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If opportunity doesn't knock, build a door!

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REALTOR® Survey Reveals Increased Demand for MLS Consolidation

And how do you feel about the survey results. If you have an opinion, share it with all of us for further discussion at pbbrmlsforum@internetcrusade.com

Most of you know that Paul Bunyan Board and MLS have data sharing agreements with Twelve (12) other boards/MLSs for the convenience of our members at no additional cost to our members. These agreements cover over a 32 county area. Paul Bunyan Board and its MLS also participate in the state wide quick search of limited field listing information at Property Data Query For REALTORS® http://mi.pdqr.net/login_prompt.epl along with

Traverse Area Association of REALTORS®
Grand Rapids Association of REALTORS®
Water Wonderland Board of REALTORS®
Upper Peninsula Association of REALTORS®
West Central Association of REALTORS®
Central Michigan Association of REALTORS®
Northeastern Board of REALTORS®
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Lapeer and Upper Thumb Association of REALTORS®
Monroe County Association of REALTORS®

Data sharing, security and consolidation of multiple listing services are top concerns for Realtors® and MLS executives, according to the 2007 REALTOR® MLS Technology Survey.

The survey describes MLS trends and technology practices and was released today by the National Association of REALTORS® Center for REALTOR® Technology.

The fifth annual survey showed strong interest in expanding MLS service territories, with nearly one-third of respondents favoring a statewide MLS, up from 19 percent last year. Twenty-seven percent said that a market area or metro statistical area would be ideal, while 21 percent preferred a larger market region within the state.

MLS service regions commonly expand through consolidations, which the survey also shows are on the rise. Thirty percent of those surveyed said their MLS has already consolidated with one or more MLS, up from 15 percent last year, and another 38 percent are considering consolidation.

While the trend of consolidation continues, MLSs are currently working to address the needs of brokers who are operating in multiple MLS regions through increased data sharing. The survey revealed that nearly one-third of respondents have reciprocal data sharing agreements with other MLSs. Another 23 percent have considered data sharing.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

“REALTORS® have invested a lot of time and millions of dollars in building and advancing real estate technology,” said NAR President Pat V. Combs, of Grand Rapids, Mich., and vice president of Coldwell Banker-AJS-Schmidt. “Improvements in technology have made it easier for REALTORS® to expand their geographic territories, which often results in greater demand for data sharing and integration among MLSs. Consolidation among MLSs will most likely continue in overlapping markets and where it’s most appropriate. This will help bring down costs and enhance service for many REALTORS®.”

The survey also revealed the growing use of technology among MLSs for sharing data. Nearly two-thirds of MLS respondents said their MLS makes use of a RETS interface, which allows brokers, third-party software vendors, REALTOR® associations and MLSs to share real-time data, regardless of the type of software they use; this figure is up nearly 47 percent since 2005.

The most popular places for MLSs to place listings are REALTOR.com, their local public MLS site, and the local REALTOR® association Web site; REALTORS® identified the same three sites as the best places to send their property listings. The most commonly shared property information that MLSs send to third parties are photos, amenities, address and tax information.

As data sharing continues to rise among MLSs, more can be done to help protect content. Only a third of MLS respondents watermark their property photos and six out of 10 said they do not make use of data tagging or seeding, a process that helps MLSs identify themselves as the original source of listing information. Three-fourths of respondents believe their MLS has taken security issues more seriously this year than in the past, but only 42 percent said their organization has a written security policy.

“For several years we’ve continued to see a wide gap between awareness of information security issues and the implementation of practices to address those concerns,” said Mark Lesswing, NAR senior vice president and chief technology officer. “NAR continues to develop software applications and certification programs to ensure the continued quality and security of the data contained within the nation’s MLS systems.”

The survey also revealed an increase in security to protect unauthorized access to MLS systems. Twenty-seven percent of MLS respondents said they are currently using two-factor authentications, such as a key FOB or USB device, which are more secure methods for users to access MLS systems than the traditional user ID and password combination. This is up from 2 percent last year. Most MLSs implement two-factor authentications to stop account sharing (47 percent) and increase data security (45 percent).

The level of data integration is also improving. More than half of MLS respondents can integrate tax data into MLS listings, and many now have the option of entering and attaching documents to records on the MLS system, storing contact data and integrating maps with tax and public record data.

Polling for the survey was conducted using LimeSurvey, www.limesurvey.com, a leading open-source tool for online surveys. NAR is a strong supporter of open source software and will make a donation to LimeSurvey to help upgrade and enhance their development and testing equipment. The survey is online at www.realtors.org/crt/2007mlssurvey.

NAR’s Center for REALTOR® Technology was established to provide technology leadership, guidance and assistance for NAR members; CRT makes available informed industry insight, research and open-source applications through its mission of implementation, advocacy and information.

SEPTEMBER GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Noon, Friday, September 14th, 2007 at McGuire’s Resort in Cadillac

Our State Senator and Representatives have been invited to this meeting, which has traditionally been our Governmental Affairs/Legislative Affairs/JPAC meeting. Rep. Booher will be joining us and we are waiting to hear back from Senator McManus. Rep. Sheltroun will not be able to join us. We will also be updating you on the Sentrilock LockBox Service and other important issues. We expect to be administering the REALTOR® Oath and distributing REALTOR® pins to our new members. Don’t forget, New Member Orientation is scheduled for Tuesday, August 28th, 2007. If veteran members care to attend the morning session to qualify their Code of Ethics Quad Training, please give us a call! (231) 775-2660 – ASK FOR SALLY OR AMBER, please.