

Signs Point to a Slow, Steady Decline for Realtor Associations

A couple weeks ago, I wrote about the importance of using a Realtor — that is, a member of a Realtor association — instead of a real estate agent who is not a Realtor.

In researching that story, I was shocked to discover exactly how many agents have quit their Realtor association, primarily to save the \$500 in annual dues.

According to Metrolist, which is Denver's MLS, over 20% of MLS members are non-Realtors, and that number is growing every year. Three metro area Realtor associations merged a couple years ago to fight the problem of growing expense and shrinking membership. The new organization is called the Denver Metro Association of Realtors. The other metro area Realtor associations are the South Metro Denver Realtor Association, the Aurora

Association of Realtors, the Douglas-Elbert Realtor Association, the Boulder Area Realtor Association and the Mountain Metro Association of Realtors.

By joining any of these local Realtor associations, an agent also becomes a member of the Colorado Association of Realtors (CAR), and the National Association of Realtors (NAR), which in turn are losing members at a fast pace, making one wonder

whether NAR, CAR and the local associations are ultimately going to disappear.

Consider what we would lose if there were no Realtor associations. First, recognize that real estate is essentially a lonely business. There are a few "teams" out there, but for the most part every agent is a sole practitioner. We set our own hours, work primarily at

home, and have little opportunity to mingle with and learn from others in the same industry — that is, except for the Realtor associations, which provide marketing sessions, conventions, continuing education classes and trade shows, not to mention email newsletters, blogs, calls to action, and the highly informative *Realtor* magazine.

CAR and NAR provide essential lobbying service at the state legislature and the U.S. Congress. Legislators would be at a loss when evaluating real estate legislation if they didn't have our paid lobbyists bringing our perspective to their deliberations. These lobbyists don't just protect the interests of practicing real estate agents (both Realtors and non-Realtors), they also protect the interests of homeowners and would-be home buyers.

Ours is not a simple business to understand. Without the input of our lobbyists, lawmakers might abolish VA

and FHA loans, which enable the purchase of homes with zero to 3.5% down payment respectively. They might abolish the mortgage interest deduction, which contributes so much to making home ownership affordable — a recognized and worthy public policy.

As I wrote two weeks ago, we real estate professionals need to support our trade association — not only for our good, but for yours, too.

More About Flood Insurance

Last week I wrote about flood insurance. Here's an important fact you may not know: flood insurance, if you have it, does not cover damage to a finished basement if it floods. It will only cover basement appliances, such as furnace and water heater, which serve the above-grade floors. You might want to keep this in mind before finishing your basement!

REAL ESTATE TODAY



By JIM SMITH, Realtor®

Chevy Volt: 23,000 Miles Later

On Labor Day, I bought gasoline for just the 12th time since taking delivery of my Chevy Volt 15 months ago. Each fill-up takes only 8 gallons. I have burned 99.1 gallons to go



23,000 miles. That's because 19,700 of those miles were on battery power alone. My lifetime average is 232 mpg. The electricity I used would have cost \$550 if purchased from Xcel Energy, but my electricity comes mostly from the solar panels on my home and my office building. (Our agents and visitors get free charging!)

My Volt's lithium ion battery pack shows no sign of degradation despite daily use and re-charging. I'm still getting over 40 miles on a full charge (slightly lower in the winter), after which the 4-cylinder gas engine runs to maintain a minimum battery charge. (The motor does not drive the wheels, it merely generates electricity.)

Dependability is built into the car's design. It has no fan belt, catalytic converter, or many of the other components of a gas powered car. I still have 72% of my original oil life remaining — my first oil change will be at about 65,000 miles. My garage never gets hot because my car's engine does not heat it up.

This Week's Featured New Listing

Starter Home Near Light Rail Station

Broker associate Jim Swanson has just listed this affordable starter home a few blocks south of the Knox Court station of the "W" light rail line. The address is [915 Irving Street](#). Much is new in this 2-bedroom, 1-bath home. It has newer carpeting, sewer line, roof, gutters, windows, furnace and electrical service. In addition to its 1,153 finished square feet, there is an oversized 1-car detached garage. The home is set at the back of its 6,250-sq.-ft. lot, with the garage facing the alley, so the front yard (which is fenced) is larger than you might expect on this size lot. Priced competitively at \$120,000. For a showing, call Jim Swanson at 303-929-2727.



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