

Summary of the February 26, 2009 On The MARK Meeting

The following is an overview of the February 26, 2009 On The MARK meeting held at the MAR office. [Click here](#) to view the agenda.

The meeting started with a welcome from MAR CEO Bill Martin, introductions of attendees and opening remarks.

An overview of NAR's Right Tools, Right Now initiative was presented. This program debuts on March 2nd. With this initiative, NAR is looking to provide specific products, services, and education at little or no cost to members and associations. For anyone who did not listen to the Right Tools, Right Now Webcast, you can find more information about it [here](#). As part of this initiative, Martin strongly urges Michigan AEs to take advantage of the NAR stipend for AE Institute. The rebate is intended to give those AEs who are in need of financial assistance the opportunity to attend AEI and will cover tuition (\$475) plus \$1,000 to cover travel costs. AEI attendees must register online and pay all tuition and travel costs up front, rebates will be given after the Institute takes place. **Rebate forms will be distributed on Monday, March 23, at AEI. Please note this will be the ONLY place the forms will be available.** For more information please contact Cynthia Bair, 800-874-6500, ext 3280.

A question was asked if MAR will be extending their due date for MAR dues since NAR has given an extension until June 1st. In accordance to MAR bylaws, MAR dues are still due by March 15th (March 16th this year as the 15th falls on a Sunday). If you have any questions regarding MAR dues submission, please contact [Julie Rowell](#).

Bill discussed a change in format for the Inaugural and Installation ceremony currently held in conjunction with Achieve. The group was asked what their thoughts were on foregoing the formal affair during Achieve. Instead have it be more of an installation reception during Achieve, with a formal event at the last MAR board meeting with the past presidents in attendance. Responses ranged from AEs liking the idea as their leadership only goes because they are told they need to go, or they only go for the reception and don't stay for the installation, whereas some locals appreciate the ability to mingle in the formal setting with the new MAR leadership. There was also the opinion as it is the state president, he/she should have recognition from members around the state, but perhaps rather than a formal affair, a reception recognizing the incoming leadership. Input from the locals was appreciated as MAR reviews the current format.

Kathie discussed the Achieve survey as far as having it answer the question, is there value in putting on Achieve? According to the survey results, yes the event is valuable. It was noted that there were about a dozen locals who didn't send their leadership this year; which is disappointing (just last week Grand Rapids had over 400 members attend a session with SAME speaker). If this is a budget issue and you find yourself, as a local, in a situation where you cannot send someone to this event, please contact MAR as we'd like to see all locals represented at Achieve. MAR does not want to see you have to choose between MAR or NAR events because your budget doesn't allow for you to attend both.

Next on the agenda was MAR local assistance. What MAR is proposing is to offer assistance in two new areas and expanding assistance in one. The first, local management (i.e. dues collection, web site, advocacy, membership POE) is being explored because it provides a means for a local association to maintain its local presence. The purpose of offering this assistance is for a local association that no longer has an AE (not intended for large local association management). The costs of the packages are still being determined and would be paid for via local dues collection MAR would receive on behalf of the local. MAR and NAR feel there is value for advocacy and grassroots programs in helping a local associations function as its own entity rather than dissolving or merging into another local. Bill stated that Texas offers this type of assistance to their locals and they currently manage 18 locals.

Another area of assistance MAR is offering help in is with Professional Standards. Again, if a local is without an AE for a long period of time, or if a local with an AE finds they are beyond what they can handle now, in regards professional standards issues, Patty Kukla, through MAR is available to assist you. It may be possible that further down the road MAR could look to coordinate professional standards administration with additional staff.

Yet one more area MAR is looking to assist locals is with AE searches. MAR is offering an “HR type” of assistance program to help locals search for a new AE. MAR would use NAR resources to conduct interviews and narrow down the search to 3-4 eligible candidates that would be taken back to the locals to choose from. This would help to keep costs down for the local rather than going out to hire an HR firm.

Kathie shared MAR membership projections and several locals commented on seeing drops in membership for 2009. MAR’s membership count is projected to be around 23,500 for 2009. Bill reiterated the fact that with the dues increase, \$40 per member of the dues increase is going into the Issues Mobilization Fund. Bill also stated that MAR is using a finance committee approved fund transfer from reserves; in his opinion this is the reason to have reserves, when we are in down times. He also stated that he realizes there are locals who are hesitant to use their reserves and has offered to talk to local boards about reserves and when they should be used.

The meeting then moved to legislative updates from Rob. As far as the MBT gross receipts issue, we still don’t know enough about where our brokers are in regards to gross receipts. An email was sent to all the brokers and AEs on Friday, the 27th, with a link to a three question [MBT Tax Liability Questionnaire](#). We are asking for the AEs help in getting their brokers, who fit the criteria, to fill out the questionnaire and submit it to us (anonymously).

Transfer Tax for commercial property. If you have a company buying another company, if less than 90% of the purchase is real estate, then transfer taxes aren’t paid. If the purchase is over 90% real estate, then the transfer tax is paid.

2009 public policy priorities include property tax relief, foreclosures, and septic system. Legislation to eliminate wall licenses has passed out of the house, MAR will keep you posted as this bill progresses through the legislative process.

Kathie announced the formation of a workgroup of six state associations who are working together to create a new association management system (AMS). Currently the workgroup is in the data collecting phase and is working with the states and selected locals in gather information on current systems being used, what they like, don’t like, and would like to see in an association management system. The goal of this project is to offer a web-based membership system that could be used at every level; local, state, and national.

During lunch Joe Kras showed the group where to find the latest MAR Governmental Affairs [podcast](#), legal update [videos](#) and shared the Google Web site Analytical information MAR uses to track traffic on our site. [Joe](#) offered his assistance if you would like to set up the Google Analytical tracking on your site.

Julie Rowell then covered the [Local Resources](#) section of the MAR site and how the items in this section are there to help the local AEs and staff with links to dues processing, dues tool kits, REALTOR member counts, Quadrennial COE reporting, Oath of Office, OTM publication archives, agendas to upcoming OTM meetings and meeting summaries. If there is anything you would like to see posted in this section to help you or your staff, please let [Julie](#) know.

For those in attendance a Broker Summit media kit CD was handed out. For those who couldn’t make the meeting, please look for this CD in your mailbox.