

## Real Estate Today

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# I Always Prefer to Deal with a Realtor — & You Should, Too!

By **JIM SMITH, Realtor®**

Only about half the licensed real estate agents in Colorado and in the country are Realtors, i.e., members of a local Realtor association and in turn the National Association of Realtors. You've probably seen the advertising campaign on both the local and national level urging you to "Make sure your agent is a Realtor" and "Look for the Realtor 'R'." (You can see that "R" next to my name below.)



When you're dealing with agents for the big national franchises — RE/MAX, Coldwell Banker, etc. — you can pretty much count on them being Realtors, but you need to check when the agent is an independent. Some companies which require their agents to join a Realtor association, including Keller Williams and Home Real Estate, appear to be a little lax, because I found several non-Realtors identified with these companies who, when interviewed, told me they were supposed to be Realtors but for one reason or another (cost?) hadn't gotten around to it. It costs about \$365 per year to belong to a Realtor association, which includes the dues sent on to the Colorado and National associations. This is about the same as what we licensed agents pay for our man-

datory Errors & Omissions insurance.

Why should the consumer care whether their agent is a Realtor? The simple answer is that only Realtors subscribe to the Realtor Code of Ethics. But aren't non-Realtor agents also ethical and law abiding? After all, non-Realtors are subjected to the same criminal background check, including fingerprinting, as Realtors before getting their license.

I have my own experience which makes me leery of non-Realtors. I wrote about it in a Nov. 4, 2004, column which you can still read at [www.JimSmithColumns.com](http://www.JimSmithColumns.com).

I described how a non-Realtor literally tried to steal a second parcel from my seller by inserting a second parcel ID in a contract after it was countered. The Attorney General is still prosecuting that agent.

The spring issue of the Colorado Real Estate Commission's newsletter lists disciplinary actions taken against 33 licensed Colorado real estate agents. Nineteen of those agents were non-Realtors.

Non-Realtors are not just representing buyers; they're also listing homes. Of 336 residential listings in the JFW area, I identified 30 that were listed by agents not in CAR's on-line Realtor database.

Metrolist, our local MLS, doesn't help. Although owned by the six metro Realtor associations, it allows non-Realtors to participate and doesn't let users know whether a given listing agent is a Realtor.

## This Week's Featured Listing

### A Ranch-Style Home in Mountain Ridge

This just-listed "Sunrise" model by Johnson features three bedrooms and three full baths (2 master suites) on the main floor and an open garden-level basement with 9-foot ceiling. The full-width wood deck offers a nice panorama of Golden and the Table Mountains beyond. All the floors were redone prior to listing — high-end carpeting in the bedrooms, porcelain tile in the bathrooms and Brazilian teak floors everywhere else. High-end appliances included too! **Open Sat. 1-4.**



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