May 2007

Sarasota REALTOR® MAGAZINE

The Future Is Now

Sarasota Young Realtors® bring new perspectives to the market

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GENERATION R

Sarasota Young Realtors®: The Future Is Now

One crucial element of any successful organization is to ensure younger members are prepared and educated to assume leadership roles. This was the basic premise behind the formation of the Sarasota Young Realtors® group in January 2007.

The SAR Strategic Plan lists as Goal 2 the creation of a program "to identify and train new leaders," and establishes as one of the strategies to "establish a Young Realtors® group within SAR."

Thanks to SAR members Dave Beachy and Anthony Homer, chair and vice-chair of the newly formed Sarasota Young Realtors® group, that strategy has been enacted. The group has now met several times and held a few successful social gatherings and networking sessions, designed to grow and promote the group. So far, their efforts appear to be paying off.

"We are proud that our younger members have taken such a strong interest in accepting this responsibility," said Joe Hembree, 2007 SAR President. "Our youthful members definitely need to be given an opportunity to make their voice heard in the SAR direction and initiatives. We want to be a balanced organization, and strive to bring new faces, voices and opinions to the mix. This is a big part of the reason for the formation of the Sarasota Young Realtors® group, and they've taken the ball and run with it."

One advantage many of the younger members of SAR have is their familiarity with the latest, greatest technological tools so prevalent in today's industry. Having grown up with more advanced computers, the Internet, cell phones and PDAs, the younger Realtors® are comfortable and highly capable.

The mission statement created by the group's leadership provides a good testament to their goals and strategies: "The mission of the Sarasota Young Realtors® is to support and advocate the interest of the young Sarasota real estate professionals. The Sarasota Young Realtors® will be an organization of advocacy that utilizes the strengths, talents, and leadership of its members to build value and lasting relationships with our community through professional development, networking and sharing of information."

Anthony Homer of Hembree & Associates, vice-chair of the organization, said the impetus for creating the group was "to identify and promote the young people in our area who will lead the Sarasota Association of Realtors® in the next five to 10 years." Chair Dave Beachy of Beachy Properties noted the Young Realtors® group believes networking is key to establishing a presence in the area and creating relationships that help further the overall mission.

"Our meetings and events are designed to get people together to establish vital contacts and business relationships," said Beachy. "The social gatherings are also a lot of fun, but there is definitely a business motivation behind them."

"We represent a group of hungry, energetic professionals in our industry, and we're ready to make our mark," said Shannon Rogers, also of Beachy Properties.

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Sarasota Young Realtors® schedule activities

The SYR Group's social is scheduled for Wednesday, May 23, 2007 at the Rustic Grill located at 1525 4th Street in Sarasota starting at 5:30 p.m. Come and unwind, share a drink and enjoy lively conversation. All Realtors and business Affiliate members are invited. Bring your spouse or a friend and relax.

Monthly Meetings – register at www.sarasotarealtors.com (all meetings on Fridays, Noon to 1:30 p.m., except where noted):

April 13 – Topic: International
May 4 - Realtor® Day Golf Tournament (8 a.m.)
May 18 – Topic: Distressed Properties
June 8 – Topic: Down Payment
July 13 - Realtor® Day Bowling

Social Events – open to all ages, no registration required (all on Wednesdays at 5:30 p.m.):

April 25 – The Table, 1934 Hillview Street
May 23 – Rustic Grill, 1525 4th Street
June 20 – The Table
July 25 – Rustic Grill

Picture from top left are: Anthony Homer, Ryan Billib, Dave Beachy, Jenny Alday, Christina Pitchford Perez, Shannon Rogers, Brad Kayser and Jennifer Roemer.

Sales tax on services amendments defeated by Supreme Court

The late March Florida Supreme Court ruling against two proposed constitutional amendments that would have allowed a sales tax on services is a hard-won victory for the Florida Association of Realtors® (FAR) and 26 other business groups that form the Coalition to Protect Florida's Economy.

At issue were two proposed amendments supported by former Florida Senate President John McKay, Department of Children & Families Secretary Bob Butterworth and others who are part of Floridians Against Inequities in Rates (FAIR). The Coalition argued successfully that the amendments should be removed from the 2008 general election ballot because (1) the ballot summary is inadequate to explain the purpose of the amendment to voters; and (2) that the proposed amendments try to do too much and therefore violate the single subject requirement applicable to ballot initiatives.

One amendment would have authorized imposition of a new tax on services unless the Florida Legislature intervened to enact exemptions for individual services. The second amendment stricken would have repealed most existing sales tax exemptions absent legislative intervention to reenact individual exemptions.

The third amendment, not challenged by the Coalition, requires that new sales tax exemptions be contained within a law that includes a legislative statement of public purpose and no other subject but the exemption. This third amendment will be allowed to go on the ballot if FAIR can collect the required 611,000 signatures by Feb. 1, 2008. Division of Elections records indicate that many of the signatures gained by FAIR were likely through paid signature gatherers.

"The Court did the right thing. At a time when Floridians can no longer afford their property tax increases, adding billions of new taxes would have been devastating," said Mark Wilson, Executive Vice President of the Florida Chamber. "We have been successful in protecting all Florida professions, strengthening our economy and preserving the integrity of our state constitution."

Property tax relief for seniors

A bill that would allow counties to double the homestead exemption for low-income seniors is awaiting a final reading in the Senate. HB 333 by Carlos Lopez-Cantera (R-Miami) would also allow a taxing authority that has adopted an additional homestead exemption for low-income seniors for the 2007 tax year to increase the amount of the exemption up to the $50,000 limit for 2007 if a copy of the ordinance authorizing the increase is delivered to the property appraiser by May 1, 2007.

Cover Story

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Establishing credibility and gaining a solid track record of experience is also important to the next generation of local real estate professionals. Through the creation of the new group and its strong ties to the SAR and the current leadership of the Association, the Sarasota Young Realtors® are bridging the generations. The knowledge and insights they are gaining from the older, more established Realtors®, plus the ongoing professional development courses ensure that the future will be bright for local real estate.

Of course, overcoming one hurdle is crucial to achieving success – the built-in bias against youth.

"I've had a few potential clients ask me if I was really old enough to have a real estate license," said Christina Pitchford Perez. "I take it in stride and it motivates me to prove that I have the knowledge and skills to walk people through a transaction."

In fact, Perez noted, those who have questioned her age have all become her most valued clients. One even nominated her for the prestigious Sarasota Magazine FIVE STAR - Best in Client Satisfaction 2007 award, based on his impression of her dedication, market and procedural knowledge, and negotiation skills.

What has been the feedback from the group's formation?

"It's been very positive," said Anthony Homer. "We had a great turn-out for the kick-off and are using the momentum to build the group and make it very member-centric. We try to make every decision in the light of the impact it's going to have on the individual Realtor®. "

Jenny Alday, another member of the SYR committee, noted the group is already a viable and vibrant element of the SAR.

"I feel that the young Realtor® group will be a success because our committee is very motivated and committed. We are all striving for success and we want to help others achieve that goal too."

One big advantage many of the younger members of SAR have is their familiarity with the latest, greatest technological tools so prevalent in today's industry. Having grown up with more advanced computers, the Internet, cell phones and PDAs, the younger Realtors® are comfortable and highly capable. In fact, many of them find themselves acting as their office IT person when the IT person is away. Helping to train other, older real estate professionals in the new technologies comes with the territory, the SYR leadership noted.

"It really pays off to be on the cutting edge of technology," explained Anthony Homer. "That's where the future of business is, and it's where you need to be in order to be successful."

And that's where the Sarasota Young Realtors® group is – on the cutting edge, aimed at success, and always striving to gain the experience so necessary for effective leadership.