



Jason Copeman, 2017 President
MICHIGAN REALTORS®

I am pleased to report that our Association is stronger and more versatile than ever. I started this year out with a very direct focus on volunteerism and association involvement. I issued a challenge to each and every member. Much like our strongest Michigan communities, a truly great association relies upon the strength and commitment of its volunteers.

There have been many participation opportunities at the local and state level for motivated members to join in, or sign up for this year. Many programs that have launched out of Michigan Realtors® continue to remain highly successful. **Michigan Realtors® Leadership Academy** has established its reputation as a prime platform for emerging leaders in our industry. This year-long program aims to promote leaders who have demonstrated their potential through job-related and community activities. In addition, the Academy provides access to a network of industry experts across the state, all of whom are actively involved in improving our Association and profession.

Placemaking initiatives provide another opportunity for members not only to participate, but to see tangible results within their communities. Our Association has worked with different municipalities across the state who took part in the **“Realtor® Lighter Quicker Cheaper”** Placemaking initiatives. These community revitalization efforts turn under-utilized common spaces into vibrant, bustling, usable shared places quickly and creatively.

In addition, the **CE Marketplace**, our one-stop shop for Continuing Education for licensees, continues to see a steady rise in enrollment. We have established an effective working relationship with the Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA) and are fully embracing opportunities to take the lead as an organization that values education and professional development. For our membership and the Michigan consumer, we remain focused on education and accountability.

In legislative news, Michigan Realtors® Public Policy staff has been working with our state elected officials in creating sound public policy initiatives for both our membership, and their clients:

- ***Protection of Vacation Rentals***

There have been a number of initiatives put forth, both nationally and statewide, that seek to ban the practice of private property vacation rentals. This trend, initiated by a growing number of local governments, fully *bans* vacation rentals as a prohibited commercial activity in a residential zone. Not only would this, essentially, wipe out tourism that many local communities depend on in the summer (especially in coastal areas and lakeshore communities in Michigan) but it also stifles property owners' rights, and what they can legally do with their properties.

While we respect a local government's right to reasonably register and regulate vacation rentals, we believe the availability of these types of rental arrangements offer a unique benefit and draw for Michigan property owners and communities. Legislation has been introduced in both the Michigan House and Michigan Senate (House Bill 4503 and Senate Bill 329) to end the practice of banning short term rentals, and we expect to see movement on the bills in the coming weeks.

- ***The Issues Mobilization Fund***

The Issues Mobilization Fund (IMF) continues to thrive as a powerful tool for local and statewide action and impact. In 2017, Michigan REALTORS® has provided IMF assistance to several local associations on issues such as combating burdensome Point-of-Sale Septic Ordinances in counties around Central Michigan, challenging short-sighted vacation rental restrictions as mentioned above, and taking strong and well-reasoned positions against various forms of local government overreach.

- ***First-Time Homebuyer Savings Account***

Lastly, in lockstep with many other state associations, we are working towards the establishment of a Michigan First Time Homebuyer Savings Account to provide an enticing opportunity to save and grow funds for homeownership *in* Michigan. Legislation has been introduced in the Michigan Senate (Senate Bills 511 and 512) to create a new incentivized savings program for 1st time homebuyers to save and grow funds for homeownership in Michigan.

As a closing personal note, I continue to be amazed at how strong our Realtor® community is throughout Michigan, and how much can be done with a unified voice. We not only love what we do, but we love our communities - From the Upper Peninsula to all of my colleagues south of bridge. We know that our value to both our communities and our association can never be fully quantified in dollars and cents. But, we see the value every single day through the eyes of our clients and the betterment of our community.