

STATE NEWS



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February 15, 2008

As President Tate Cymbaluk and Jill Beck, NDAR AE, have been traveling around the state the last month to visit boards, it was asked that we “push” more information from NAR to our members. As you may have noticed with the last State News it is getting very long and it is intended to be a quick read to see what is happening in our state and NAR. Therefore, for now, if we have the information, we will try to send the State News twice a month.

NDAR UPDATES:

Statewide Housing Conference Scheduled

The 2008 Statewide Housing Conference will feature Scott MacIntosh, Senior Economist with the National Association of REALTORS®. Scott will present a housing industry forecast entitled “2008 - A Year of Opportunity”. There are also several break out sessions that are focused on housing including “Legal Issues: Homeownership” that will deal with problems faced in getting the right paperwork to close a sale. Casey Chapman, NDAR Legal Counsel and Howard Malloy, Bismarck Title will be the featured panel at this session. Other break-outs of interest to REALTORS® are Financing Manufactured Housing, Environmental Issues Update, Creating a Housing Trust Fund. Attendees can earn Continuing Education - five hours CE on Wednesday, Feb. 20, and three hours on Thursday, Feb. 21. For a schedule and registration information [click here](#).

GRI 1 & 2

Courses are scheduled for March 3-6, 2008 in Fargo at O’Kellys. Each course is 15 hours and may be used for GRI designation and/or CE credit. Institute 1 is also approved for Appraisal Education. The tuition for each 15-hour course is \$175. For registration form [click here](#).

Spring Caravan Scheduled

NDAR Professional Development Committee (formerly known at the Education Committee) has scheduled a Spring Caravan with two Mandatory Education Classes - Contract Law and Agency Law. The instructors for the courses are Casey Chapman and Marcie Roggow. Both classes will be held in each of the 7 large local boards. For more information please see flyer [here](#).

Property Tax Relief (Senate Bill 2032)

As reported by ND Tax Commissioner, Cory Fong, during the last biennium (2005-2007), the North Dakota economy was strong, enabling the 2007 Legislature to offer \$115 million in property tax relief. The relief is the result of a law passed by the 2007 Legislature and signed by Governor Hoeven. The relief is provided to homeowners, land owners, and commercial property owners. The Tax Department has had many calls from our industry on this tax relief and we have now published much of this information on our website – www.ndrealtors.com – see Property Tax Relief on the left side or just under the calendar.

NAR UPDATES:

Stimulus Package Signed into Law

This week President Bush signed the Economic Stimulus package into law. Last week, Congress gave overwhelming final approval to the Economic Stimulus Package supported by NAR and REALTORS® across the country. As a result, the government will be sending payments to most American households and grant tax incentives for business investment.

The legislation includes the requested GSE and FHA limit increases strongly backed and lobbied by NAR. The increased GSE loan limits means borrowers will see immediate relief with new liquidity in the mortgage market and the nation will see an additional 300,000 home sales. The increased FHA loan limits means an additional 138,000

Americans will purchase homes, and with the needed FHA reforms means 200,000 families can refinance their homes safely and affordably.

Thank you for your efforts. Over 85,000 REALTORS® contacted the Senate on this issue, and together you made a significant difference. NDAR had 118 members and staff contact our Senators on this issue. Thank you.

Additional Information provided by IRS on Stimulus Package

Please [click here](#) for more information provided by our Regional IRS Rep. Attached is all the information I have to date. There are also small business provisions such as an increase in the Section 179 deduction limitations, certain first year auto depreciation limitations, and a provision for an additional first-year depreciation deduction equal to 50% of the adjusted basis of qualified property. As soon as I get more complete details on the new depreciation limits, I will send that out as well.

Ann Makres
Senior Stakeholder Liaison
Internal Revenue Service

Maine "Open MLS" Ballot Initiative Dead

As reported at our January Meetings an attempt to place the open MLS issue on the November ballot failed to gather sufficient number of signatures. The ballot initiative in Maine that attempted to create a statewide residential multiple listing service accessible to both real estate practitioners and the general public will not be on the State's November ballot because the proponents of the initiative failed to gather enough signatures. The signature gathering process was reportedly funded largely by out-of-state entities. NDAR Leadership is fully aware that such an issue could still come to North Dakota and are keeping a watchful eye on it.

Congress Makes Do-Not-Call Extension Permanent

On February 6, Congress sent to President Bush for his signature legislation that overturns a Federal Trade Commission (FTC) rule consumers must re-register their phone numbers every five years on the federal Do-Not-Call (DNC) list.

In addition, the legislation requires the FTC to issue a biennial report to Congress to evaluate, among other things: The impact of the established business relationship exception on businesses and consumers The impact of the exceptions to the DNC registry on businesses and consumers, including an analysis of the effectiveness of the registry.

Organizations engaged in charitable, political and survey work is exempt from the restrictions. Also, companies with an established business relationship with a customer may call for up to 18 months after the last purchase, payment or delivery.

Also, the DNC is "scrubbed" on a monthly basis by the FTC to remove all reassigned or disconnected numbers from the list.

NAR will continue to dialogue with the FTC on the impact of the DNC rules on small businesses as well as NAR's continuing concerns with the rules.

For more info on the DNC please visit our website at <http://www.ndrealtors.com/donotcall.htm> or contact NAR staff [Melanie Wyne](#) 202-383-1234, [Scott Rinn](#) 202-383-7508

President's Budget Impacts Housing, Real Estate

On February 4, 2008, the President released his proposed budget for FY 2009. A summary below provides a preliminary analysis of how the Administration's budget would affect the real estate industry. While details are sparse on many of these proposals, NAR will continue to work to obtain more information. The FY09 budget is available at: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/budget/fy2009/>

Key Highlights include:

Housing Programs

- The Administration is requesting \$38.5 billion for the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), which is \$3.2 billion or a nine percent increase over the FY 2008 proposed budget. The proposed budget includes increases in funding over FY 2008 proposed budget for housing counseling, Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation, the HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME), and the Self-Help Home Ownership Opportunity Program (SHOP).
- HOME funds include \$50 million for the American Dream Downpayment Initiative (ADDI), which is a \$40 million increase over FY 2008 enacted budget.

Government Sponsored Enterprises

- The Administration again proposes a new independent Federal Housing Enterprises Regulator for the housing government sponsored enterprises (GSEs): Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac, and the Federal Home Loan Banks. The new regulator would combine safety and soundness authority with oversight of their housing missions.
- The Administration supports GSE reform legislation to enhance the powers of the new regulator, including the ability to put a GSE into receivership if it were to fail, new product approval authority, authority to address the size of their retained portfolios and to mitigate related risks, and authority to ensure compliance with affordable housing mission of the enterprises.

Flood Map Modernization Program

- The President's budget is proposing \$256 million to fund the Flood Map Modernization Fund for 2009. This will allow the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to complete the updating and modernization of most of the maps in the country, and also allow them to develop procedures to regularly update and maintain them. The Flood Map Modernization Fund is used to update, modernize and maintain the inventory of over 100,000 flood maps nationwide.

Rural Housing Service/Rural Development Programs

- The Administration is requesting nearly \$15 billion for the Department of Agriculture's Rural Development programs. This includes \$4.8 billion for the single family loan guarantee, an increase of \$600 million from FY 2008.
- No funds are requested for the 502 Direct Single Family Housing Loans for FY 2009 as the single family guarantee is expected to replace the direct loan program. The FY 2009 budget requests \$300 million for the 538 guaranteed multifamily housing loans. This level of funding supports the Administration's policy to maintain rental assistance for 230,000 low-income households that reside in USDA financed multi-family housing.

[View the FY 2009 Federal Budget Key Real Estate Provisions](#)

NAR Contact: [Russell Riggs](#) 202-383-1259

NAR Legal Affairs Podcast

The NAR Legal Affairs [podcast](#) is a resource for reporting current legal issues related to real estate professionals. Podcasts that are available: Personal Safety, Undisclosed Dual Agency, Meth and RE Professionals, Fair Housing Compliance, Short Sales and Mortgage Fraud. Please note that will need your log in information for www.realtor.org to access these podcasts.

Mark Your Calendar for...

Upcoming Education

- ❖ February 20-21 – NDHFA housing Conference, Ramkota, Bismarck [click here](#)
- ❖ March 3-6 – GRI 1 & 2, O'Kellys, Fargo [click here](#)
- ❖ March 10-14 – Spring Caravan, 2 courses, 7 locations [click here](#)
- ❖ May 12-17 – NAR Mid Year Meetings & Expo

Meetings & Events

- ❖ March 29 – April 2 – AE Institute, Boston
- ❖ April 16-17 – NDAR Committee and BOD Meetings, Ramkota, Bismarck

NDAR Office Closings

- ❖ February 18 – President's Day Observed
- ❖ March 21 – Good Friday