

GOING



a GCAAR Publication

GREEN®

► President's Message



REALTORS® tend to love the earth. We not only sell it, and rent it, and help to cover it with homes, but we have a great respect for the thing we make our livelihood on. And we tend to want to protect it and leave it in better shape that we found it, because we don't just sell bricks and mortar, we sell a better quality of life.

For ourselves, our friends and families we want clean air, clean water, and a healthy environment. Although we don't fish or farm for a living, but we're intricately involved with the planet more that most occupations, because we put the land and the people together. Because of that important job we founded the Green REALTORS®.

Regardless of our political persuasion we all believe in making this a great place

to live, and a great place to work. Conserving energy often means conserving money, something else we all seem to like! We've gotten together to share ideas about how to practice green, environmentally friendly, and economical real estate. How to run an energy efficient office, how to show property or write offers or just do business in a way that will save money, save energy, and reduce emissions and pollution.

Recently, the National Association of REALTORS® announced that over 53% of purchasers ask for energy efficient features when searching for homes. And we need to help our purchasers and sellers find and market homes the best way. Even our communities are encouraging us to describe, divulge and detect energy and environmental features of real estate. We're here to help.

Look at these tips from the Green REALTORS® task force. See if you can add to each list or topic. If you have more ideas and feedback, please get back to us at comments@gccar.com. Thanks to the task force members and staff for their hard work and commitment to the practice of green real estate. We're all the better for it.

► Smart Growth and Going Green

An Interview with Parris Glendening

By: Bonnie Casper, Chairman, Green REALTOR® Task Force, GCAAR



Frm. Gov. Parris Glendening

Parris Glendening, Former Governor of Maryland (1995 – 2003) and currently President of Smart Growth America, sat down with me to discuss the benefits of implementing smart growth principles in planning our communities. During his tenure in office (1997), Mr. Glendening proposed, and the Legislature enacted, Maryland's Smart Growth legislation.

Question: How would you define Smart Growth?

Governor Glendening: There is no one definition of smart growth – it is not an absolute but rather efforts to move toward a model to encourage certain principles of land use planning. In short, these principles include: mixed land uses; higher density design; walkable communities; distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place; preservation of open space, farmland, natural beauty, critical environmental areas; strengthening of existing communities; transit-oriented communities; community collaboration in development decisions; fair and cost-effective development. In essence, we need to concentrate mixed use development where there is existing infrastructure.

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Greater Capital Area Association of REALTORS®
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10 Things to do in the Office to Go Green

10 Ways to Work With Clients in a Green Way

► Five Myths Of Sustainable Living

By: Beth Irons, GRI, Green REALTOR® Task Force, GCAAR

1. LIGHTS

Myth: It takes more energy to turn lights off and on.

Fact: If you are going to be out of a room for more than 10 minutes, turn off the lights.

2. HEATING & COOLING

Myth: It takes more energy to heat up or cool down my house if I turn the thermostat back (or up) than if I just left it at one temperature.

Fact: If you are going to be gone for more than 4 hours, turn down your thermostat in the winter and turn it up in the summer. Better yet, invest in a programmable thermostat. Studies show that over \$100/year can be saved on heating and cooling costs with a programmable thermostat.

3. DISHWASHERS

Myth: You should run the hot water before starting the dishwasher so your dishwasher starts with hot water and washes better.

Fact: This is true only if your dishwasher is over 10 years old. Dishwashers built in the last 10 years have booster heaters so they have hot water immediately available.

4. BOTTLED WATER

Myth: Bottled water is “safer” than water from the faucet.

Fact: False, at least in areas where water is purified before it is distributed to end users.

5. INSULATING BASEMENTS AND CRAWLSPACES

Myth: Basements and crawlspaces don't need to be insulated because they are mostly below grade and we don't live in them.

Fact: An uninsulated foundation can result in a large heat loss from an otherwise tightly sealed, well-insulated home. It can also make rooms below grade uncomfortable. Proper foundation insulation can lower heating requirements and help avoid water vapor condensation problems. However, a poorly designed foundation insulation system can create problems with radon infiltration, moisture, and insects. Remember, in situations such as this, always receive information from a professional.



Michael McGreevy

► Green Logo Contest Winner

Congratulations Michael McGreevy, branch manager of Long & Foster REALTORS® in Silver Spring, for winning GCAAR's green logo contest. For his efforts, Michael will receive a \$200 Lowe's Home Improvement gift card.

The new logo is meant to identify Green REALTORS® initiatives our Web site, environmentally-friendly articles in our Capital Area REALTOR® newsletter, and our new “Going Green” newsletter.



The winning logo

Glendening Interview, continued from page 1

Question: How/why is Smart Growth good for the environment?

Governor Glendening: The principles that guide Smart Growth policies are being transformed into laws and regulations that enhance the environment. For example, zoning laws are being changed to permit high density and mixed use development; incentives are being created to support mass transit instead of highway construction as in the free local bus systems in Eugene, Portland, and Denver; building codes are being upgraded to incorporate LEED standards, permit commercial development up to sidewalks (for example the new mixed use development in Bethesda). This will not only protect the environment, it will make better use of public resources and will help conserve energy.

Question: How do you see Smart Growth impacting the real estate market?

Governor Glendening: Actually REALTORS® are the first to see the impacts of Smart Growth – what purchasers prefer and don't like about homes. For example, look at the local market and analyze where the highest sale/resale markets are – consumers want walkability, resident/retail/employment, readily available mass transit.

There is also a major demographic shift going on. Households up to 1970 were predominantly 2 parents with children; in 2008 only 25% fit this category – many being single purchasers with or without children. “Empty-nesters” are another driving financial force – younger than previously considered in this category – often in their 50's, peak of earning capacity,

want to be able to walk to dinner and cultural activities, the subway, etc. These are the folks who are now driving the marketplace.

Another example is the revitalization of neighborhoods in DC – for example, the U Street corridor, Penn Quarter, and the SW areas near the Nationals Park. Kids out of college today look for where they want to live, then they look for a job – we used to look for the job and then find housing. Major companies are looking to locate where the workforce fits the needs – so many college towns are benefiting. For example, Google wanted to move to Michigan so they located in Ann Arbor rather than Detroit due to the demographics of the workforce.

REALTORS® may not see that these market changes are due to Smart Growth, but in fact they are. Then trends will continue as we become more conscious of the need for clean and efficient energy and as we face scarcer public resources.

Question: Do you think strict standards, environmental, energy efficiency, etc. are good or bad for business?

Governor Glendening: The goal is to achieve an environment that reduces pollution, conserves energy, improves building standards, and promotes improved public health while building attractive, commonsense communities. This is what is good for business. Europe is much stricter than we are in this country and their economy is doing well. The tension almost always comes when the process for developing the laws and regulations is not open, workable, and known. When all the stakeholders can participate, business benefits.

▶ Green Web Sites

By: Rick Humrichouse and Elley Kott
GCAAR Green Task Force

www.Energystar.gov, www.Energysavers.gov

ENERGY STAR is a joint program of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of Energy to help save money and protect the environment using energy efficient products and lifestyle.

www.EPA.gov

The mission of the Environmental Protection Agency is to protect human health and the environment.

www.Goinggreenathome.org

Montgomery County Park and Planning Commission offers free presentations from experts on how homeowners can reduce energy costs and lessen their impact on the environment.

www.grist.org

Environmental news, the latest “green” product, how green is your candidate, and more. Lively, informational, and worthwhile.

www.Green.yahoo.com

Extensive information for technology, home and garden, transportation, food and health, gift guide; even calculates your personal carbon footprint.

www.Catalogchoice.org

Free sign-up service to decline unsolicited catalogs – lighten your footprint on the environment

www.Greenerchoices.org

Past of Consumer Reports. Offers green ratings for appliances, cars, electronics, food-beverages, and home and garden, and information on hot topics.

www.Freecycle.org

Grassroots, nonprofit organization dedicated to the exchange of free items and keeping the “good stuff out of landfills.” This site helps keep over 300 tons a day out of landfills.

www.Earth911.org

Mission is to teach how we can continue to buy and use products we love without destroying the planet.

www.Greenbuildinginstitute.org

Provides sustainable building practices through education and example.

www.Lighterfootstep.com

Great advice on making your home and office greener.

www.dothegreenthing.com

Green living tips and cool videos.

www.ecostreet.com

Green news and blogs.

www.dailygreen.com

Database of green living Web sites

www.idealbite.com

Easy eco living tips.

www.treehugger.com

Media outlet dedicated to driving sustainability.

www.planetark.com

Ways for businesses and individuals to lessen their impact.

www.dotearth.blogs.nytimes.com

Environmental news and blogs.

www.Regreenprogram.org

The American Society of Interior Designers and the U.S. Green Building Council provide best practices guidelines, educational resources and case studies to help envision and plan green remodeling projects.

www.GreenHomeGuide.org

Website of the U.S. Green Building Council. Explores LEED-certified homes and other green programs.

www.Friendsofrockcreek.org

Promotes a healthy and sustainable Rock Creek watershed through conservation, education and restoration.



A few of the members of GCAAR's recently-formed Green Task Force.

From L to R: Michael Kiefer, Alan Black, Beth Irons, Bonnie Casper (Chair), Richard Humrichouse, Catalina Schrader, Eleanor Kott.

► 10 Things a Real Estate Office can do to “Go Green”

1. Increase awareness through discussions at office meetings and other education sessions. A survey was conducted to solicit suggestions for green activities in the office and feedback on how agents are currently implementing green initiatives in their real estate business.

2. Recycle used paper (#1 staff recommendation) by placing recycle bins in the office. The bins are provided by Montgomery County and the building cleaning staff brings the paper to the material recycling area operated by building management.

3. Reduce the use of paper by eliminating the distribution of “new listings” and “open houses” to approximately 80 agent mail boxes. This information is now provided in a weekly report and posted on the office bulletin board.

4. Recycle office print cartridges by returning all used cartridges to Corporate Express for reuse.

5. Recycle print cartridges from agent home offices. Several staff members collect used cartridges and donate them to local schools who sell them for fundraising activities.

6. Reduce the use of colored ink/toner by redesigning marketing material to use fewer colors and increase white space.

7 Reduce the consumption of electricity by turning off lights, computers, and printers. Bay areas are on multiple light switches and only a few computers and printers are turned on during night and weekends. Lights in individual offices and conference rooms can be regulated by motion detectors.

8. Encourage more e-mailing and less “hard mail.” Office communications are handled by e-mail and agents have volunteered to teach others how to create mass mailing lists for spheres of influence and farm areas.

9. Reduce the use of bottled water to eliminate plastic bottles. Several options being considered are adding a filter on the kitchen water faucet or renting a water cooler. Agents are encouraged to drink “tap” water.

10. Reduce filing of hard copies by encouraging agents to scan contracts and other documents and to maintain computerized files on hard drives and portable flash drives

Agents Working Smarter in their Smart Cars



Eleanor Balaban, an area agent, with her Smart Car.

► 10 Ways to Work with your Clients in a “Green” Way

By: GCAAR Green Task Force

1. Educate yourself on green issues related to home construction, remodeling, energy use, indoor air quality, energy efficient products, and most importantly, how to market green features in a home. Be a green resource to your clients.

2. Be a role model for being green-aware. Earn a green designation, trade in your SUV for a gas-efficient car, remodel with eco-friendly products, develop water and energy saving habits, on all e-mails, remind clients to only print if really necessary, etc.

3. Give “green” closing gifts, such as a Lowes gift card (NAR discount), to purchase energy saving items, a basket of eco-friendly cleaning supplies, a subscription to a eco-friendly magazine, a gift certificate for an energy audit (approx \$400 – 500), etc.

4. Focus your marketing materials on green topics, i.e. put a monthly “green tip” in your newsletter, and send out e-mails telling clients about an upcoming community meeting about a green topic.

5. Create pop-by gifts for your top clients that focus on a green topic, i.e. foam draft sealers for plug outlets with an article from the Energy Star Web site about sealing up air leaks, a copy of Home Power magazine, etc.

6. Provide your sellers who are doing a “clean-out” before selling with a list of locations for recycling clothing, building products, paint, toys, and all kinds of clutter. Habitat for Humanity Re-Store is a great resource. Provide yard sale signs (with your information on them) so they can profitably re-cycle.

7. Encourage sellers who are preparing to sell to select Energy Star appliances, lighting, windows, fans, HVAC systems, etc. Explain the value in marketing the home to the more energy conscious buyer. Be sure your house brochure features these items.

8. Develop a list of service providers who practice green building and service practices: i.e. flooring companies who offer eco-friendly products with low VOC’s and send the old flooring to recycling, not the dump, painters who use low VOC paint, stagers who pay attention to energy efficient and eco-friendly products.

9. Provide clients with resources for green information on your Web site, offer articles, publications, service providers, and local meetings.

10. Sponsor a seminar or meeting with a green topic that is of current interest. Suggestions might be to have a representative from a power company, a solar products company, an indoor air quality specialist, etc. be the keynote speaker.