



North Metro REALTORS® Association

... Improving Business, Building Community

News from North Metro

Weekly Update

March 2, 2009

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Greetings!

Watch for your NMRA Trade Fair post card in your mail this week! Bring this with you to our Trade Fair for a chance to win \$500 cash! The Trade Fair is March 12 from 9:30am-2:00pm. More details are below. We look forward to seeing you there!

Wishing you a wonderful week!

Announcements from NMRA

Daylight Savings Time Reminder

Remember daylight savings time arrives this Sunday, March 8, 2009. Turn your clocks one hour forward from 2am to 3am on Sunday morning. Daylight saving time allows for more light during the evening hours and less in the morning.



In Memoriam

Jeanne Voight's (long time NMRA Member) husband, Jim Voight, sadly passed away from cancer on February 27, 2009. Visitation held on Monday, March 2nd, 2009 from 3-8 PM at Central Lutheran Church 1103 School Street, Elk River.

Memorial Service will be held tomorrow, Tuesday, March 3rd, 2009 at 11 AM with a visitation 1 hour prior. Interment is on Wednesday, March 4th, 2009, 11:30 a.m. at Ft. Snelling National Cemetery.

The entire Voight family is in our thoughts and prayers during this difficult time.

2009 BettyAnn Croteau Scholarship Application Now Available!

NMRA proudly offers the BettyAnn Croteau Scholarship to students who will be entering college in the fall of 2009. BettyAnn was the EVP of NMRA from 1973-1997. Because of her dedication to the Association and education in the real estate industry, three scholarships were named for her. These three scholarships are available to children and grandchildren of NMRA members.



Simply have your family member who is graduating high school in 2009 fill out this easy [application](#) and mail it to the Association by April 20, 2009. The scholarships will be awarded on May 21, 2009 at the Membership Breakfast.

Upcoming Events

2009 NMRA Trade Fair - Thursday, March 12, 2009

Watch for your post card in the mail this week!

Featuring- Free Admission, Complimentary Coffee, Muffins & Pastries (donated by Costco), Free Luncheon Hors D'Oeuvres, Networking, Lots of New Exhibitors, Tons of Chances to Win Prizes & a \$500 Cash Giveaway!

Come Early for the Complimentary Breakfast and then join us for the NorthstarMLS presentation:

- **10:30am-11:15am, What's New and Coming Soon to NorthstarMLS?**

The staff at NorthstarMLS is dedicated to continually improving the value of NorthstarMLS to you as agents and appraisers by increasing your efficiency, productivity, and thereby multiplying your value to your customers. We have been busy upgrading our services with such features as WEBForms, BookAShowing, SafeMLS security and improved public records data. More exciting upgrades are coming in 2009. Come hear how NorthstarMLS is working to help you be more successful.

Tom Flaherty is Director of Marketing & Communications with NorthstarMLS. Tom and his colleagues will have a table at the trade show to answer your questions and listen to your feedback.

After Grab Some Lunch & Attend the Social Media Presentation:

- **12:15pm- 1:00pm, The Basics of Social Media**-Learn all about the social media tools you should be using. We will discuss how to use the

following programs to help you grow your business; Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Get Active and others.

March 12, 2009
9:30am- 2:00pm
Courtyards of Andover
This Event is FREE!

WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU THERE!

Advanced Listingbook Workshop

Have you taken the first step and logged into your Listingbook account, but now you're not quite sure what to do next?

Many REALTORS® are already using Listingbook to better service their buyers, sellers and prospects, and winning new clients and more business as a result everyday!



Join us at one of our upcoming **ADVANCED WORKSHOPS** and **NEXT-STEP** classes, and **Unleash the Power of Listingbook** for you and your customers!

Choose from these Course Topics and Date Options, Conveniently Located at the White Bear Lake office of Coldwell Banker Burnet:

- March 4th beginning at 130pm. Listingbook Workshop for Listing Agents!

[Click here](http://actevarsvp.com/event/a0C4000001N9IJ) for course information and to register. (Or, Copy and Paste this address to your browser: <http://actevarsvp.com/event/a0C4000001N9IJ>)

News from NorthStarMLS

BookAShowing Demos for Agents

We are offering online demonstrations of BookAShowing for agents. BookAShowing is the online scheduling application incorporated into NorthstarMLS and included in your MLS fees. The scheduling portion of BookAShowing goes live on March 11. These demonstrations will give you a quick overview of how to easily schedule showing appointments, confirm showing requests for your listings and customize showing feedback requests. Each demo lasts no longer than 45 minutes and you can participate from your home or office. All you need is an Internet connected PC and PC audio (if your PC does not have audio, there is a call-in phone number although it is not toll-free).

Below is the schedule. Click the register link for the demonstration you want to join. After you register, you will receive an email with all the details of how to connect to the demonstration.



Wednesday, March 4, 2:00 p.m. [Click here to register.](#)

Thursday, March 5, 9:00 a.m. [Click here to register.](#)

Thursday, March 5, 1:00 p.m. [Click here to register.](#)

Monday, March 9, 2:00 p.m. [Click here to register.](#)

Tuesday, March 10, 9:15 a.m. [Click here to register](#) (**Brokers:** This one is a great opportunity to include most of the agents in your office if you want to do it during your Tuesday Sales Meeting.)

Wednesday, March 11, 2:00 p.m. [Click here to register.](#)

Thursday, March 12, 10:00 a.m. [Click here to register.](#)

Thursday, March 12, 2:00 p.m. [Click here to register.](#)

Monday, March 16, 1:00 p.m. [Click here to register.](#)

Wednesday, March 18, 10:00 a.m. [Click here to register.](#)

Government Affairs News

Affordability, Rates, Lower Prices Not Driving Sales Recovery-Yet!

While continued price declines are contributing to a general reluctance to buy now, adding a kind of "good for me" if I wait and prices get even better attitude, which equates to no consumer urgency. A more limiting factor is the overall jobs picture. Daily news accounts of massive layoffs, corporate P&L statements that are ever more 'loss heavy,' failing banks, ailing auto industry, shrinking GDP, massive government spending, and unemployment that seems dead set on reaching 10% and beyond, these factors have left everyone somewhere between malaise and utter paralysis about their job prospects and future income potential. At this point, the 'common man rationale' is 'nobody is safe.' Planning a major financial decision, i.e. purchasing a home, given these conditions is senseless, from consumers prospective, no matter how good the deal.

Considered another way, if simple Real Estate economics were the only limiting factor to sales wouldn't the combination of the high affordability index, historically low interest rates, and lower prices be contributing to all time record sales?

The challenge for agents is to calm consumers down and get them to think strategically, in an otherwise emotional transaction, about their housing needs, budget, job situation, and ultimately their purchase or sale. It's going to take more work. You may have to change your tactics, provide more market statistics, utilize housing assistance funds, encourage new buyers to learn about home buying, remind would be sellers that is not necessarily a bad time to 'move-up', but it can be done.

The good news is the market will rebound, it has already shown some hints towards a more balanced market. When will that be? That's anyone's guess. Sooner or later fear will subside, and all things being equal, sales will be swift. Here's hoping for sooner!

[Eric Myers](#), NMRA's Government Affairs Director, is available to present his prospective as well as detailed market statistics to your office, local unit of government, HRA, civic group, or other interested parties.

Let's Kick-Start the Spring Market

Member Involvement Needed

NMRA is working to help kick-start the spring market. The board of directors approved in concept a plan to hold 'city specific open houses.' The idea behind the project would be to coordinate and work with interested cities to hold open every listing in a particular city on a particular day. Promoting each community as a great place to live, highlighting community attributes, and driving interest in homeownership is a win for cities, REALTORS®, and most of all prospective homeowners.

Members are needed to join small working groups of (3-5) per community to plan the details. Working groups will be member driven but supported by NMRA staff.

Criteria:

- Established community relationships (i.e. elected officials and staff);
- Working knowledge of community processes;
- Vested interest in a particular community; and
- Beyond that we'll take any member willing

If you have been waiting for the right opportunity to 'get involved' this is it! Sign up today!

Please indicated your Name, Office and Contact Information, any criteria information (as above), and which community you would like to focus on.

Staff contact: [Eric J. Myers](#), Government Affairs Director, NMRA

Upcoming Education

Member Breakfast: Demographic Trends and Homeownership Programs

Join instructor Tom Gillaspay, the State Demographer, as he discusses the development focus on state demographic trends and their impact on current and future real estate market.



Additionally, Karen Skepper, Anoka Community Development, will discuss the new Federal Neighborhood Stabilization Program dealing with foreclosed property and opportunities for agents.

Course Details

Tuesday, March 10
Cost: \$15 includes breakfast
Registration & breakfast begins at 8:00am
Class runs 8:30am- 11:30am
3 hours of continuing education (now approved!)

[Click here to register](#)

News from NAR

REALTOR Magazine Seeks Good Neighbor Nominations

Five winners will receive \$10,000 grants and national publicity

REALTOR Magazine, the official publication of the National Association of REALTORS, is seeking your help in identifying nominees for the 2009 Good Neighbor Awards. The program--now in its 10th year--recognizes REALTORS whose extraordinary commitment to community service has helped make their communities better places to live.



In November, five winners will be announced in REALTOR Magazine and will be recognized at the 2009 REALTORS Conference & Expo in San Diego. Five winners will receive a \$10,000 grant for their community cause, travel expenses to the convention, and extensive publicity to benefit their cause. In addition to the winners, five honorable mentions will receive \$2,500 grants.

Eligible activities include any volunteer work that helps improve the quality of life in a community. Entry form, rules, judging criteria, and profiles of past winners are available [here](#).
Deadline for entry is Friday, May 22, 2009.

News from NAR

Fannie Instructs Its Servicers Not to Cut Commissions on Short Sales

On February 24, 2009, Fannie Mae sent Announcement 09-03 to its servicers instructing them not to negotiate commissions on short sales below the amount negotiated by the listing agent (unless the commission exceeds 6 percent). The requirement takes effect March 1, 2009. Fannie Mae recognizes that (a) negotiating commissions for short sales is unfair because getting a short sale to closing requires intensive work over many months, often requiring working with numerous buyers, and (b) compensating real estate agents fairly benefits Fannie Mae because agents play a crucial role in short sales. The Announcement reminds servicers that third party approvals (i.e., private mortgage insurers) may be required, which can affect commissions. NAR has asked both Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac to strengthen their policies against reducing short sales commissions, welcomes Fannie's announcement, and has urged Freddie to follow Fannie's lead.

[Fannie Mae Announcement 09-03 \(2/24/09\) >](#)

Housing Statistics

The 100+
Market Updates for 205 Twin Cities Communities

Now Updated & Includes New Counties!

The 100+ is now updated through January and includes an additional 16 county reports. [Click here to view the Monthly Markets Analyses.](#)

Updated February 13, 2009.



Get the latest housing market statistics from our [Weekly Market Activity Report!](#) Updated February 23, 2009.

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