YOU matter

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It’s all part of our unique Culture of Awesomeness – one of Coldwell Banker NRT’s Core 4 Values designed to create a collaborative environment that inspires pride.
## FEATURES

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Mission Statement
The Maryland REALTORS® exists to support all segments of its membership and their specialties. Maryland REALTORS®, through collective efforts with local boards/associations and the National Association of REALTORS®:

- Develops and delivers programs, services and related products that maintain and elevate the high standards of the real estate business and the professional conduct of its practitioners;
- Assists members in ethically and professionally serving the public;
- Promotes and preserves the right to own, transfer and use real property; and
- Protects the right of members to conduct business within a framework of fair and reasonable laws and government regulations.

In principle and in practice, Maryland REALTORS® values and seeks diversity and inclusive participation within the field of real estate and recognizes each member as a unique individual.

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Welcome to the Dog Days of Summer!

I hope this finds you well and that you’ve had the opportunity to recharge your batteries for the fall buying and selling season.

This is my last letter to you as your 2019 President. My term has flown by and I am humbled that you gave me the opportunity to serve as your President. I’ve learned so much about this state and the members that we serve. We’ve accomplished a lot this year at the Association and I have to say I am most proud of the way your Leadership Team has come together to serve you.

I know that our Maryland REALTORS® will be well served by incoming President, John A. Harrison and the 2020 Leadership Team. You can learn more about John and his initiatives on page 4.

I’m excited to see you at our Annual Conference in September at the Gaylord National Harbor. The Annual Conference Committee has worked extremely hard this year to bring you an Annual Conference that is cutting edge and innovative, while still allowing you to get up to 13 hours of your required CE. You can register online until the 26th of August on our website, mdrealtor.org.

This year we held more than our share of special events. On page 14, learn more about the Environmental Education Workshop we held in April at the Chesapeake Bay Environmental Center in Centerville. The half-day event produced some lively conversations and great ideas that we hope will make a difference in educating members about critical areas and flood plains.

In June, we also held the first Women in Real Estate Conference at the BWI Marriott. The day-long event brought together women (and a few men) from across the state to discuss the unique challenges of being a woman in real estate. Attendees were inspired and had some great networking opportunities.

This year, I appointed 3 Presidential Advisory Groups (PAGs) to look at various aspects of the Maryland REALTORS® and report their findings and recommendations. You’ll be hearing more about the Annual Conference and Political Activity Funding PAGs in the coming months. One group that finished its work resulted in a significant change to our governance structure. First, a local association/board Executive (AE) will now have a non-voting seat on our Board of Directors and Executive Committee. Also, starting next year, candidates for state elective office will be versed by a Credentials Committee instead of the old Nominating Committee. This process will result in more fair and open elections and we hope will encourage more candidates to run for office. Keep on the lookout for more information on the process toward the end of the year.

As my letter comes to a close, I want to thank you again for your support and your tireless work on behalf of the clients and consumers we serve. You answered every Call For Action we sent out on legislative issues that impact the industry. You invested in RPAC so that elected officials at the federal, state and local levels know that REALTORS® are the Voice of Real Estate and when we asked you to serve on committees, you did.

Best Wishes for a happy & healthy summer and continued success! 🌞
John Harrison grew up as the “mayor’s kid.” His father was the mayor of Laurel, Maryland and an active member of the Rotary Club. His mother was involved in their church. Through his parents, Harrison learned the importance of community participation and service. As a young man, he joined the Prince George’s County police department.

Three years into his police career, Harrison was hit by a car while working an accident scene. His knee was badly injured. He went back to work, but ten years later, the injury retired him from the police force. Harrison turned to real estate.

Harrison purchased his first home when he was twenty-two and maintained an interest in buying and selling while working as a police officer. But when it came time to change professions, real estate was more than just an interest; it was a good fit. Harrison saw a lot of similarities between real estate and police work: you had to be self-motivated, adaptable, and you needed to understand people.

“As a police officer, you have to put on a lot of hats. You have to be the chaplain. You have to be the psychiatrist. You have to be the marriage counselor. It’s very similar with real estate, because you have to help your clients & customers with whatever their situation is and shepherd the deal along to where it needs to be.”

Harrison began his thirty-one-year real estate career in Prince George’s County, but moved to Anne Arundel to manage an office in Severna Park. The agents in his new office encouraged him to join the local Distinguished Sales Associate Club (DSAC). As a county newcomer, Harrison thought it a good way to meet people and recruit new agents for his office.

He had always volunteered: from the Fraternal Order of Police to the Lions Club to Laurel’s Fourth of July committee. Harrison didn’t stop when it came to real estate. He served as president for DSAC and the Anne Arundel County Association of REALTORS® (AACAR). This fall, he begins his term as president of Maryland REALTORS®.

Harrison hopes to champion several initiatives during his year as president. The first, agent safety, comes out of his police background. He’s been working with the state association to get an agent safety course certified for continuing education. He wants to provide an incentive for more people to take the course, which he believes would keep more agents safe.

Harrison’s second initiative is promoting the importance of RPAC, the REALTOR® Political Action Committee. Harrison feels having the ability to voice industry concerns to legislators is important and needs more member involvement.

As his third issue, Harrison would like to continue the professionalism initiative begun by past presidents. Specifically, he would like to make the professionalism course established by past president, Boyd Campbell, mandatory for those that want to renew their license.

Harrison’s fourth initiative is an ongoing one. He would like to see a stronger relationship between the state association and the sixteen local associations. Over the past two years, Harrison has made an effort to visit every local association’s board of directors, at least once. Each area has its own unique strengths and weaknesses, and Harrison feels it’s important to understand the varied perspectives.

“Real estate is a relationship business,” Harrison says. “It’s between you and your buyers and sellers. But it’s also the relationships between agents, between their brokers and between different associations.”

Harrison hopes to foster those relationships in any way he can. He encourages new agents to get involved with their local association, attend the new agent orientations and learn what services are offered.

“Don’t be an island, just get involved,” he says. “Volunteer. That’s what we need.” The importance of service can be learned through John Harrison’s example.
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*Google Analytics, January 2017
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CLASS OFFERINGS

Join us for the Annual Conference & EXPO at the Gaylord National Harbor, September 10–13. Visit MDREALTOR.org to see the entire schedule (click on the “Member” or “New Member” registration) category to access the agenda.

This year, we are offering a wide variety of professional development courses along with up to 13 hours of Maryland Continuing Education (CE).

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 10

5:00–7:00 PM
PRE-REGISTRATION PACKET PICK-UP

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 11

10:00–11:30 AM
1.5 hours Fair Housing, Category “C”, Course #948-6614
WHERE YOU LIVE MATTERS—FAIR HOUSING ACT PROTECTIONS & REAL ESTATE TRANSACTIONS
Speaker: Sherrill Brown

12:00–1:00 PM
KEYNOTE
7 HABITS OF HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL REAL ESTATE AGENTS
Speaker: Egypt Sherrod

1:00–2:30 PM
GRAND OPENING—LUNCH W/EXHIBITORS
Join Exhibitors for lunch in the EXPO Hall immediately following the keynote session! This event is included in your registration. If you wish to purchase any additional tickets, please select them under “Optional Items”.

2:30–4:00 PM
LEGAL HOTLINE LIVE PANEL
Join our experienced panel to discuss current happenings and changes that affect the way you do business. Hear examples of key issues found on Maryland REALTORS hotline; and, how to handle them legally and professionally. Bring your questions for open discussion with the panel and get immediate answers with Hotline LIVE!
Speakers: Kathleen Dartez, Colette Massengale, Al Monshower, Cathy Werner

2:30–4:00 PM
DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES & ITS EFFECT ON REAL ESTATE
Who is buying today, why are they buying, why it differs than in the past. The presentation will cover how businesses and members can plan for that change in a top 11 list of trends. How can agents understand how longer lifespans, a growth in multi-generational families, a drop in marriage rates, and plummet in childbearing is here and is changing buying. How is housing affordability playing a role and what’s the deal with student debt? How can our members help all generations with the buying and selling transaction? How can they be more efficient or look at a different angle? How are the clients today shopping for homes differently, while the relationship with the agent evolves?
Speaker: Dr. Jessica Lautz, National Association of REALTORS®

2:30–4:00 PM
THE POWER OF THE INBOX: TIPS & TRICKS FOR SUCCESSFUL EMAIL MARKETING
What is the first impression you give when they see you in their email inbox? And when they see you there, what do they do? This powerful seminar takes you step-by-step through the keys to effective email marketing- What it really is (and isn’t); What it can do for your business; And the five easy steps you must take to harness the power of the inbox!; Grow a healthy list; Create great content; Customize a beautiful, mobile-friendly template that matches your brand; How to get your emails opened; and, Tracking your results. From revealing why regular email doesn’t work to insider tips and techniques like automated list building tools and the design elements that work (and those that don’t!), this seminar will give you the keys to the most effective marketing you can do—email marketing. Join us!
Speaker: Romona Foster

2:30–4:00 PM
COMMERCIAL-INVESTMENT REFERRAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR RESIDENTIAL SPECIALISTS
1.5 hours Professional Enhancement, Category “F”, Course #939-1604
Are you a “blended agent”? Someone who occasionally does commercial-investment real estate transactions?
Learn why it might be important to refer (Code violations, legal complications) your clients and when. Create a win-win for your client through referral networks. Learn a better approach that will increase your reputation with your clients, increase your income potential as well as increase your cooperative reputation within the industry, while reducing your future risks.

Speaker: Syd Machat

2:30–4:00 PM
**MARYLAND REAL ESTATE COMMISSION (MREC) UPDATE**
1.5 hours Professional Enhancement, Category “F”, Course #944-1604
Join Nick D’Ambrosia, Chair, MREC, and Michael Kasnic, Executive Director, MREC, to discuss new legislation, regulations and general updates affecting licensees on areas of concern and disciplinary cases that have an impact on day-to-day activities. Get your questions answered directly from the Commission—be in the know!

Speakers: Nick D’Ambrosia, Mike Kasnic

2:30–4:00 PM
**DECONGESTANTS BREAKING BAD–THE METH REALITY**
1.5 hours Professional Enhancement, Category “F”, Course #941-1604
How does allergy medicine link to drug labs?! Find out in this fast paced and interactive class! Ever wonder if a house you’re listing or showing has a history as a meth (methamphetamine) lab? Ever wonder what dangers lurk in homes that are contaminated by drug residue? What would you do if you came across a meth lab? Who do you call? What are the red flags to watch out for? Can it be cleaned up? What to expect, how to test, and how to clean up are all covered in this class being offered for the first time by Maryland REALTORS®.

Speaker: Rachel Oslund

4:00–6:00 PM
**HAPPY HOUR WITH EXHIBITORS**
Join Exhibitors in the EXPO Hall for drinks & food. This event is included in your registration. If you wish to purchase any additional tickets, please select them under “Optional Items.”

6:00–8:00 PM
**AFTER PARTY IN POSE**
Join us for an After Party before you head to dinner on Wednesday night at POSE on the 18th floor of the Gaylord. Cocktails and hors d’oeuvres will be served along with a beautiful view of the harbor.

8:00–9:30 AM
**CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST WITH EXHIBITORS – EXPO HALL**
Join Exhibitors for a Continental Breakfast before you head to class!

9:00–10:30 AM
**HOC CERTIFICATION SESSION—STATE & LOCAL PROGRAMS**
1.5 hours Professional Enhancement, Category “F”, Course #879-1604
Get information to assist buyers in using state and local housing finance programs in Maryland. The class will teach you how to develop coordination and communication tools to thoroughly prepare buyers before and during the home buying process. Loan products and financial assistance programs primarily targeted to first-time homebuyers and low and moderate income buyers will be highlighted. Maryland REALTORS® consumer website [www.marylandhomeownership.com](http://www.marylandhomeownership.com); housing counseling curriculum and requirements; foreclosure prevention programs; and nonprofit housing agencies will be discussed. The class counts toward the Housing Opportunities (formerly Workforce Housing) Certification.

Speaker: Brenda Kasuva

9:00 AM–12:00 PM
**REAL ESTATE SAFETY MATTERS**
3 hours Professional Enhancement, Category “F”, Course #946-1604
The Real Estate Safety Matters: Safe Business = Smart Business course is designed to instill safety awareness and habits as second nature so that real estate professionals—as well as their clients and customers—know how to avert or respond to dangerous situations and avoid harm as they practice their profession.

Speaker: Barbara Maloney
9:00 AM–12:00 PM
COMMERCIAL—BPO’S & COMMERCIAL EVALUATION REPORTS
3 hours Professional Enhancement, Category “F”, Course #940-1604
What do these acronyms mean—CMA, BPO, BOV, BPE, AVM, RVR, ARR and when are they used? Learn the distinction between real estate appraisals and non-appraisal options. Understand what and when to use the 3 approaches to value and their use with various classification of property types. Learn risk management practices for brokers and agents who prepare BPO’s.
Speaker: Syd Machat

9:00 AM–12:15 PM
CRITICAL AREA LAW, NFIP, FLOOD MAPPING & INSURANCE
3 hours Legal & Legislative, Category “A”, Course #933-1604
Learn what constitutes critical areas, the laws in place governing them, map usage definitions for various types of lot coverages AND MUCH MORE. Hear valuable insight for licensees on what the NFIP is and is not and why it’s an important conversation to have with Sellers and Buyers. Understanding where flood zones are, what new changes may mean to buyers and sellers and where to access information on flood mapping will be discussed. Hear important information on insurance options for your buyers and sellers.
Speakers: Kevin Wagner, Joy Hatchett, Bill Castelli

9:15–10:30 AM
3 KEY SUCCESS STRATEGIES—PROACTIVE, PURPOSEFUL, PROFITABLE LEAD GENERATION
You’re about to commit or recommit your greatest assets (time—energy—money) on creating and implementing effective lead generation strategies. Before you do there is objective and demonstrable information that clearly points to where and how to focus those assets to generate the largest quantity of quality clients at the lowest cost.
Speaker: Ed Hatch

9:30–10:30 AM
SOCIAL MEDIA—YOUR BASIC BluePRINT
A look into the top social media platforms and how to use them to better build your real estate business.
Speaker: Phil Gerdes

10:45 AM–12:00 PM
3 KEY SUCCESS STRATEGIES—TIME MANAGEMENT, DELEGATION AND BALANCE
3 KEY Success Strategies—Time Management—Delegation—Balance Time are all your greatest assets! Controlling how effectively and productively you manage it consists of 3 step system with a system for measuring and tracking how you spend it. From that solutions will present themselves, better systems to create more focus, time-blocking to eliminate procrastination, starting or building a team if/when necessary, and “budgeting” for balance.
Speaker: Ed Hatch

11:00 AM–12:00 PM
SOCIAL MEDIA—DEEP DIVE: CREATING A BRAND THAT STICKS
A deep dive into social media branding tips that will take you from novice to professional and help you to create and stay top of mind with your sphere while expanding your engagement and reach.
Speaker: Phil Gerdes

11:00 AM–12:30 PM
INTRODUCTION TO SEPTIC SYSTEMS
1.5 hours Professional Enhancement, Category “F”, Course #938-1604
This 90-minute interactive elective class will introduce Maryland Department of the Environment’s 4-Step Procedure for septic evaluations, explain the types of septic inspections your buyers can choose from, review proper maintenance, types of absorption systems, and what to do when a septic system is considered failing. The Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) will be referenced in addition to the Bay Restoration Fund. Bring your questions!
Speaker: Tim Shotzberger

11:00 AM–12:30 PM
HOC CERTIFICATION SESSION—MD MORTGAGE PROGRAM & MD HOMECREDIT
1.5 hours Professional Enhancement, Category “F”, Course #880-1604
This course will show you the loan products and down payment assistance programs available from the State of Maryland and how it can help your clients to realize their dreams of homeownership. Also covered is the Maryland Home Credit Program which offers homebuyers significant tax savings. The class counts toward the Housing Opportunities (formerly Workforce Housing) Certification.
Speaker: Terry Catalano
11:00 AM–12:30 PM
**USING RPR TO BETTER SERVE BUYERS & SELLERS**
Upon completion of this class, students will gain a deeper understanding of factors to be considered when assisting in serving clients & customers in the home selling or buying process. Students will be able to provide home sellers with a detailed analysis of criteria related to pricing strategies such as market trends, property history and home improvements. Students will learn to use new tools to better serve buyers in identifying properties by using detailed mapping tools, location analysis and market activity updates.

*Speaker: Katie Gleboff*

11:30 AM–2:00 PM
**LIGHT LUNCH W/EXHIBITORS**
Join Exhibitors for a Light Lunch in the EXPO Hall.
This event is included in your registration. If you wish to purchase any additional tickets, please select them under "Optional Items"

1:30–3:00 PM
**HOC CERTIFICATION SESSION—FEDERAL & NATIONAL INITIATIVES**
1.5 hours Professional Enhancement, Category “F”, Course #881-1604
Gain an understanding of federal financing programs and nationally-available lending initiatives that can assist homebuyers in Maryland so that you can work with lenders in getting the information to interested buyers. The class counts toward the Housing Opportunities (formerly Workforce Housing) Certification.

*Speaker: Bridget McGee*

1:30–4:30 PM
**DISCLOSURES**
3 hours Professional Enhancement, Category “F”, Course #949-1614
Every real estate transaction requires agents to gather vast amounts of information from many different sources. Some information must be held in confidence while other information must be disclosed, even if disclosure would compromise the client’s position. Agents are expected to know the difference. Severe penalties, including loss of license, are imposed on agents who don’t get it right. This course will provide the agent practical guidance to understanding disclosure obligations.

*Speakers: Chuck Kasky, Tom Drechsler*

2:00–4:00 PM
**PROPERTY MANAGEMENT DO’S & DON’TS LESSONS**
So you want to be a Property Manager! Startup do’s and don’ts, along with a few helpful hints.

*Speaker: Mary Groven*

2:00–3:00 PM
**NEW NEGOTIATING EDGE—SAY NO TO UNREASONABLE DEMANDS & STILL GET PAID**
You can stand up for yourself against unreasonable demands by understanding—constructing—and delivering what master negotiators call a “Positive NO”. Predict unreasonable demands, know when and how to say a respectful NO, and move forward with a variety of options for mutual gain and still get paid!

*Speaker: Ed Hatch*

2:00–3:30 PM
**CONTRACTS LAW UPDATES**
1.5 hours Professional Enhancement, Category “F”, Course #945-1604
Think the contract is confusing? Getting the clarity you need is key! Join us for a contracts refresher and hear the latest updates!

*Speaker: Colette Massengale*

2:00–4:00 PM
**OPPORTUNITIES IN EMERGING ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES IN COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE**
2 hours Professional Enhancement, Category “F”, Course #943-1604
Maryland has been described as having more pages of environmental statutes and regulations on a per capita basis than any other state. From the new Phase I Environmental Site Assessment protections for tenant to the application of changing mandatory green building laws across Maryland, savvy players in the real estate industry will find business opportunities to lead and profit through environmental regulation, including opportunities advantaged by these and other newly enacted laws.

*Speaker: Stuart Kaplow*
9:00 AM–12:00 PM
MREC AGENCY
3 hours MREC Agency-Residential, Category “H”, Course #909-1604
Walk step-by-step through Maryland’s NEW Agency law changes and obtain clear guidance to ensure compliance so you get it right the first time and you’re always on the right side of the law. This class will qualify for the new Agency requirements that go into effect on October 1, 2019.
Speaker: Mary Chieppa

9:30–11:30 AM
EXTRAORDINARY CUSTOMER SERVICE—DURING & AFTER THE TRANSACTION
We will create an effective package FOCUSED on turning every ordinary situation into an EXTRAordinary experience. If you are committed to a long-term career, it is time to stop thinking transaction and begin FOCUSING ON RELATIONSHIPS! In this session we will create a PROACTIVE—PURPOSEFUL—FORWARD-THINKING strategy for keeping your CLIENTS AND ALL THEIR FRIENDS—FOREVER!
Speakers: Ed Hatch

10:30 AM–12:00 PM
TO ALL THE ECONOMISTS I’VE LOVED BEFORE
1.5 hours Professional Enhancement, Category “F”, Course #941-1604
This presentation supplies detail discussions regarding global, national and regional economic performance using the most current data available. Special attention is devoted to certain aspects of economic life, including the performance of financial, labor, real estate; and, construction markets.
Speaker: Anirban Basu

12:00 PM
LUNCH
Join us for lunch on Friday starting at. This event is included in your registration. If you wish to purchase any additional tickets, please select them under “Optional Items”

12:30–1:30 PM
GETTING THINGS DONE- USE YOUR HEAD FOR A CHANGE!
In everyone’s professional and personal life CHANGE is inevitable; growth, on the other hand, is optional. Whether you are progressing from one predictable stage of professional growth to another or trying to deal with the ever-changing market, there are 5 Essential Steps for successfully creating and managing change that will enable you to SUCCEED in any market. If you come READY and WILLING to this session, you will certainly leave ABLE!
Speaker: Ed Hatch
LOOKING TO TRANSFORM YOUR REAL ESTATE CAREER?

We are the proud home of over 500 licensed Real Estate Professionals in Maryland, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Virginia, and the District of Columbia.

OUR PROGRAMS

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<th>100% COMMISSION</th>
<th>90% COMMISSION</th>
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<td>$99/month</td>
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Environmental Education Workshop

We recently held an educational session on the environment at the Chesapeake Bay Environmental Center in Grasonville. The session was held received at this hidden gem in Grasonville. Participants received 3 hours of Maryland Continuing credit and learned about the unique details surrounding critical areas.

Women in Real Estate Conference

We held a successful Women’s Conference in early June with over 150 women broker, agents and leaders from across the state. The conference brought together thought leaders that discussed the unique challenges woman face in real estate and to best overcome those challenges. Leslie Rouda-Smith, NAR 2020 First Vice President was our keynote.
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Women’s Council of REALTORS®

June’s Women in Real Estate Conference was well attended by members of Maryland’s Women’s Council of REALTORS® (WCR). This nationwide group was originally formed because women were not allowed to join many REALTOR® associations. Now, WCR is a community of over 12,000 members with networks in 40 states. As an organization, they focus on developing leadership skills and professional enhancement. WCR hosts an annual Leadership Institute, meetings and events at each NAR conference, and numerous local events and educational opportunities. One of the most valuable benefits of WCR membership is business referrals. According to a recent survey, “membership means a high-level business leader who will follow through on client needs.”

The core values of Women’s Council include:

Professional Credibility
Members of the Women’s Council of REALTORS® are career professionals. We operate based on a shared value system of integrity, respect, consistency and a commitment to excellence and continuous development.

The Power Of Relationships
Success in business today is achieved through positive, productive relationships. The Women’s Council of REALTORS® provides an environment of collaboration in which members can form, build and maximize relationships for business and personal success. When members share their time, talent and experience, the industry is advanced.

Leadership
Every business, industry and community must have leaders who can see change that is needed, organize resources, and engage the hearts and minds of those around them. Through the Women’s Council of REALTORS®, members develop and apply newfound leadership skills and qualities across all areas of their personal and professional lives.

Diversity
The Council member network is enriched through the celebration of and active outreach to the full diversity of our industry. At the same time, the strength of the organization lies in what unites us all—our shared values.

Involvement
Active participation increases membership value. Every member can learn something from every other member. When members participate and share their experience and ideas, an exchange of value occurs that is one of the principal benefits of Council membership. Participation in the Women’s Council of REALTORS® is the opportunity to contribute to change, and to be changed, personally and professionally.

Success
Success in business brings credibility, influence and greater opportunity. Wealth creation through business success leads to long-term financial security, greater independence and more quality of life choices.

Influence
Positive change comes from greater inclusion of women’s perspectives in positions of influence in the real estate industry and in the broader community.

WCR offers the Performance Management Network (PMN) designation to its members. This three-course series is followed by documentation of either leadership experience or network referrals to earn points.
to complete the designation application. The courses include topics such as negotiation, presentation development, networking, and leadership. There are also electives which include several NAR designations and certifications. One of these electives, At Home With Diversity, will be offered by Maryland REALTORS® in October and taught by WCR Greater Baltimore network leadership member, Brenda Kasuva.

In Maryland, there are seven networks: Anne Arundel, Frederick, Greater Baltimore, Greater Capital Area, Harford County, Howard County, and Prince George’s County. Recent and upcoming events include: Jazz in the Garden Gala; 12 Steps to $20 Million Business Workshop; Shrimp Boil; Housing Opportunity Certification; Real Estate and the Connection to Human Trafficking; Diamonds, Denim & Dance; and numerous lunch and learn sessions and networking breakfasts. For more information on joining this dynamic organization, please visit www.wcrmd.org or find them on Facebook at @marylandwcr.
How Homebuyers Can Protect Their Move

Moving into a new home can be exciting and scary. Homebuyers need to be prepared to deal with a multitude of contractors, including moving companies. Making an informed decision when hiring a moving company is critical. The U.S. Department of Transportation’s Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) is here to help with consumer resources.

In 2018, more than 5,900 consumers filed moving fraud complaints with FMCSA. These included problems with damaged or lost goods, overcharges, insurance scams and even “hostage loads,” when a mover provides an initial estimate to move household goods, loads the truck and drives away, then demands additional funds to deliver them—effectively holding them hostage until paid.

With the American economy growing at a record pace and unemployment at all-time lows, more and more Americans are finding new homes and moving throughout our country.

FMCSA’s “Protect Your Move” campaign focuses on consumer protection, especially when it comes to helping homebuyers choose a reputable mover that is registered with the government. We’ve joined State and local law enforcement...
It’s a great time to be listing and selling homes in Maryland and Delaware. Are you ready to have a strong season? PRO$ is ready to help you:

- **Talk about home heating issues** that are on your clients’ minds.
- **Boost your sales** with **FREE resources** for your buyers and sellers.
- **Position yourself as the oilheat expert** so sellers see you as the best resource to sell their oil-heated homes.

Visit **OilheatPROS.com/md-de** today to schedule a free 15-minute educational session in your office or to order free selling materials!

Help Your Homebuyers Prepare for a Smooth Move:

Since Governor Larry Hogan took office, our department has been working hard to change Maryland for the better. For us, this means providing the best customer service. It means making choices to spur economic development, create jobs, and improve communities and the quality of life for residents. As REALTORS®, you know homeownership provides one of the best paths to achieve these goals. Proud homeowners are crucial to a thriving community, and a healthy real estate market is essential to a growing economy in Maryland.

That's why the department is eager to partner with Maryland REALTORS® through the Maryland Mortgage Program, the state's flagship mortgage assistance program for nearly 40 years. REALTORS® have been and will continue to be instrumental in the growth of the program. With your support, our department has been able to make the dream of homeownership more accessible to more Maryland homebuyers. Overall, the Maryland Mortgage Program has financed more than 11,000 loans since 2015 and, thanks in large part to your partnership, the forecast continues to be strong.

The department is pleased to participate in the Maryland REALTORS® 2019 Annual Conference & Expo at Gaylord National Harbor in Oxon Hill. Terry Catalano, a member of our business development team, will conduct a class on the Maryland Mortgage Program and Maryland HomeCredit. The class is a requirement for the REALTOR® Housing Opportunity Certification (HOC). If you are attending the conference, I encourage you to register for this informative session!

I also encourage you to visit the department’s exhibit booth to learn more about the Maryland Mortgage Program. Our staff is happy to answer any questions regarding mortgage products or other initiatives offered by the department. The team can provide information on affordable interest rates, down payment assistance, mortgage credit certificates, and the hugely successful Maryland SmartBuy program.

I look forward to strengthening the partnership between Maryland REALTORS® and the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development and enjoying this year’s Annual Conference & Expo.

Matt Heckles
Assistant Secretary
Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development
mmp.maryland.gov
singlefamilyhousing.dhcd@maryland.gov
1-800-756-0119
You help them find the right home.
We help them finance the right home.

Together, we’re building Maryland communities.

Learn more by visiting mmp.maryland.gov/realtors
or call 800-638-7781
This article is meant to provide REALTORS® and their clients with actionable information based on my interactions with the State Department of Assessments and Taxation (SDAT) since I moved to Maryland in 2008.

Most homeowners are familiar with political battles over tax rates, but not very familiar with a topic that is often more important to them—property tax assessment. An assessment loaded with errors can cost hundreds and even thousands of dollars in extra property tax. I learned this firsthand.

If you do an internet search for “Maryland property assessments count air as square footage,” Google and Bing search engines will return my 2016 op-ed in the Baltimore Sun at the top of the list. Every Maryland house with a cathedral ceiling is most likely over-assessed. That means over-taxed relative to neighbors whose houses do not have a cathedral ceiling.

Prospective home buyers ordinarily pay attention to the disclosure of annual property tax on a property listing, as they should. But how often do they examine the property worksheet that SDAT creates? Not often, I’ll bet. The assessment worksheet seems complicated and a bit mysterious. We assume that SDAT does the job correctly. That was my assumption when my new house went on the tax rolls in 2009.

Here are two numbers that will emphasize my point: 6,628 and 4,312 square feet. In my assessment appeal in 2015, SDAT used the first number in making appraisal comp adjustments against recent sales of nearby properties to support the assessment on my property. After my further study and appeals, the most recent worksheet shows a gross living area of 4,312 square feet. Property assessment, and therefore the tax bill, is based primarily on SDAT’s figure for square feet. Think about that: 6,628 is 54% larger than 4,312. That does not mean that my tax bill was 54% too high and without going through a huge amount of detail, I will simply assure you that my tax bill was, and still is, too high.

I strongly recommend that buyer’s agents recommend that their clients study the property worksheet for each property and compare the worksheet to the listing information. If the two are not consistent, it would benefit the buyer to find out why. They may be amazed by the discrepancies they find. Careful examination of my 2012 and 2015 worksheets revealed discrepancies in my tax bill. A 10’ x 13’ storage shed on the back of my garage was assessed for 348 square feet of “attached storage.” In the 2015 general reassessment, this storage shed was “promoted” to 348 square feet of living space, “with basement.” The worksheet sketch showed the correct dimensions for the garage, but the multiplication on the worksheet table was inaccurate. This past November I discovered another error. My experience is that SDAT will address an error that comes to its attention, but the homeowner must ask for the correction.

If a property owner believes a worksheet is incorrect, the owner should go to the SDAT website to understand the appeal process. What I have tried to do in this article is to explain why you might want to appeal. The SDAT website does not advise you to look for multiplication and other errors. If property owners accept work from SDAT at face value, we will simply pay the tax bill that comes in the mail.

William Poole is Distinguished Senior Scholar at the Mises Institute, Distinguished Scholar in Residence at the University of Delaware and Senior Advisor to Merk Investments. He retired as President and CEO of the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis in March 2008. He grew up in Wilmington, DE and moved to Cecil County in 2008 when he built his retirement home on the family summer property. wp.oped@earthlink.net
Global real estate opportunities are everywhere. People move to the U.S. from other countries, foreign-born individuals residing in the U.S. move to new areas or purchase their first home. Many native-born Americans are interested in purchasing a rental property overseas or may want to retire overseas. No matter which market you are serving, NAR's Certified International Property Specialist (CIPS) designation will provide you with the knowledge, research, network and tools to globalize and expand your business.

IN 2018 FOREIGN BUYERS SPENT $121 BILLION ON PROPERTIES IN THE UNITED STATES!

If you want to take your business to the next level, please join the Maryland REALTORS® Global Business Committee, Greater Capital Area Association of REALTORS® (GCAAR) and the Women’s Council of REALTORS® - Maryland at the CIPS Institute this fall!

With Instructor: Azizali Kanjee, FRI, CIPS, CBC, REI, AMP
President/Broker of IPB Realty & Finance Inc

Schedule:
- October 7, 2019: Global Real Estate: Local Markets
- October 8, 2019: Global Real Estate: Transaction Tools
- October 9, 2019: Asia/Pacific & International Real Estate
- October 10, 2019: Europe & International Real Estate
- October 11, 2019: The Americas & International Real Estate

Date: October 7-11, 2019
Location: Greater Capital Area Association of REALTORS® (GCAAR)
15201 Diamondback Drive, Rockville, MD 20850
Time(s): 8:45-4:30pm each day

CIPS Institute Registration Fees:
- Member Price: Full Session: $250 / Individual Session: $75/day
- Non-Member Price: Full Session: $300 / Individual Session: $85/day
- Already Certified: Refresher Class: $100 Flat Fee (select all or specific class at same price)

Register on-line: https://www.mdrealtor.org/Events/Featured-Events/2019-CIPS
or fill out registration form and fax/email to:
Fax (443) 716-3510 Brenda.royce@mdrealtor.org

For more information or for sponsorship opportunities contact Brenda Royce at Maryland Realtors (443) 716-3500 x3563
AGENDA

OCT 7TH  Global Real Estate: Local Markets
This introductory course offers you an overview of the international real estate business environment, including capital flow, currencies, government regulations and cultures. Topics such as international brokerage, networking, marketing, and selling will also be discussed.

You must take this course before taking any other CIPS courses. Upon completion of this course, you will receive elective credit towards the ABR and CRS designation (applies to U.S. members only).

OCT 8TH  Global Real Estate: Transaction Tools
This course provides you with the tools needed to present investment information to international clients—in their currency and area. You will learn how to measure investment performance, prepare financial projections, and understand the effects of taxes and exchange rates on investment.

OCT 9TH  Asia/Pacific & International Real Estate
This course introduces real estate professionals to the basic skills and knowledge necessary to facilitate international transactions with Asian clients. The course benefits both experienced real estate professionals as well as those just getting started.

OCT 10TH  Europe & International Real Estate
This course introduces real estate professionals to the basic skills and knowledge necessary to facilitate international transactions with European clients and is designed to benefit both experienced real estate professionals as well as those just getting started.

OCT 11TH  The Americas & International Real Estate
This course offers students practical information on working with regions of the Americas and provides historical and cultural influences, regional relationship, and investment opportunities from that region. It is designed to benefit both experienced real estate professionals as well as those just getting started.

REGISTRATION

First Name:  _______________________________________________________
Last Name:  _______________________________________________________
Email:  __________________________________________________________
Phone:  ___________________________________________________________
Address:  _________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
City:  _____________________________________________________________
State:  ___________  Zip code:  ______________________________

First Name:  _______________________________________________________
Last Name:  _______________________________________________________
Email:  __________________________________________________________
Phone:  ___________________________________________________________
Address:  _________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
City:  _____________________________________________________________
State:  ___________  Zip code:  ______________________________

NRDS ID:  __________________________________________________________
Real Estate License Number:  _________________________________________

Full Series
☐ Member $250  ☐ Non-Member $300  ☐ Already Certified (Refresher) $100

Individual
☐ Oct 7, 2019: Global Real Estate: Local Markets $75
☐ Oct 8, 2019: Global Real Estate: Transaction Tools $75
☐ Oct 9, 2019: Asia/Pacific & International Real Estate $75
☐ Oct 10, 2019: Europe & International Real Estate $75
☐ Oct 11, 2019: The Americas & International Real Estate $75

Total:  __________  __________

If paying by credit card, FAX form to 443-716-3511.
All others, mail to: Maryland REALTORS®, 200 Harry S Truman Parkway, Suite 200, Annapolis, MD, 21401.

Check made payable to Maryland REALTORS®
☐ VISA  ☐ MASTERCARD  ☐ DISCOVER  ☐ AMEX

Card Number:  ___________________________________________________  Exp  ___________________  Date:   ________________________  CVV: _____________
Cardholder’s Name:  __________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

In lieu of my credit card imprint, I ______________________________ (name of cardholder) hereby authorize Maryland REALTORS® to use my credit card information to pay for the above registration in the amount of $ __________.

Cardholder Signature:  X  _________________________________________________  Date:  _______________________

Failure to complete any of the above required fields will result in the form being returned.
Pumpkin spice season is almost here and the fall real estate market is picking up. Whether you have a currently active listing, are entering a new listing or are looking for a property to sell, Bright offers the MLS tools and features you need to drive your business forward.

Stay safe at your next Open House with the Homesnap Pro Safety Timer

September is REALTOR® Safety Month and a great reminder to make sure you are following best practices and staying safe during showings and open houses. Homesnap Pro offers a Safety Timer that helps prevent a potentially dangerous situation from getting too far out of hand. It sends a message to your chosen contacts without alerting anyone in the vicinity of your phone that the message has been sent. Homesnap Pro is available for free with your Bright subscription. Download the app and register your Bright account today!

Prepare for that Monday morning commute with DriveTime search

Buying a home is a big commitment. Make sure your clients understand every aspect of the home they are considering by searching in minutes, not miles. DriveTime search allows you to enter the time of day and location(s) your buyers commute on a regular basis. You can also see the typical area that falls within their preferred commute time.

Find homeowners who are ready to sell with Remine

Remine is a map-based property search tool within Bright that combines data on people and properties to effectively target prospects. Remine offers a feature called Sell Score which shows who owns a property, who is living in it, what their mortgage balance is, when they are likely to sell, and more. Use this feature, especially in a market with tight inventory to determine which off-market properties are most likely to be ready to sell the soonest.

Look for more information on new features and updates at brightmls.com

Our focus at Bright is driving your business forward. To us, that means being committed to you—our subscribers. Finding solutions to make the way you work a whole lot easier. Creating data that empowers you to have more information for your clients. We take this seriously. Because at the end of the day, our business is all about you—making your business successful, and always forging ahead.

Want to learn more about all Bright has to offer?

Stop by our booth at the 2019 Maryland REALTORS® Annual Conference and Expo. We are looking forward to seeing you there and answering any questions that you have!
A combination of sunny weather, warm temperatures, a record-setting stock market and rock-bottom mortgage rates seems just about the perfect formula for driving home sales higher. But in Maryland, where the economy lost momentum during a 35-day federal shutdown transpiring several months ago and where the inventory of unsold homes also remains at rock bottom, the formula hadn’t been working.

Viewed from certain perspectives, this should have been an excellent time for homes sales in Maryland, especially in suburban communities. In much of the Sunbelt, suburbs around booming cities like Nashville, Atlanta, Orlando, and Dallas are experiencing a torrent of homebuying as Millennials, now ages 23-38, are belatedly getting married, having children, and moving to the suburbs just as their grandparents and parents did. But for these dynamics to exist, there must be sufficient job creation to allow people to save for down-payments and support enough confidence for people to chase the American dream.

Nationally, job growth has been quite good, especially in the American west and south. Recently released data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics indicate that the nation added 224,000 net new jobs in June. That was well ahead of expectations and put to rest much of the chatter regarding a sharp slowdown in U.S. economic growth. While the U.S. economy is slowing, thus far the rate of slowing is hardly dramatic, and consumers enriched by rising stock prices and an abundance of jobs appear poised to continue to drive economic growth for at least a few more quarters.

This is not to suggest that there aren’t challenges facing the economy. Most economists recognize the issues created by burgeoning trade disputes between the U.S. and several major trading partners, including China, the European Union, and India. There is also evidence that the housing market is slowing in much of the nation, and the auto sales and production cycle likely peaked two or three years ago. Indeed, concerns about economic growth in 2020 and/or 2021 have resulted in the Federal Reserve ending discussion of further rate hikes. The market expects rate cuts over the balance of the year, hardly a vote of confidence in the economy’s longer-run prospects.

Others are unnerved by the federal government’s ballooning debt. There is also the issue of a softening global economy, the creeping impact of tariffs on consumer spending power, and the ever present prospect of corrections in asset markets, whether in the stock market, the bond market, commercial real estate, or Bitcoin.

Maryland’s Meandering Economy

On a year-over-year basis, the Free State added 15,000 net new jobs in May, representing a lackluster increase of 0.5 percent in total payrolls. That percentage growth ranks Maryland tied for 40th in the nation in terms of the pace of growth among the 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia. The bulk of jobs added in Maryland were in the Baltimore metropolitan area, home to approximately half of Maryland’s economic output. Job growth in Maryland’s D.C. Suburbs, which are collectively
responsible for about 40 percent of Maryland’s economy, has ground to a virtual halt.

Slow job growth working in combination with anemic inventory in many communities has conspired to drive home sales lower. In April, home sales were down 3.6 percent relative to the same month one year earlier. Average price was up less than one percent, perhaps a reflection of growing difficulty selling high end homes in parts of Maryland in the context of less confident workers among some fraction of Maryland’s federal government contractors and diminished state and local tax deductions.

But one could easily view the glass as half full. Median sales price was up a meatier 3.5 percent on a year-ago basis in April, with large increases registered in a number of rural communities (Somerset County, +75%; Allegany County, +38%; Kent County, +17%; Calvert County, +15%; and Dorchester County, +15%). Meaningful increases in median sales prices were also recorded in Baltimore City and Baltimore, Montgomery, and Prince George’s counties.

What’s more, pending units were up in April 2019 (4%), likely a response to a recent decrease in mortgage rates. The nascent momentum persisted into May, with pending sales up a brisk 18 percent. Average sales price rose more than four percent on a year-over-year basis while median sales price rose 4.2 percent statewide.

One can speculate that the sharp decline in mortgage rates has rendered buyers a bit less price sensitive than they had been earlier, allowing sellers to enjoy their time at the settlement table a bit more. Low inventory

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>% Change</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>% Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Allegany</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>44</td>
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<td>Anne Arundel</td>
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<td>Baltimore County</td>
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<td>$282,806</td>
<td>$275,317</td>
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<tr>
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<td>$193,982</td>
<td>$212,147</td>
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<tr>
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<td>$324,955</td>
<td>$340,739</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cecil</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>-7.7%</td>
<td>$227,458</td>
<td>$212,627</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Charles</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>232</td>
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<td>$299,804</td>
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<td>Garrett</td>
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<tr>
<td>Howard</td>
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<td>-0.8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kent</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>-46.0%</td>
<td>$258,650</td>
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<td>St. Mary’s</td>
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<td>Talbot</td>
<td>54</td>
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<td>Washington</td>
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<td>$256,402</td>
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<td>TOTAL</td>
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<td>7,203</td>
<td>-3.6%</td>
<td>$339,439</td>
<td>$337,402</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figures reflect resales and new properties. Residential resales are reported by Bright MLS/MSRIS.
also supports higher prices, including in places like Baltimore, Frederick, Montgomery, and Prince George’s counties where inventory remained below three months of supply through May. A year earlier, months of inventory statewide stood at 3.5 months. By May 2019, it had fallen to 3.1 months.

Looking Ahead

Interest rates continued to decline through June and remain stable into early July. This is not merely an American phenomenon, but a global one. With inflation in the U.S. continuing to fall below the Federal Reserve’s 2 percent target, investors are anxiously awaiting rate cuts.

For REALTORS® and other housing market stakeholders, this likely represents good news. A year ago, the expectation was that mortgage rates would have risen substantially in the context of the federal tax cuts passed in late-2017 and expectations for faster economic growth and multi-decade lows in unemployment.

Indeed, the nation has experienced multi-decade lows in unemployment, but broad-based inflation has refused to manifest itself even in the context of rising tariff activity. There are many conceivable explanations, including a weaker global economy, a strong U.S. dollar, and the “Amazon effect”, which renders it easier for shoppers to compare prices, thereby placing downward pressure on what vendors can charge.

For now the U.S. economic expansion, which achieved a record in July as the lengthiest in the nation’s history, remains firmly in place. While many economists continue to predict recession in 2020, the steps toward recession, including rapidly rising unemployment, have yet to be taken in earnest.

Anirban Basu, Chairman & CEO, Sage Policy Group, Inc.
A new (or not-so-new) member of a board of REALTORS® may find himself or herself perplexed when first hearing the term “Three-way Agreement.” However, the basic concept is simple. The three-way agreement is an agreement between the National Association of REALTORS® (NAR), the state associations, and the local associations of that state, which outlines the rights of the member boards (local and state associations) to grant REALTOR® status to qualified members and binds the member boards to subscribe to the Code of Ethics, maintain good standing, and regulate the REALTOR® trademark, among other things.

The Three-way Agreement is more of a concept than a written document, although each state and local association is granted a “charter” by NAR. The idea of the agreement, which establishes the relationships between NAR, state associations and local boards, is embodied in a board’s governing documents, its charter, license agreement to use the NAR trademarks, and other documents that define the inter-activity of NAR, state associations, and local boards.

The term “Three-way Agreement” refers to the structure of the REALTOR® organization. This agreement was established among NAR, the state associations, and local boards and associations. In our charters, the state associations and local boards and associations agree to:

- Accept the charge of properly granting and regulating the use of the terms “REALTOR®”
- Subscribe to the NAR Code of Ethics, and
- Uphold and enforce the Code of Ethics within the board’s/association’s jurisdiction

Also, each local board agrees to maintain membership, in good standing, in the state association of the state in which the board is located.

In other words, the REALTOR® organizations are a “ federation” or a “union” of organizations. We are comprised of member associations that are both state and local associations of REALTORS®. The federated structure strengthens the REALTOR® organization by providing a framework for effective communication, delivery of goods and services, and enforcement of the REALTOR® Code of Ethics. The size of the REALTOR® organization (over 1.3 million members at this writing), is also a product of the federated structure and contributes substantially to the political influence of NAR, enhancing its effectiveness in lobbying for causes that contribute to the protection of private property rights.

In the simplest of terms, the federated structure allows the REALTOR® organization to use its combined resources (both human and financial) and influence to have a unified, powerful voice in shaping public policy, set recognized standards for ethical real estate practice, and contribute to the advancement of the real estate industry.

As a state association, the basic purpose of Maryland REALTORS® is to integrate more closely the work of local, state, and national bodies. We accept this charge and work diligently to maintain outstanding service and leadership to our local member associations. We are the vital link between NAR and its member associations. We provide leadership and expertise at the state level and create an effective liaison between local associations and NAR. In this way, Maryland REALTORS® renders a valuable service to the REALTOR® cause, striving constantly to improve the organization of REALTORS®.
The local REALTOR® organization exemplifies the REALTOR® concept and organizational intent. The local board/association of REALTORS® is the most visible and best known to the public and our members. General excellence, effective leadership, cooperative effort, and responsible participation in community affairs makes it an important and respected organization in the community. Most of the products and services members rely on every day are delivered by our local boards/associations.

These strong links and mutually beneficial relationships, as embodied in the Three-way Agreement, are the backbone of organized real estate. Our ability to carry out our distinct functions in ways that complement each other is the key source of our ability to deliver value to our members and to advocate for responsible regulation of the industry and the preservation of private property rights.

Chuck Kasky, Maryland REALTORS® Chief Executive Officer
To achieve the GRI Designation in Maryland, you only need to take GRI Series 100 & 200. Each of these Series consists of 6 days, for a total of 72 hours. It’s easy to get the GRI Designation now!

Maryland REALTORS® offers the additional Series 300 & 400 for those interested in pursuing their broker’s or associate broker’s license. Series 300 & 400 consist of 4 days each. Completion of Series 100–400 will meet the education requirements to sit for the broker/associate broker’s exam.

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<td>Coastal Association 410-641-4409 September 16, 17, 23, 24, 30 &amp; October 1</td>
<td>Greater Baltimore Board 410-337-7200 September 17, 19, 24, &amp; 26, October 1 &amp; 3</td>
<td>Maryland REALTORS® —Annapolis 800-638-6425 October 15, 17, 22 &amp; 24</td>
<td>Pen-Mar Regional Association 301-797-4480 September 4, 5, 17 &amp; 18 Maryland REALTORS® —Annapolis 800-638-6425 November 12, 13, 19 &amp; 20</td>
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To learn more, go to mdrealtor.org/Education/Programs/Realtor-Institute-GRI or scan this QR code.
How Are You Keeping Your Clients’ Data Safe?

If you listen to the news on any given day, you are almost certain to hear a story involving technology, data security, or privacy. Topics range from how various apps use or misuse facial recognition technology or user data, a corporation or governmental agency being hacked or subjected to a ransomware attack or cybercriminals taking advantage of weak or non-existent security on smart home devices. The risks are widespread and constantly evolving. Providing real estate brokerage services subjects REALTORS® to some unique risks because of the nature of the business. Brokers and agents gather personal information from their clients and customers in a variety of ways. In any given transaction, you may collect the following information:

- Drivers’ license numbers gathered as a safety measure when first meeting with a client or customer;
- Social security numbers to run credit checks on rental applicants;
- Bank account information from personal checks for Earnest Money Deposits (EMD);
- Detailed financial information included on Buyer’s Financial Statements or Seller’s Short Sale documentation (often including social security numbers; names of financial institutions; account numbers; account balances; and detailed employment information).

Brokers and agents face the challenge of obtaining the personal information needed to process and successfully conclude a transaction while protecting that information for the benefit of the client and the brokerage. This is not an easy task; however, it is an essential task. To understand your obligations, let’s briefly discuss the laws affecting data security and privacy.

There are no federal data security or privacy laws specifically pertaining to real estate brokerages. Maryland, however, passed the Maryland Personal Identity Protection Act (“MPIPA”) in 2009 and recently expanded it slightly, with those changes taking effect on October 1, 2019.

In Maryland, “personal information” is defined as:

(A) An individual’s first name or first initial and last name in combination with any one or more of the following data elements, when the name or the data elements are not encrypted, redacted, or otherwise protected by another method that renders the information unreadable or unusable:

1. A Social Security number, an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number, a passport number, or other identification number issued by the federal government;
2. A driver’s license number or State identification card number;
3. An account number, a credit card number, or a debit card number, in combination with any required security code, access code, or password, that permits access to an individual’s financial account; or

(B) A username or e-mail address in combination with a password or security question and answer.
that permits access to an individual's e-mail account.\(^1\)

Maryland law defines “encrypted” as follows:

“Encrypted” means the protection of data in electronic or optical form using an encryption technology that renders the data indecipherable without an associated cryptographic key necessary to enable decryption of the data.\(^2\)

The Maryland statute would NOT be triggered where the personal information is encrypted, redacted or protected through another method which renders the information unreadable or unusable; however, an email username in combination with a password or security question would trigger the statute.

With this legal framework in mind, what do you need to consider in developing a data security program? As a preliminary matter, you should consider five key principles set forth by the Federal Trade Commission:

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(1) **Take stock** (what personal information do you have on your computers?);
(2) **Scale down** (keep only what you need for your business);
(3) **Lock it** (protect the information you keep);
(4) **Pitch it** (properly dispose of information you no longer need), and
(5) **Plan ahead** (create a plan to respond to security incidents).³

Once you’ve completed your initial evaluation utilizing these five key principles, you will need to take steps to implement your data security program. Here are some practical steps that you can take to protect yourself, your brokerage and your clients when developing a data security plan.

### General Office Computer Security Guidance

- **Design** your systems with security in mind. Consider the information you gather and how it is stored
  - Use multiple security systems—Defense in Depth
  - Firewall protection
- **Protect Wi-Fi**—provide a separate network for guests
- **Install** and maintain antivirus software
- **Consider** Internet content filtering software
- **Publications from the National Institute of Science and Technology (NIST)⁴** and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS)⁵ may be helpful.
- **Get professional assistance to develop and implement security measures, if needed**
- **Maintain** your systems—apply application and operating system updates, don’t choose the option to wait until later
- **Automation tools can help**
- **Check** your backups, make sure they are functioning properly
- **Passwords**
  - **Use multi-factor or two-factor authentication when possible**
  - The longer the password, the better
  - Don’t use the same password in different places
- **Use a password safe to keep track of passwords, don’t write them down**
- Don’t link accounts.
- **Use computer accounts with limited privileges, don’t use administrative accounts**
- **Copiers**
  - Most copiers have hard drives that store every document processed on the machine.
  - Those hard drives should be destroyed or securely wiped at the end of the lease term

### Email & SMS (text messages)

- **Don’t send** sensitive data via email or SMS
- **Don’t trust** communications with links or attachments—they are the primary way that cyber villains are able to access your machines
- Even from people you think you know
  - **Use the phone to follow up**—verify that the sender sent the link or attachment before clicking on it or opening it

### Internet Surfing

- **Avoid visiting random websites**
- Again, be careful what you click on

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⁴ NIST’s Computer Security Resource Center (“CSRC”) provides information on NIST’s cybersecurity and information security-related projects, publications, news and events: https://csrc.nist.gov/

⁵ Link to DHS’s Cybersecurity resources: https://www.dhs.gov/topic/cybersecurity
Tech Support Scams

- These scammers call and pretend to be computer techs who know something about the state of your computer. They will state that there is a problem, ask for access to your computer to prove their claim, and then demand payment to fix something that isn’t broken.6

- Work with local and trusted IT professionals instead. Use those professionals to help in all phases of information technology for your business.

As noted, Maryland law narrows the definition of personal information to: “An individual’s first name or first initial and last name in combination with any one or more of the following data elements, when the name or the data elements are not encrypted...” Encryption, then, is an important component of any data security program and it is important that you have at least a general understanding of what type of data is potentially at risk and what action you can take to minimize that risk. So, let’s discuss encryption.

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6 The FTC has more information about tech support scams, including where to report them: https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/how-spot-avoid-and-report-tech-support-scams
Encryption

There are two kinds of data: data in transit and data at rest.

Data in Transit
Data in transit is often protected using encryption atop of the underlying protocol. HTTPS is an encrypted form of HTTP, which is widely used for web browsing. You can rest assured that data transferred using HTTPS (look for the green lock in the location bar) is encrypted and that encryption is usually end-to-end. Email however is generally not encrypted end-to-end, meaning there are some points in transmission where this data is transmitted in the clear, or un-encrypted.

Email
End-to-end encryption requires that both parties, the sender and recipient, can perform the same encryption and decryption to a message. Several vendors offer a service that integrates with Gmail, or Outlook 365 and allows recipients to access the secure message via HTTPS. There are also applications that natively support end-to-end encryption and support mobile platforms, ProtonMail is a good example.

Data at rest
The most common example of data at rest is files on your computer. There are several tools available that encrypt either a portion of data on your computer, or all of it. Performance on modern computers with modern storage bears little difference to un-encrypted storage.

In addition to encryption, it’s important to limit access to sensitive data. Don’t share accounts among different users. Personal information should not be stored electronically—period!

Pay careful attention to what you scan and email from copiers. It’s convenient, but it’s not secure. Better options are to scan to a USB flash drive or scan to a folder on a computer. Modern E-fax bears similar pitfalls. It’s convenient but the data within is not protected from compromise.

SMS (Text Messaging)
Several Android and Apple IOS based apps natively encrypt text messages. Signal, WhatsApp and Telegram are a few examples. Using these SMS applications assures that communications are not readable by third parties and they are no more difficult to use than the standard SMS apps that come native on our devices.

Finally, the National Association of REALTORS® (NAR) has prepared a Data Security and Privacy Toolkit, which includes detailed checklists of issues to consider and sample data security policies for real estate brokers and agents to use when developing a data security program. When it comes to data security, as in many other areas, the best offense may be a good defense.

Kathleen Dartez, Esquire, Maryland REALTORS® Director of Legal Affairs
The author is grateful to Mark Wiater, President of Greybeam, Inc. (www.greybeam.com), a provider of managed IT services, network engineering and secure computing services throughout Maryland, for his invaluable assistance with this article.

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