

OHIO ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®

The Ohio Association of REALTORS is continuing to refine, enhance and assist its membership and Local Boards/Associations to meet the ongoing challenges of an ever-changing marketplace.

With an eye toward 2015, we've begun implementing programs and initiatives concerning three key areas:

- NAR Core Standards
- OAR Governance Structure / Meetings
- Communications Audit

Foremost, OAR has a long-standing policy and mission of serving the needs of our Local Boards/Associations. We understand that, for most members, the most important point of contact with the REALTOR organization takes place at the local level. Our focus of service to the Local Boards/Associations has been vital in building a strong and lasting partnership within the Buckeye State.

As such, OAR leadership has arranged a two-day workshop in Columbus focused on the pending NAR Core Standards. We have invited incoming presidents and Association executives from our 47 Local Boards/Associations to participate in the session, designed to provide insights and offer tools to ensure compliance with the new standards.

In addition to representation from Local Boards/Associations, the session will also include OAR elected leadership and staff.

A long-term project involves OAR revisiting its current structure and meeting schedule. The organization is somewhat unique in that we have a 314-member Board of Directors. This group meets three times each year – Winter Inaugural Conference, Spring Legislative Meeting and OAR Annual Convention & EXPO. Within our governance structure, there are 28 standing Committees and forums.

Leadership has decided to conduct a review of our governance structure and frequency of meetings, hoping to determine whether any changes or enhancements should be made to better meet the needs of the membership and overall organization.

Finally, OAR understands that it plays a critical role in telling Ohio's real estate story to its membership and to the public. We undertook a total revamp of our communication strategy in 2012 – in part due to financial concerns, but also as a result of the emergence and flexibility of new technologies.

While we continue to mail a membership publication, we did reduce the frequency from six tabloid newspaper issues to two, high-gloss magazines. The continual increases in printing and postage, combined with shrinking advertising revenues were key factors in the change.

The biggest change was a shift in our focus to utilizing electronic methods of communications. We enhanced our Association website and weekly e-Connections newsletter emailed to our membership. Additionally, we created the OAR Daily Buzz to serve as a gathering spot for news and information. Each day we post information on the blog on a wide range of topics – legal, political, research, coaching and Association news, among others – to keep membership “in the know.” Each post includes social media tools that, with a simple click, allows REALTORS to easily share the information with their family, friends, clients and customers.

While an internal survey this past Spring indicated that these changes have been met with widespread approval and acceptance within our ranks, leadership would like to further investigate whether or not we're fully providing the information and tools today's REALTOR needs to stay successful. We anticipate conducting a follow-up survey by year-end to gain a better understanding of what membership thinks of our current offerings – both traditional and electronic. In addition we are in the process of reaching out to outside vendors to explore the costs and value of undertaking a more exhaustive investigation of our internal and external communications efforts.

OAR's leadership, to its credit, is curious and willing to explore whether the Association can improve its delivery of service to meet the needs of Ohio's REALTOR community today and tomorrow.