overwork the system and result in poor air quality.
- When replacing equipment buy Energy Star qualified products. Equipment such as computers, printers, copiers, appliances and more carrying this logo are the most energy efficient.
- Go paperless. By using technologies like ZipForm contracts, email and scanners, REALTORS® can keep documentation of transactions electronically and reduce or eliminate their use of paper and cut office supplies costs.
- Read newspapers and magazines online and try online banking and bill pay as other ways to reduce paper consumption.
- When purging paper files, recycle the shredded paper.
- Reduce junk mail at work by visiting www.ecologicalmail.org. At the site you can stop receiving catalogs, magazines and other bulk mail addressed to former employees. ■

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Lane

Lane wins national RLI post

Jackson REALTOR® Jesse Lane, Nancy Lane Commercial Realty, Inc., has been elected as the 2009 Vice President for the REALTOR® Land Institute (RLI). In this national post, Lane, a commercial REALTOR®, will ascend to the national position of RLI President in 2011. Currently active on the 2008 RLI Board of Directors as the Legislative Steering Coordinator, Lane has also served the RLI organization as the 2003 Mississippi Chapter President and as an RLI representative on various NAR committees. Says Lane, "I look forward to serving the members of the REALTORS® Land Institute, and I invite ideas, suggestions, comments or criticisms that will help grow our organization in meaningful ways."

REALTORS® attend national party conventions



Several Mississippi REALTORS® joined more than 200 Republicans and 100 Democrats as delegates to the Democratic and Republican National Conventions. These Mississippi REALTORS® joined other REALTORS® and NAR staff in representing the REALTOR®

voice on the national political level with their dedicated involvement in the national political process.

REALTORS® Lavaree Jones, Jackson; Curley Clark, Century 21 The Real Estate Place, Pascagoula; Jeffrey Gooden, Gooden Realty, Clarksdale; and Tanya Gray, Gray Real Estate, Laurel were among those attending the Democratic National Convention in Denver, Col., Aug. 25-28.

Attending the Republican National Convention in St. Paul, Minn., Sept. 1-4 from Mississippi were Larry Edwards, Edwards Homes, Inc., Ridgeland, and Mark Cumbest, Cumbest Realty, Moss Point. Edwards (left) and Cumbest (right) are pictured here with 2008 NAR President-Elect Charles McMillan at a convention event.



Alfonso serves on insurance panel



Alfonso

On September 30, the Mississippi House of Representatives Insurance Committee held hearings on the Gulf Coast to discuss the continuing difficulties coastal residents face in finding affordable property insurance. Carlene Alfonso, Coldwell Banker Alfonso Realty, Gulfport, participated in the hearings representing the Mississippi Association of REALTORS® to provide the REALTOR® perspective.



Hogue



Renkenberger

REALTORS® among Mississippi's leading business women

REALTORS® Kelly Hogue and Teresa Renkenberger were among those recognized recently by the Mississippi Business Journal as Mississippi's 50 Leading Business Women for 2008. Hogue is the owner of Blue Sky Auctions, LLC in Madison. Renkenberger is REALTOR® with Merck Team Realty in Brandon.

Phillips serves on DSU panel



Phillips

On Oct. 9, MAR Vice President of Professional Development John Phillips served as a panelist in a discussion of today's economy before more than 250 students and community members at Delta State University in Cleveland. Other panelists included John Allison, Commissioner of the Mississippi Department of Banking and Consumer Finance; Jimmy Clayton, President and CEO of Planters Bank and Frank Howell, the Delta Council. Discussions focused on the problems in the financial markets, including problems associated with Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. ■



BEEN THERE, DONE THAT

REALTOR® GUEST COLUMNISTS SHARE THEIR STORIES

Back to basics in a challenging market

By John Phillips

By now we have probably heard more than any of us wanted to know about how we got to the real estate market we are in today. The federal government encouraged lenders to make home loan money available to purchasers who would not ordinarily qualify. Lenders provided funds with variable rate financing. As the interest rates and monthly payments increased, the borrowers could no longer make the payments. When large numbers of borrowers began to default on their loans, the foreclosed properties added to the inventory of available homes for sale to such a degree that the law of supply and demand kicked in and caused a market value decrease in almost all homes in almost all geographic areas.

Many large lenders have been driven out of business, others are teetering on the brink, and the secondary market

to our business, got licensed, and became accustomed to clients and customers contacting them wanting their help to do real estate transactions. It has come as quite a shock to many, who have not experienced a down market, that their phones are not ringing any more. It is time to get back to the basics, to ask ourselves the question, "Where are the buyers and sellers, how do I contact them, and how do I get them to do business with me?"

Here are what some of our fellow REALTORS® around the state are doing:

Chester Harvey, CRS, Chester Harvey, REALTORS, Ocean Springs, realizes that controlling expenses is critical. We no longer have the leeway to waste resources. Special attention needs to be paid to advertising, especially the expensive print ads that are sometimes run to keep our sellers happy but do not produce sales and revenue. Agents must be strong enough to turn down listings that are priced above the market because they will wind up spending their time and money on properties that offer little promise of a sale and closing. It is essential that agents tell people what they need to hear, not what they want to hear. The best time an agent can spend is on getting price reductions on their listings.



Harvey

including Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac are worried about trillions of loan dollars.

While property values in Mississippi had not been driven to sometimes absurd levels over the last few years, like some other parts of the country, the sheer volume of adverse news reporting in all media has affected buyers and sellers in our local markets.

In a classic case of closing the gate after the horses are out of the corral, the lending pendulum has now swung from easy money for everyone to today's market, where a borrower has to have spotless credit and sterling qualifications to get a loan. It is easy to understand the frustrations real estate agents have when they finally get a buyer and then can't get them financed, or in the case of the Gulf Coast, can't get affordable insurance.

Many of our members who have experienced decades of real estate market swings, and were part of the 15 to 19 percent interest rate market a few years ago, see this as just another opportunity for those who work smart to survive and those who are stuck in the business-as-usual rut to fall by the wayside. The one thing we can depend on as members of the real estate profession is that the market conditions will change, but with the relatively easy listings and sales over the last few years, lots of new people were attracted

Tena Taylor, Mississippi Real Estate Exchange, Oxford, believes that it is time for agents to pick up the phone. We have become so accustomed to answering the phone to get business that many of us have forgotten how to make phone calls to prospect and find listings and sales. Ongoing quality training is essential to both teach newer licensees a number of basic skills and to remind those who have been in the business for years what they can do to reenergize their careers.



Taylor

Phield Parish, Parish Real Estate, Greenville, says that working smarter is key to prospering in this kind of market. In these days of high credit score requirements, prequalification is almost a necessity to keep from burning four dollar a gallon gasoline driving people around who ultimately cannot get a loan when you find a property for them. Prequalification also allows the agent to only show the right houses, those the buyer can qualify for. He stresses the importance of working with "prospects" not "suspects". This is also a good time to work with investors since this buyer's market presents many opportunities for those with assets.



Parish

Monica Gates, Prudential Gardner, REALTORS®, Picayune, has had surprising success having agents negotiate listing price reductions and immediately getting contracts on the lowered price properties. Now that agents have some extra time, she is using this time to do in-company training on where to find buyers and how to deal with them. The internet is a great place to find buyers for those who know how to use web sites, blogs and social sites like YouTube, MySpace, etc. Most buyers look on the internet before they are ready to talk to a real estate agent, and they must be treated very differently from those ready to look with an agent. If any pressure at all is applied, they can be gone forever with the click of a mouse, but internet clients are incredibly loyal to those agents they see as competent.



Gates

David Stevens, Century-21 David Stevens, Inc, Clinton, knows that there is a much larger inventory of houses for sale than there are buyers and, because of this, agents must be buyer-centric offering superb professional service over and above the buyers' expectations. Internet leads are a very important source of buyer clients and care must be taken to capture every lead available. Only about 12 percent of closed business comes from print ads, but agents spend most of their marketing dollars there. Fifty percent to 60 percent of closed business comes from yard signs. It is essential that yard signs be kept clean and straight, they are a direct reflection on the real estate company and the agent, and buyers form opinions based on the appearance of these signs.



Stevens

Ray Branscome, Coldwell Banker-Landmark Realty, Grenada, promotes a back-to-the-basics approach stressing that, in this market, you can't wait for the phone to ring. Not enough buyers and sellers come to us anymore, we have to go to them. One of the most important sources of business for any agent is past customers and clients. Cold calls will do if the agent doesn't have anyone they know to call, but for those licensees who have done real estate business in the past, repeat and referral business can be a large portion of the agent's income in good times and bad. They have already chosen you to help them make the largest financial transaction they have made in their life and will do business with you again and send you their family, friends and business associates if you will just ask. Rapport is easy to build with these prospects since they are already predisposed to like you.



Branscome

Pat Hamilton, Wilson Realty, Meridian, reports that her market area has remained remarkably steady over the last 35 years. There have not been any large subdivision developments or huge building projects, therefore the buyer market has been able to absorb preowned listings and newly constructed homes as they come on the market. She has seen a few price reductions lately, but that is somewhat unusual. Newer agents have the expected concerns as they establish and grow their businesses, but



Hamilton



established agents get a large portion of their business from repeat and referral business generated from past clients and customers.

Ric Cortis, Re/Max Real Estate Partners, Hattiesburg, believes that staying in contact with past and present clients and customers is extremely important, sometimes even being in touch more than you and they think they need. He is convinced that greater use of the internet is key to doing real estate business now and in the future and his firm and agents have just contracted with REALTOR®.com to showcase all of their company's listings. It shows professionalism and inspires seller confidence when an agent is competent enough to use the internet to determine the number of hits on a client's property and share that information with the client. Pulling back from print media and focusing on technology to contact those who sit at home and look at real estate online is a step into the future. Virtual tours of homes are a vital part of capturing internet business.



Cortis

From the many calls I get every day from agents and the public all over the state and the calls, e-mails and other contacts I make with our members, it appears that the real estate professionals in Mississippi recognize what is happening in their marketplace and are taking the actions necessary to survive and prosper under these changed circumstances. Control of expenses, contacting past clients and customers for repeat and referral business, greater use of the internet, and training to learn new skills and refresh older skills are all important. I think all of this can be summed up by saying that working smart is more important than working hard, that Darwin's theory of survival of the fittest is alive and well in the real estate profession, and that real estate agents who learn to excel under today's trying conditions will profit in both money and expertise in tomorrow's world. ■

Got GEO



14 REALTORS

By Angela Cain

It all began with a three-page application form and a check for \$549. With blind faith, a couple of duffel bags and their egos in check, fourteen REALTORS® boarded two vans and embarked on what many are calling a life-changing leadership event.



Fourteen *LeadershipMAR* alums, graduates of the Mississippi Association of REALTORS® nationally recognized leadership development program, were chosen to participate in this first *LeadershipMAR.h* honors program called “Courageous Leadership.”

One REALTOR® didn’t know how to swim. Several had a fear of heights. Many had never been in public without makeup, jewelry or high heels. That is, until they arrived last month at the Nantahala Outdoor Center in Bryson City, N.C. There they gave up many of modern life’s conven-

iences – including air conditioning – and in doing so gained memories, friendships, leadership skills and personal satisfaction to last a lifetime.

Armed with a 10-minute lesson in how to use a paddle, 14 rather pun-gent personal flotation devices and a wing and a prayer, four rafts headed into the 52°F white water of the Nantahala River for a day-long excursion aimed at sharpening team building and decision-making skills. REALTORS® took turns serving as captain of their rafts at various points along the river. The successful navigation of their vessel rested solely in their ability to communicate and inspire teamwork and cooperation.

The goals were seemingly simple: Stay inside the raft. Avoid drowning. Don’t lose your hat or your sunglasses. Don’t injure a fellow rafter with a paddle. Dodge sharp rocks and raging rapids. Arrive safely at shore. Some REALTORS® were better at following directions than others.

Hands-on leadership training dominated the event, but REALTORS® also spent quality classroom time with Joe Judge, President, Staub Leadership Solutions, Greensboro, N.C. He led group discussions based upon the book *The 7 Acts of Courage*, Robert E. Staub II, and asked teams of two to teach each chapter to the class and relate personal stories that would bring meaning to the seven courageous lessons:

1. The courage to dream and put forth that dream
2. The courage to see current reality
3. The courage to confront
4. The courage to be confronted
5. The courage to learn and grow
6. The courage to be vulnerable, to love
7. The courage to act

After surviving whitewater rafting with only a few minor bumps, bruises, blisters and bee stings, the real adventure began...the ropes course. This daunting adult playground looked like monkey bars on steroids. Rope ladders, tight ropes, balance beams and free-fall swings were suspended 20 feet and 40 feet in the air.

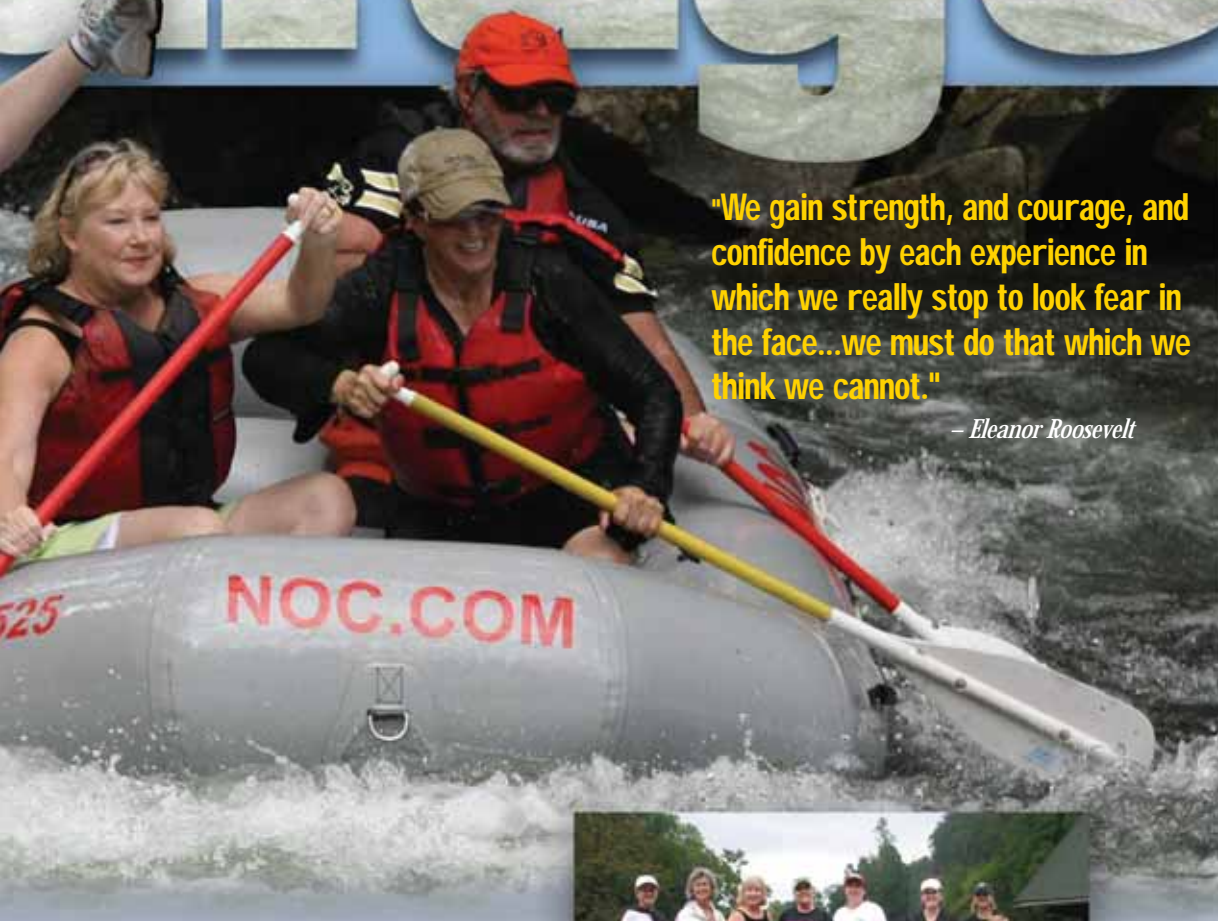


“I no longer fear hell.”

– REALTOR® Lisa Hollister, Ocean Springs, upon completing a 40-foot free fall on the ropes course

S® brave rapids, ropes and live to tell the tale

Surprise?



"We gain strength, and courage, and confidence by each experience in which we really stop to look fear in the face...we must do that which we think we cannot."

— Eleanor Roosevelt

Captain Nancy Lane, Jackson, abandons ship unbeknownst to her crew: Sandra Vaughn, Laurel; Mike Flannes, Jackson, and Doris Hardy, Columbus. This is THE "Kodak moment" of the entire trip.

The fear was palpable as the group strapped on tight-fitting, unflattering climbing harnesses and learned to hold on and let go all at the same time.

Every REALTOR® tackled the ropes course with the courage, grit and determination that has made them driving forces and leaders in their profession. Every REALTOR® was successful in facing their fears and completing most, if not all, of the challenging climb. Some breezed right across high wires without ever looking down. Others took very deliberate steps and climbed ever-so- gingerly from one rope to the next. Either way, all would tell you that fashion and form weren't a consideration. Sweat, mental toughness and physical exhaustion ruled the day.

While one REALTOR® climbed, two REALTORS® served as on-the-ground anchors ensuring that a misstep didn't cause a plummet to the ground. The fear factor, participants say, and the immediate requirement to trust one another built an instant group bond. This led to an incredible show of support on the ropes course. Climbers could hear cheers and "you can do it" shouts from the ground as they found the intestinal fortitude to keep going.

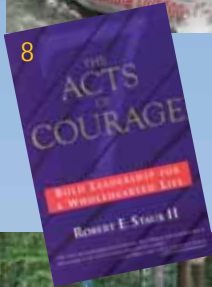
The retreat concluded with heaping helpings of homemade mashed potatoes and a laugh fest with blow-by-blow recaps of the trips funniest, scariest and most enlightening moments. The laughter continues to this day. ■



IMAR.h Class of 2008: Bottom row (left to right): Keith Henley, Tupelo; Mike Flannes, Jackson; Middle row (left to right): Audrey McBride, Starkville; Doris Hardy, Columbus; Janice Shows, Jackson; Nancy Lane, Jackson; Top row (left to right): Lisa Hollister, Ocean Springs; Melanie Mitchell, Starkville; Sandra Vaughn, Laurel; Dee Denton, Jackson; Corie Haynes, Hernando; Trish Fleming, Columbus and Kathy Adkins, Jackson.

continued on page 18

continued from page 17



MAR is accepting applications for LMAR Class of 2009 – Deadline Nov. 7, 2008

The Mississippi Association of REALTORS® is accepting applications for the 2009 class of its nationally recognized leadership development program. Up to 14 REALTORS® from across the state will be selected to participate in this prestigious program consisting of a series of four leadership retreats. Participants will gain valuable leadership skills that will aid them in their businesses, their own personal development and will position them for greater leadership roles within the state association. Apply online at www.msrealtors.org or call 601-932-5241 to request a copy. Note: The Courageous Leadership LMAR honors class will be held again for LMAR alumni in 2010.

Pictures worth a thousand screams

1 The group takes a break from rafting at a state park and takes part in a team building exercise.

2 Jackson REALTOR® Dee Denton doesn't let her raft mates down as they brace for the final rapid. Crew members include: Janice Shows, Jackson; and MAR staffers John Phillips and William Fulton..

3 REALTOR® Trish Fleming, McComb, holds on for dear life as she swings from a 40 foot free fall.

4 Laurel REALTOR® Sandra Vaughn walks the tight rope like a pro.

5 McComb REALTOR® Trish Fleming captains the raft down the final rapid with crew members Keith Henley, Tupelo; Melanie Mitchell, Starkville and Audrey McBride, Starkville.

6 REALTOR® David Griffith, Cleveland, pauses to catch his breath before climbing even higher.

7 Columbus REALTOR® Doris Hardy walks the high wire anchored by REALTORS® Kathy Adkins, Jackson, and Melanie Mitchell, Starkville.

8 The 7 Acts of Courage was the leadership book utilized for the retreat.

9 Commercial REALTOR® Mike Flannes, Jackson, sways between the trees.

10 First comes flexibility. Then comes courage. The group stretches before tackling the ropes course challenge.

11 Let the whitewater rafting begin!

12 Tupelo REALTOR® Keith Henley was the first climber of the day setting the standard by reaching 40 feet.

13 Hernando REALTOR® Corie Haynes breathes a deep sigh of relief after completing her free fall.

14 Jackson REALTOR® Janice Shows pauses to catch her breath on the "rope ladder of death" as Starkville REALTOR® Audrey McBride (left) cheers her on.

15 Jackson REALTOR® Kathy Adkins hangs out on the rope ladder.

16 Cleveland REALTOR® David Griffith commandeers his vessel with ease thanks to his capable crew: Corie Haynes, Hernando; Lisa Hollister, Ocean Springs and Kathy Adkins, Jackson.

17 REALTOR® Melanie Mitchell, Starkville, swings with a smile.



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Town Hall Webinars - Coming soon to your local board virtually



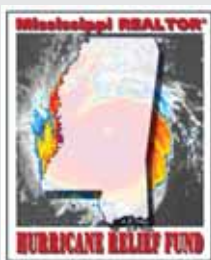
The MAR Town Hall Webinar is your opportunity to meet with other members of your local board, MAR elected leaders and MAR staff for a virtual exchange of information and ideas without using a drop of gas. This open forum will allow you an opportunity to learn about member benefits, programs and services offered to you by your state

association AND give you a chance to ask questions, provide feedback and offer suggestions for ways we can serve you better – all in 45 minutes or less! Webinars began in September and will continue through the fall. Watch your e-mail for more details about participating in your local board's Town Hall Webinar.

AE Retreat Highlights

Local Board Association Executives met in September at the Tara Wildlife Refuge, Vicksburg, for a two-day retreat packed with valuable information to help them in their roles as association managers. MAR and NAR staff addressed topics included budgeting, income tax changes, leadership development, policies and procedures, and the use of social and technical media to foster member communications. In addition, participants had opportunities to share their experiences and best practices regarding local board association management.

NAR provides additional Katrina funding



The Mississippi REALTOR® Hurricane Relief Fund is pleased to report that it received another \$185,000 from the National Association of REALTORS® REALTOR® Relief Foundation for Hurricane Katrina rebuilding efforts along our Gulf Coast. The funds will be provided to Lutheran Episcopal Services of Mississippi for a program aimed at getting families out of FEMA trailers. The funds will be earmarked for start-up, move-in costs associated

with transitions into affordable housing. These funds are added to the more than \$3.5 million the Mississippi REALTOR® Hurricane Relief Fund has already provided to more than 3,000 families who sustained significant damage to their primary residences and to a nationally recognized, award-winning rental repair project designed to put make more workforce housing available.



Habitat house with MAR roots complete

A Habitat for Humanity home recently presented to home owner Monica Jackson in McComb is complete today do in part to the efforts of the 2007 *Leadership*MAR class. As part of a class project to raise funds and secure

donations of lots for Habitat for Humanity, the 2007 *Leadership*MAR Class of 2007 secured the donation of land on which Monica Jackson's Habitat home now stands. Pictured at the presentation of the home are from left to right: Nancy Cowan, Construction Manager Larry Haynes, Butch Schultz, Henrene Mathews, home owner Monica Jackson, Jackie Neimeyer, Jerry Van, Barbara Burge, local Habitat President Carl Cowan, REALTOR® and Class of 2007 LMAR Graduate Patricia Fleming, Re/Max Southland, and lot donor Elizabeth Shelton.

MAR releases new edition of consumer guide

The Mississippi Association of REALTORS® is now distributing copies of the latest edition of *Real Estate 4-1-1: The Mississippi Consumer Guide to Homeownership*. A copy of the publication was mailed to all REALTORS® along with the Fall 2008 edition of *Real Estate Leader*. Additional copies will be mailed to each designated broker, local board offices, advertisers, housing agencies and chambers of commerce. REALTORS® are encouraged to share this resource with potential clients and customers. An electronic version of the publication will also be available at 411.msrealtors.org.



Submit applications for 2009 MAR committee appointments

MAR seeks nominations for a number of appointments to key committees for 2009. Areas of focus include legislative affairs, professional development, professional standards, member services and technology and association operations. Interested members should submit nomination forms by Friday, November 7. Nomination forms are available online at www.msrealtors.org.

New sales meeting tool for brokers

Broker Buzz is weekly service of the Mississippi Association of REALTORS® designed to assist managing brokers with sales meetings and agent training. Tips for weekly sales meetings and risk management are sent to Managing Brokers every Monday morning by e-mail. Archives of the Broker Buzz are available at msrealtors.org by clicking on "Member Services" and then "Risk Management." REALTORS® who would like to be added to the Broker Buzz mailing list should contact IT Manager Mike Delamater at mdelamater@msrealtors.org or call (601) 932-5241.



New Rookie resource launched

MAR now provided Rookie REALTORS® with a new resource, the Rookie Report. This e-mail is sent to new REALTORS® every Monday by e-mail and contains information and tips to guide new REALTORS® as they are just starting out in the real estate business. Archives of the Rookie Report are available at msrealtors.org by clicking on "Member Services" and then "Risk Management." New REALTORS® who would like to be added to the Rookie Report mailing list should contact IT Manager Mike Delamater at mdelamater@msrealtors.org or call (601) 932-5241. ■





FOR THE TECH OF IT

BY MIKE DELAMATER

Virtual tours on a budget

A fast and inexpensive way to create a virtual tour for your MLS listing is to do a “shoot and talk.” Using your video camera, some inexpensive (or free) software and a free website, you can easily create a walk through video for properties you have listed.

Step 1: Charge the camera battery, insert a new tape and head out to your new listing. Stage the rooms you plan to tour making sure each room is well lit. Then do a dry run. Walk the tour and practice what you will say. When you are comfortable with the dialog, start at the front door and

video the house, reciting the practiced text as you go through each room.

Shoot plenty of video, you will edit

later. Pause the

camera between

rooms. When

you are done,

make sure you

label the tape.



Step 2: Go back to the office and plug your camera into your computer. Windows XP users will use the program Windows Movie Maker. Mac users can use iMovie. Import your video into Movie Maker using the capture wizard. When you import the video, Movie Maker will separate it into “scenes” where you paused. This allows you to use transitions to go from scene to scene. Don’t worry about messing things up. If you don’t like the results of your first attempt, just delete and start over. Keep the final cut short – four or five minutes. When you finish editing the video, export it to a file format such as wmv, avi, or mov.

Step 3: Setup a YouTube account at yourtube.com. It is free and takes just a couple minutes. After you log in, you will see an “upload” button. Follow the onscreen instructions to upload the video. iMovie users can export directly to YouTube.

Step 4: Add the supplied URL to your MLS listing in the virtual tour space. YouTube also supplies you with embed code, so you can add the video to your website.

A number of professional virtual tour companies and websites can help REALTORS® create true virtual tours that allows viewers to spin the camera to look around each room and move at their own pace, but the method described here is fast, easy and affordable. Take this first, inexpensive step to drawing more attention to your next listing. ■

Mike Delamater is MAR's Information Technology Manager. E-mail him at mdelamater@msrealtors.org.



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YOUR NECK OF THE WOODS

Local Board & AE Forum

In Mississippi, there are 21 local boards serving REALTORS® in every corner of the state. Here's what's going on in their communities:

Biloxi/Ocean Springs

The Biloxi/Ocean Springs board celebrated NAR's 100th birthday with the theme "Anchors to Stay." We honored members in our association that have been REALTORS® for 20+ years. We would also like to congratulate those who recently received special recognition. Lisa Hollister received the REALTOR® of the Year Award, Ellis Branch received the Martha Helms Award, Marshall Holyfield, Gulf Coast Publishing and Wayne Richmond, All Points Home Inspector, tied for Affiliate of the Year, and Shirley Zimmerman was the first to receive the Wally Page Memorial Presidents Award.

Clarksdale

In spite of slow residential sales, REALTORS® have noticed an increase in commercial inquiries. A new look to Clarksdale's legendary Crossroads intersection is an upcoming project in our city. Investors are undertaking The Crossroads Hotel and Entertainment Complex targeting blues fans. The board congratulates Lawrence Magdovitz for securing these contracts. The board also congratulates Billy Noah as our REALTOR® of the Year.

Cleveland

No information provided.

Four County

No information provided.

Golden Triangle

Golden Triangle Association donated over \$1,500 to a local non-profit to provide school clothes and other items to needy children in grades K-8. We are holding a raffle in November to raise money for an area Habitat project. The funds will go toward building the largest home in the history of the Columbus-Lowndes chapter. It will provide housing for a retiring Air Force couple who are parents of six children and are adopting eight more special needs children. We are proud that three of our local *LeadershipMAR* alumni, Doris Hardy, Audrey McBride and Melanie Mitchell, were chosen to participate in the 2008 *LeadershipMAR* honors program.

Greenville

Greenville's September membership meeting was at E. E. Bass Cultural Arts Center. Kathryn Lewis, Executive Director of the Greenville Arts Council, spoke to members about the Art Gallery, Delta Center Stage and future plans for the Arts Center. REALTORS® viewed the recently restored Carousel located in the center and enjoyed a meal of gumbo and French bread compliments of Betsy Alexander of Coldwell Banker!

Greenwood

The Greenwood Board of REALTORS® participated in the May Day of Caring at the Habitat for Humanity building site by serving lunch and working with other volunteers. We implemented an ongoing Pride of Ownership program for our service areas. Welcomed Clara Spann, REALTOR®, to our board. Members participated in the 10K run and the 5K walk for the 300 Oak Race with t-shirts saying "BUY NOW" look for the "R". Dixie Kelly placed 20th overall and 2nd in her age group in the 5K walk. We will not disclose how the rest of the participants placed in the races though.

Grenada

The Grenada Board of REALTORS® has recently become involved with the local food pantry. As a result of the numerous hurricanes, our area has many new families in need. The pantry assists over 800 families at the present time, with 300 families on a waiting list. Many of our REALTORS® are helping pack and distribute bags each month. Our board hosted "Octoberfest with Elvis" on Wednesday, October 8 on the square in downtown Grenada collecting canned goods as admission to the event.

Gulf Coast

In September, MAR President Gwen James, was our guest speaker. She helped recognize our 2008 award recipients, REALTOR® of the Year, Mark Cumbest; REALTOR® Spirit, Tina Pavlov; Affiliate of the Year, Stephen Reck and Gulf Coast Hall of Fame Inductee, Danette Shaw. Ten members selected to participate in our 2008 Coast REALTORS® Leadership Class were also recognized during their graduation ceremony.

Hattiesburg

The Hattiesburg Association just completed its first "Economic Development Boot Camp for REALTORS®" which was partially funded by a Smart Growth Action Grant from NAR. We also had our summer party with a tailgating theme. Gwen James was crowned Homecoming Queen! We are currently working on our Young Professionals Network and will be having a reception honoring those who are new to the real estate business.

Jackson

No information provided.

Laurel

The Laurel Board of REALTORS® is working with local businesses, EDA, churches, and Jones County Junior College to present an Education Summit in our community. The summit focus is "Going from Good to GREAT" and will be held on Nov. 13, 2008 at Jones County Junior College. We have applied for a Smart Growth Grant to help promote the summit. Our board has proven leadership members with Tanya Gray chosen to be a MS delegate to the National Democratic Convention, Sandra Vaughn chosen to attend the MAR leadership retreat and Lee Boyette and Mica Stevens chosen to be a part of the Jones County Leadership team.

Meridian

The Meridian Board of REALTORS® is very pleased to have Debbie Little, Magnolia Realty, selected as our REALTOR® of the Year, and Dan Derrington, a mortgage banker with First State Bank, chosen as our Affiliate of the Year. Both have been very active with the board and supportive of its efforts. Local Code of Ethics training provided through MAR was very well attended. Association Executive Tom Tabereaux is recovering from total left knee replacement, and while recovery has been slower than hoped, he is very grateful for the board's support, for remote computer access...and for the painkillers!

Natchez

Adams County and the surrounding counties received massive damage from Hurricane Ike. Adams County is still in the clean-up process. We had huge trees down and will take some time to get the town back to normal. Homes sales for the month of August were up from last month. Sales are up

about 50 percent for the month of August from this time last year.

North Central

In North Central Mississippi the summer has been busy for everybody. We are only down about 3 percent in our home sales from this time last year. With Ole Miss hosting the first 2008 Presidential Debate, our REALTORS® hope the added coverage through the national media will peak interest in the real estate market for Oxford and the surrounding area. Membership is holding steady, and our outlook for 2009 is good.

Northeast

We used our \$3,000 Smart Growth grant from NAR for an education summit. To open lines of communication between public education supporters, which include so many of our REALTORS®, and those who are the first contacts with people moving to our city. The summit helped REALTORS® understand that weakening public schools would affect their livelihood. We want them to be informed and educated, so they can pass factual information on to homebuyers. Nancy Loomer, executive director of The Parents' Campaign, Jackson, was our guest speaker.

Northwest

NWMAR will be busy in October with our last Leadership Class for the year, CE and Post License classes, a new MLS Property Mapping class, and our first Smart Growth Conference on Oct. 23rd. On Oct. 24th, we will be hosting a political forum for all the candidates to come and speak to members and the public just before Election Day. Our new leaders were elected in September, and are looking forward to seeing everyone in Hattiesburg in December!

Pearl River

Congratulations to our newly elected 2009 Executive Officers and Directors: President, Sherry Pullens; Vice President, Debbie Benoit; Treasurer, Stephanie Russo; Secretary, Paulette Egler. Newly elected Directors: Cecil Johnson, Corey Smith and Judy Pippin. With our heartfelt sympathy, we would like to acknowledge the unexpected passing of one of our long time Broker, Don Ginn. Our prayers go out to his family.

Southwest

No information provided.

Vicksburg

The Vicksburg-Warren County Board of REALTORS® Multiple Listing Service Committee waived the 4th Quarter MLS dues to all current MLS members. Our market has changed gears several times during the 2008 year and maintains a favorable market for buyers. Our membership size has remained relatively unchanged while we welcomed only a handful of new agents to our market this year.

Mississippi Association of Commercial REALTORS®

MCAR's own Doug Molyneux, CCIM, of Sawyer Commercial in Gulfport, recently taught the course, "Time Value of Money & the Financial Calculator" for a group of about 45 commercial practitioners in Jackson. The class served as an introductory course for new commercial agents and provided a valuable review for veteran agents.

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Local Board MARPAC participation levels

As of October 2, 2008

MARPAC has reached 105.9 percent of its 2008 goal with \$211,853 of \$200,000 and 51.1 percent of its 50 percent fair share participation goal.

Biloxi-Ocean Springs	64.8
Clarksdale	63.6
Cleveland	34.9
Four County	42
Golden Triangle	53.4
Greenville	60
Greenwood	62.5
Grenada	78.1
Gulf Coast	48.9
Hattiesburg	52.4
Jackson	33.9
Laurel	76.9
Meridian	66.4
MCAR	60
Natchez	32.3
North Central	44.1
Northeast	63.9
Northwest	72.8
Pearl River	69.9
Southwest	47.1
Vicksburg	63.4

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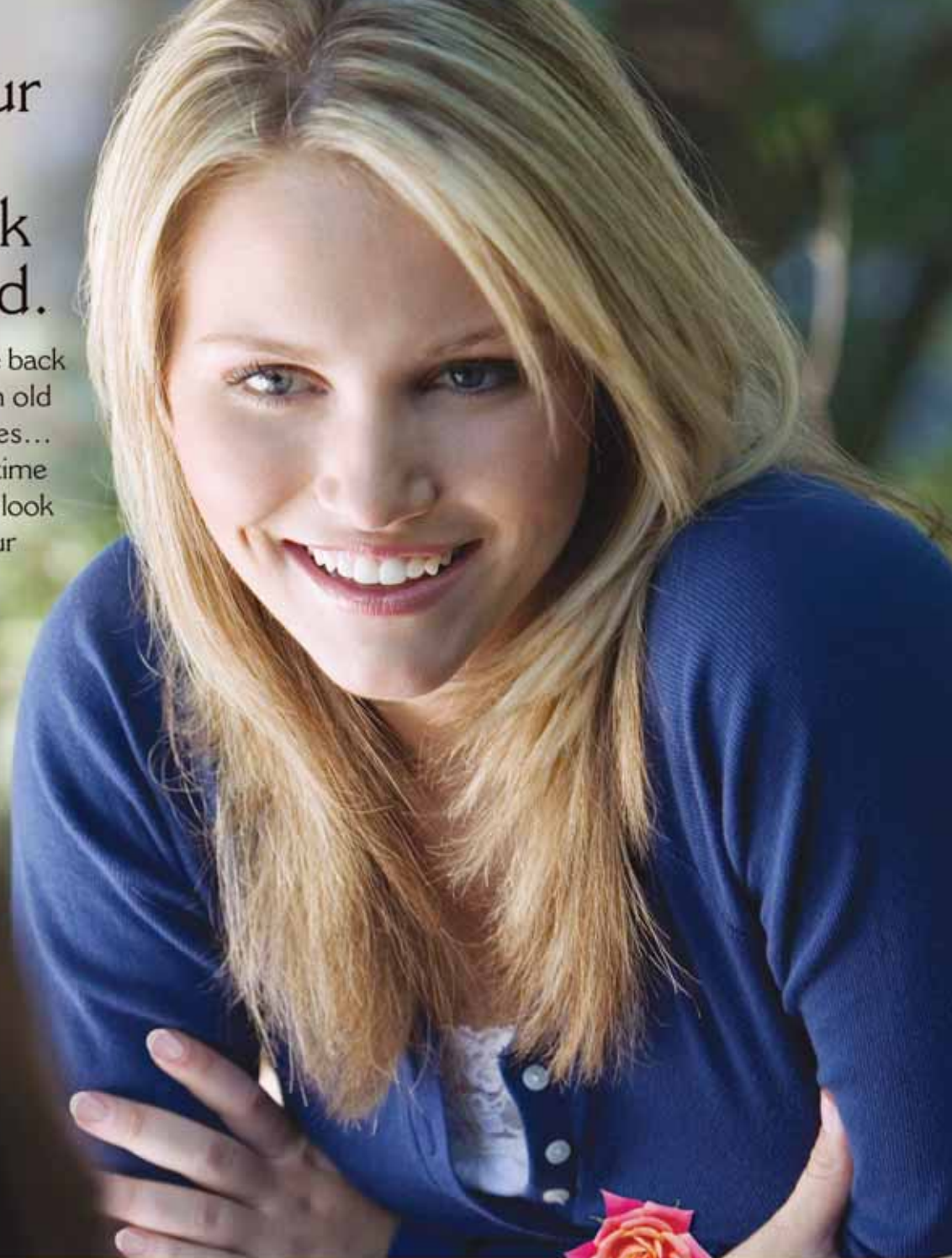
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