



MICHIGAN REALTORS®
2016 President's Report

Michigan REALTORS® continues to play an extremely active role as both a trusted resource and sounding board for our Governor, the State Legislature, Michigan's citizens – and, of course, our fellow REALTORS®. Whether it's providing the voice of reason on Tax Tribunal Disputes, championing practical fixes to the Condominium Act, defeating proposed Statewide Point of Sale inspection proposals, or improving the recording process at the Register of Deeds, 2016 was another great year for advocacy at Michigan REALTORS®.

Michigan REALTORS® also graduated the Inaugural class of the Michigan REALTORS® Leadership Academy. This growing venture aims to create leaders in our industry who have demonstrated their potential through job-related and community activities. In addition, the Academy seeks to create a network of industry experts across the state who are actively engaged in improving our Association and profession. Entrance into the year-long program continues to be a highly competitive, but the feedback from those involved in the Academy has been incredible, and we look forward to continuing this great program for many years to come.

The versatility and importance of our Issues Mobilization Fund has never been more pronounced. In 2016, Michigan REALTORS® ramped up the communications and outreach for IMF use, creating infographics and unveiling the IMF Hotline to alert staff to issues of note in your local community. This year, your association has been providing IMF assistance to several local associations on issues, ranging from harmful ballot initiatives posing as a community benefits effort in the City of Detroit, to short-sighted vacation rental restrictions along Lake Michigan. We're currently involved in more than 15 local issues and we anticipate involvement will only increase as local governments search for revenue in every corner of the community.

For example, we've been battling a burdensome Time of Transfer Septic Ordinance in Gerrish Township in northern Michigan. Our local REALTORS®, armed with talking points and analysis from Michigan REALTORS®, have been rallying in opposition for the past few months. Their voice was heard loud and clear at the most recent Township Board meeting, generating the local headline: "Realtors: Flush septic proposal". Work continues there as we try to prevent local government from using REALTORS® as enforcement.

The association-owned CE Marketplace made huge strides in 2016. Not only is the CE Marketplace a great membership service for the tracking and offering of continuing education, its growth and real-time accuracy have become a model and resource for the State of Michigan's Real Estate Licensing Division. The passage of the REALTOR®-supported Senate Bill 555 made the CE Marketplace an even more important resource for Continuing Education. The law now provides that any course approved, taken, and tracked by the CE Marketplace is 100% audit proof. That means that if your license gets selected for a random CE audit and you use the CE Marketplace for your education tracking and compliance, you can quickly stop that audit in its tracks by invoking the CE Marketplace as your shield and proof that your education is CE Marketplace approved.

In the midst of the water crisis in the City of Flint, Local REALTORS® at the East Central Board were quick to mobilize on behalf of their community to provide time and resources. Your Michigan Board of Directors felt strongly about partnering with the local association to galvanize REALTORS® Resources in a meaningful way – even when the media frenzy had subsided. In early 2016 the “Michigan REALTORS® Relief Fund” was established to support the City of Flint and its response efforts. In July, a Relief Fund check for \$20,000 was presented to The Community Foundation of Greater Flint. The funds will be used to aid with interventions that support positive health outcomes for Flint children. While the primary focus of establishing this particular fund has been centered on the current water crisis, the Relief Fund is intended to be ongoing as a 501(c)(3) organization, a new and versatile tool to provide aid to victims of disasters and other future challenges down the road.

Most recently, the Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs announced a partnership with Michigan Attorney General Bill Schuette in stepping up enforcement against unlicensed real estate practitioners. For the past several months, Michigan REALTORS® have led discussions with both departments about this important initiative to deal with unlicensed real estate activity and real estate fraud in Michigan. Michigan has a Real Estate Enforcement Fund that is funded through earmarked licensing fees. This formalized partnership for enforcement is a huge win for REALTORS® in Michigan, as we continue to advocate for professionalism and consumer protection in our industry.