

Texas REALTORS
Winter Meeting
February 9 -13, 2024

I attended various sessions at the Texas REALTORS Winter Meetings in February as well as the TREC meeting.

My favorite sessions were the Association Presidents/President-Elects Breakfast and my Taxation Committee Meeting.

I attended the WCR Texas State Installation. Kayla Click and I represented CCAR.

The commercial day programming began with Daniel Oney (Research Economist with Texas Real Estate Research Center at Texas A&M. University. His presentation was the Three R's of Real Estate and the Economy. The research center has begun a new program in which they are working with colleges and universities around the state to have their researchers help provide research at a more local level. Its in the very beginning stages but I really think it is going to be helpful to have more localized data for the commercial markets. Places like Tarleton University can offer more local market data for that are so that practitioners don't have to use DFW market data which has much different influences.

In the Public Policy Business Issues Committee meeting my biggest takeaway was related to cash buyers and a new reporting requirement that is being proposed. It is likely going to create friction and will affect about 10-15% of all deals. Its being brought forward based on National Security Issues under something called PEP (Politically exposed persons).

There was a lunch for Legislative Contact Teams and Key Contacts. We were reminded how important it is to always talk about REALTOR Issues during our interactions and keep our REALTOR hat on. They would also like us to stay in contact with the legislative member throughout the year, maybe once a month during legislative sessions and once a quarter when we are not in legislative sessions. I was glad I was there to hear that because this is the first time I have heard a suggestion on how frequently we should be in contact (even if its just an email). They really want to make sure we can photos with our contacts as well. <https://www.texasrealestate.com/members/government-affairs/political-affairs/legislative-contact-teams/> and click on "Build Your TEAM" to check your team members. Glad I checked because I am now the ONLY member on Bob Hall's team and I added myself to Angie Chen Button's team because when the district lines got redrawn, we got moved into her district. We had a guest speaker from Rep Phelan's office, the Director of Political Operations. We took a deep dive into the 2024 Primary Elections and talked a lot about some organizations that were putting out a lot of misinformation and negative ads that targeted some of our supported candidates. (Now that I see the primary results, its clear that the money spent on these efforts really did have a big impact)

I am the Vice Chair this year for the Public Policy, Taxation Committee. We had guest speakers from Senator Bettencourt's office. (this is significant because Senator Bettencourt authored the property tax reform bill). Ross Leake and David Clark talked to us about the history of property tax reform and the most recent package and a little bit about how we ended up where we did with the legislation. I asked them about SB 1801 (not authored by Senator Bettencourt but property tax related) Some Appraisal District has begun sending out letters to homeowners stating they are required to file a new homestead exemption every 5 years under this bill. This is incorrect according to our speakers.

The bill simply adds the language: The chief appraiser of an appraisal district shall develop a program for the periodic review of each residence homestead exemption granted by the district under Section 11.13 to confirm that the recipient of the exemption still qualifies for the exemption. The program must require the chief appraiser to review each residence homestead exemption at least once every five tax years. The program may provide for the review to take place in phases, with a portion of the exemptions reviewed in each tax year.

In fact, in *section (11.43(c))* it states: *(c) An exemption provided by Section 11.13... once allowed, need not be claimed in subsequent years, and except as otherwise provided by Subsection (e), the exemption applies to the property until it changes ownership or the person's qualification for the exemption changes. With 11.13 being the Homestead Exemption section I read that to say you don't have to refile the exemption.*

Each appraisal district may have a different way to handle the situation depending on their size, but it was NEVER the intent of this Bill to require homeowners to apply for the homestead exemption every five years. This will likely take new legislation to further clarify SB 1801 (88R) so it appears that there will be one year that homeowners must reapply if they receive a notice from their CAD.

I also attended a session entitled "Agent Duties Under the New 2023 Water of the U.S. (WOTUS) Rules. The main point the speaker Charles Porter made was: "If you want to control growth, control water." The redrafting of the rules under WOTUS very likely expands the jurisdiction of the EPA and the Army Corp of Engineers over ALL types of land and water across the United States.

Another great meeting was the Association Presidents and President-Elects breakfast and RAP session. We heard from the TEXAS REALTORS Leadership team but also had a guest speaker from Predictive Media Network that gave us tips on responding to interview questions with the media:

- Remember it's YOUR interview, you are a guest and an expert.
- Stick to the things YOU think are most important-that's what the reporter is looking for.
- Think of a media interview more like a presentation, instead of a deposition. Look for opportunities to add something.
- Respond, don't necessarily answer.
- Positive language-don't repeat negatives.
- Re-dos are good, use your TAKE 2.

Control the interview with Flagging

- Emphasizes and priorities, isolates attention on a key message or framing statement.
- Signals control and message discipline
 - First and foremost...
 - The main point I want to stress is...
 - Our primary concern at this moment is...
 - The most important thing your viewer should understand is...
 - The most important thing your viewers should understand is...
 - At the end of the day, everyone needs to keep in mind...
 - What's important is...
 - The bottom line here is...
 - What we're really excited about is...

Control with Bridging

Helps you transition away from uncomfortable, controversial, uncertain questions...and back to your messages.

- Some people believe that, but another way to look at it is...
- I've heard that, but also consider this...
- Actually...
- The fact is...
- We're asking the same tough questions...
- That's an interesting question, what's important is...
- What concerns me more is...
- I don't know, but what I do know is...
- It's too early to respond to that. Our Focus right now is...
- Here's what I have to say about that...
- I see where you are going, but it looks different to us, here's why...
- I don't have that information right in front of me, what I can tell you right now is...
- I'll look into that and get you the latest, what I can say is...