

It's That Time of Year When Many Agents Take a CE Class That Will Be Outdated in 1 Month

Every real estate agent licensed in the State of Colorado must take a 4-hour **Annual Commission Update** (ACU) class to keep their license from lapsing. As the managing broker of Golden Real Estate, I incentivize our broker associates to take it in January by reimbursing them for its \$40 cost — but only if the class is taken in January.

I don't know any other brokerage that does so, but I feel that we should all take this update class while the information is fresh. Meanwhile, my inbox is full of emails promoting last-minute ACU classes for agents who have not yet met that CE (continuing education) requirement.

It's crazy — and, I believe, not smart — to wait until December (or anytime after March) to take this class which updates us on important rules and regulations which may have changed from the previous year. The class that is being taught this month will be outdated the first week in January when vendors begin offering the 2024 ACU with totally new information.

What's taught in the ACU class? For starters, there are typically several changes to the contracts we must use beginning on Jan. 1st. Many of these changes are dictated by laws passed in this year's legislative session and take effect the following January. One such example is the law passed requiring sellers to disclose whether they know the level of radon gas in their home, the date and results of any testing, and whether they have had it mitigated. That required a change to the Sellers Property Disclosure document.

The Democratic-controlled General Assembly has also passed and the

governor has signed new laws to protect tenants, outlawing many anti-tenant provisions in leases — for example, a provision prohibiting tenants from participating in a class action lawsuit against their landlord. Property managers are also licensed by the Division of Real Estate, so that is just one example of the teachings which will be included in the 2024 update class.

Other components of the 4-hour class are refreshers of long existing rules that are included when the Real Estate Commission has experienced a large number of disciplinary complaints based on those rules. Some of us, me included, were licensed many years or even decades ago, and the ACU is a tool to keep us all current on the laws and rules by which we must practice our profession.

It's important for all real estate agents and brokers to be “on the same page” when it comes to the rules we must follow and the practices which can get us in trouble and even jeopardize our real estate licenses.

The Colorado Real Estate Commission takes continuing education seriously enough that it regularly audits every licensed real estate broker on a cycle to make sure they have taken the 24 hours of CE classes required to renew their real estate license every three years. The ACU provides 12 of those required hours.

My question to the Real Estate Commission is that, since they are serious about continuing education, why don't they change the rule regarding the Annual Commission Update class to require that it be taken by May or June instead of by the end of the year?

REAL ESTATE TODAY



By JIM SMITH
Realtor®

'Giving Circles' Can Give Meaning and Focus to Your Giving

I was recently made aware of **Grapevine**, a non-profit organization that is dedicated to facilitating the organization of charity-minded people into small groups which pool their giving and decide as a group where to make their combined donations.

An example might be a “circle” of 100 people who would give \$100 per month (or quarter) and then nominate and decide on a different charity to receive their combined \$10-30,000 donation each cycle. The group size

can be as small as 5 or as large as you want. Grapevine only takes a cut of the first donation to cover costs. After that, 100% goes to your charities.

The circles can be neighborhood-based or topic-based. By utilizing Zoom, they could even be international on such topics as LGBTQ, climate change, spirituality, social justice, etc. If you don't find a circle that fits your interests, they'll help you start one. Go to www.grapevine.org to see how they work and existing groups.

Gifts to Save the Planet — and Save on Energy Costs

From New Energy Colorado:

1) Gifts to help loved ones stay warm: Rather than turning up the thermostat to heat a whole home, warm up your loved ones with cozy slippers, throws, sweaters and base layers of clothing.

2) Gifts made from recycled materials: It's getting easier each year to find clothing made of reused plastic bottles, old sweaters and other recycled materials. Buying from second-hand stores can yield surprising treasures. And it's not just clothing that's recycled: look for dishes, towels, dish cloths and other household items.

3) Gifts that cut down on packaging: A nice water bottle to discourage the use of plastic, reusable coffee cups to take to the local shop or fill at home, and artistic shopping bags are just a few ideas.

4) Gifts that help avoid waste: A kitchen food compostor lets homemakers collect scraps and turn them into soil — or join their community composting program. Nice food storage containers encourage saving rather than tossing.

5) Gifts that clean the indoor air: A houseplant takes in CO₂ and breathes out oxygen and will help your loved ones connect to nature in the cold months. Paperwhites and Amaryllis are two fun bulbs to grow during the holidays.

6) Gifts that share things you love: Suggest your book group exchange books you've read and are ready to

pass on rather than buy new books. Propose that your work group's gift exchange feature treasures already in your homes. Libraries lend eBooks!

7) Gifts made by local crafters: Markets featuring homemade arts and crafts abound this time of year and allow local artisans to thrive.

8) Gifts that help the needy here and abroad: Whether it's planting trees in Africa, helping Latin American farmers grow their herds or replacing coral in reefs, charity gifts are always welcome. Closer to home, consider gifts that feed the hungry and help those who are struggling, and let your loved ones know you have donated in their name. Share your joy!

9) Gifts of experiences: Tickets to a concert, a play, or a sporting event can be more meaningful than more “stuff.” So can a massage or a membership to a gym or museum.

10) Gifts that help organizations working on the climate crisis: Of course, we think this is a great time to make a gift to **New Energy Colorado** in a loved one's name! Your tax-deductible donation will allow us to broaden our education and outreach offerings, helping more people get involved in fighting climate change.

Find more energy saving gifts on my Substack posting of this article.

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This Column Appears in 23 Weekly Papers Starting This Week

For nearly two decades this “Real Estate Today” column has been published on page 3 of the Denver Post's YourHub section and on page 3 of three Jefferson County weekly newspapers.

We are pleased to report that *starting this week* it also appears in the following metro area weeklies:

- Northglenn-Thornton Sentinel
- Westminster Window
- Denver Herald
- Centennial Citizen
- Englewood Herald
- Littleton Independent
- Metro West Advertiser
- Brighton Standard Blade
- Fort Lupton Press
- Commerce City sentinel

- Castle Rock News Press
- Douglas County News Press
- Castle Pines News Press
- Canyon Courier
- Clear Creek Courant
- 285 Hustler
- Elbert County News
- Parker Chronicle
- Highlands Ranch Herald
- Lone Tree Voice, in addition to Arvada Press
- Golden Transcript
- Jeffco Transcript

This is *great news* for homeowners who list their home with Golden Real Estate, knowing that their home will now be even more widely promoted than before — far more than by any other real estate brokerage.



Hometown Service Delivered with Integrity
Promoting and Modeling Environmental Responsibility

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“I cannot do all the good the world needs, but the world needs all the good I can do.” —Jana Stanfield