

The Regulator November 2011

A Fine Balance: RECA, Self-Regulation and You

What does self-regulation mean to you and why is it important to you?

With respect to self-regulation, what are the challenges and opportunities?

What role do individual industry professionals, brokerages and industry associations have when it comes to self-regulation?

What advice do you have for the Real Estate Council of Alberta regarding “right touch” regulation and effective self-regulation?

The Real Estate Council of Alberta is inviting feedback from all industry professionals and industry stakeholders on these important questions.

How did we get here?

From mid-2009 to 2011, RECA conducted a comprehensive environmental scan, which included extensive consultation with industry professionals, related stakeholders and consumers. It included Advisory Committee meetings, brokerage presentations, consumer focus groups, surveys of industry professionals and town hall meetings across the province, to determine the most top-of-mind issues within Alberta’s real estate industry.

Prior to Council’s March 2011 strategic planning session, RECA carried out additional consultation with industry professionals to determine the single most important issue on which RECA should focus during the next three to five years. Almost 42 per cent responded with suggestions related to professionalism, industry professionals’ value to consumers and industry standards. The resulting 2011-2016 Strategic Plan, which was approved by Council in July, very much reflects these responses.

Now that the Strategic Plan is in place, implementation work begins and RECA encourages all industry professionals to be involved.

Statement on Self-Regulation and National Symposium

The first Critical Success Factor within RECA’s 2011-2016 Strategic Plan, on which much of RECA’s work in the next five years will focus, states:

Advance professionalism of the industry by establishing a clear definition of self-regulation and working with industry professionals to take ownership for and understanding of self-regulation by supporting and promoting responsible and accountable behaviour.

To that end, in October 2011, Council adopted, in principle, a Statement on Self-Regulation. And now, industry professionals, stakeholders and related associations are being invited to

review and provide feedback on the Statement on Self-Regulation. The consultation process will culminate in March 2012 when RECA hosts a National Symposium on Self-Regulation, which will bring together industry stakeholders, by invitation, from across Canada. The majority of attendees will be individual industry professionals, and representatives from regulatory organizations, government and trade associations are also being invited to attend. The feedback related to the Statement on Self-Regulation will be used extensively at the Symposium.

Why should I get involved?

All industry professionals and industry stakeholders have a role to play in increasing the professionalism of Alberta's real estate industry. It is through effective self-regulation and greater professionalism that Alberta's real estate industry will:

- Enhance the strength and reputation of Alberta's real estate industry and its dedicated professionals;
- Help build an even stronger complement of competent, ethical and experienced industry professionals; and,
- Demonstrate to consumers the tremendous value proposition inherent in the work of Alberta real estate industry professionals.

RECA encourages all practitioners to read the Statement on Self-Regulation and provide feedback. Help RECA strike the right regulatory balance. Help raise the professionalism of Alberta's real estate industry. Be part of the evolution.

Click here <http://www.reca.ca/industry/content/about-reca/self-regulation.html> for all of RECA's materials relating to self-regulation, including the Statement on Self-Regulation, the online survey, and a list of Town Hall meetings being held across Alberta.

Council Message – Wayne McAlister, Chair

As this is my first Regulator message as the Council Chair, I think it is most fitting that I begin by thanking our Past Chair, Robert Telford, for his commitment to the Real Estate Council of Alberta (RECA), particularly over the course of the past year. Robert's involvement in all aspects of Council operations and planning have helped set the stage for a strong future and we are particularly fortunate to have him continuing as a Council member.

Now that we have begun a new fiscal year, Council is beginning to implement some of the 120 plus activities set out in the 2011-2016 Strategic Plan. Elsewhere in this newsletter you will read about a few of those initiatives, one of which is RECA's Symposium on Self-Regulation, which is scheduled to take place in Calgary in March 2012.

The initiatives planned within the 2011-2016 Strategic Plan focus on five central Critical Success Factors. In short, to advance professionalism of the industry; to provide leading-edge career preparation and training; to promote quality standards and continuous performance improvement; to build awareness and appreciation for RECA's self-regulatory value proposition

and brand contribution; and, to ensure RECA has the capacity to achieve its vision of excellence in self-regulation.

One of the broadest efforts that will be made in the coming year is to raise RECA's profile, both with Alberta real estate industry professionals and with consumers. In raising the profile of RECA as a standards-setting, governing body, we can raise and improve on the already strong reputation of our industry professionals.

Achieving Our Strategic Vision

Council is committed to achieving the vision set out in the Strategic Plan and strongly believes that Alberta real estate industry professionals share this commitment. With the extensive industry consultation that was carried out prior to development of the Strategic Plan, Council heard time and time again that there is a tremendous appetite in the industry for greater professionalism, higher professional standards and increased personal responsibility and accountability. It is now the time to put those commitments and beliefs to action.

There will be many opportunities in the coming years for all industry professionals to get involved, improve their own business practices and demonstrate to consumers the inherent value in working with licensed Alberta real estate industry professionals. Council will be there every step of the way and looks forward to continued – and in many cases, increased – collaboration with other industry bodies, trade associations and individual industry professionals.

It is a very exciting time to be serving as Chair of Council as the initiatives underway position RECA to be the leading self-regulatory body for real estate professionals in Canada. I am very excited about the direction RECA is heading, and I look forward to working with and meeting many of you during the coming year.

RECA Strategic Vision Reflected in Organizational Changes

The Real Estate Council of Alberta is only six weeks into its 2011-2016 Strategic Plan, but already changes are being implemented to better reflect its strategic vision.

Effective December 1, 2011, a new Department of Professional Standards will be created. It will be responsible for the Trust Assurance and Practice Review Program (formerly the Audit Program), the Professional Conduct Review Program (formerly Investigations) and Conduct Proceedings (formerly Legal Services). These three areas of responsibility will be organized under Charles Stevenson as Director, Professional Standards, who was previously the Director of Industry Standards. The new department names and structural realignment better reflect RECA's vision for greater professionalism, effective self-regulation and the promotion of quality standards and continuous performance improvement.

This realignment will facilitate the administration of complaints, practice reviews (investigations) and conduct (disciplinary) processes within the same department and management structure providing continuity from receipt of the complaint to the final outcome. This will facilitate greater synergy across staff in these three programs and build upon the existing teaming initiatives. It will further advance communication, cooperation and consistency of approaches to files and solutions in the area of industry standards and practices.

These organizational changes also include the creation of an Office of the Registrar. Licensing and information services staff, which comprised much of the former Industry Standards department, will now be combined with RECA education staff in the Office of the Registrar, under the directional leadership of Joseph Fernandez, Registrar, who was previously Director of Compliance Audit and Investigations.

The Registrar position will be responsible for providing strategic and operational leadership to programs and services that support RECA's mandate respecting the issuing of authorizations including eligibility requirements for a person to acquire and retain an authorization to carry on business within the industry. This position will be responsible for the development and implementation of RECA's policies and standards, and all operations related to information, licensing/registration and education programs. The Registrar will be delegated the authorities of the Executive Director in these areas.

The responsibility for education will include the development and delivery of RECA's educational programs related to career preparation, authorizations and re-licensing education requirements for industry professionals.

The Registrar will be responsible for external relations related to this area of responsibility and, in particular, liaison and collaboration with organizations involved in the development and delivery of licensing education and professional development programs (e.g. Real Estate Education Administrators Forum).

Organizing education within the same unit as licensing and information services means there will be greater cohesion between education courses and materials, and information provided via RECA information officers and licensing staff. RECA recognized that licensing, information services and education are so intricately related that it made sense to tie them together as a unit and have them reporting to a single individual.

Another key structural change within RECA is the creation of a Deputy Executive Director position, which will be held by Kirk Bacon. The primary responsibility of this position is to provide strategic and operational leadership for all aspects of RECA's regulatory and public interest mandate and be a key liaison with RECA's external stakeholders. This includes providing information and advisory services that support our industry members, the public, and individuals who wish to enter the industry as well as managing our professional disciplinary processes. The responsibilities of this position include providing leadership, advice and support to the Registrar,

Director of Professional Standards and Practice Advisor.

Perhaps one of the most exciting initiatives to come out of RECA's reorganization – and in fact, out of the 2011-2016 Strategic Plan, is the creation of a Practice Advisor position. The Practice Advisor position is a new position to be developed in accordance with the strategic business plan and it is intended to be a key element in RECA's efforts to expand its support to the real estate brokerage industry. The Practice Advisor will be a readily accessible source of advice to brokers and broker delegates in the real estate sector. The advice will be confidential and provided on a "without prejudice" basis; that is, the specific communications between the Practice Advisor and industry members will not be shared with, or accessible by, other RECA staff members (unless authorized to do so).

In addition to the advisor role, this position will be an important resource to support RECA's new strategic and five-year business plans. Those responsibilities will include: presentations to brokerages and industry groups on real estate brokerage practice and regulatory issues, assisting in the development of RECA Information Bulletins and information pieces for industry members, consumers and stakeholders; and, participating in projects related to professional standards e.g. Professional Code of Conduct, Professional Standards Manual and template Real Estate Brokerage Policy Manual.

Advertising to fill the Practice Advisor position will begin in late November, with the intention that he or she will begin work in March 2012.

NEWS BYTES

Virtual College – Survey of Canadian Real Estate Professionals – Have Your Say

The National Virtual Real Estate College project is a collaborative venture of real estate boards, associations and regulators from across Canada, who envision a national virtual college for licensing and continuing education of licensed real estate professionals. The College is planning to develop and maintain a library of online courses, research papers, videos and other learning tools for the benefit of all real estate practitioners.

We understand Canadian real estate professionals come from diverse backgrounds and have a wide range of needs. We are circulating an important survey to help us better understand the needs of Canadian real estate professionals to ensure that our project will add value for real estate professionals.

Please take the time to participate and help to shape the direction of the National Real Estate Virtual College project.

The survey has 17 questions and will take a few minutes to complete. All of your responses will remain private and confidential.

To show its appreciation, the National Virtual Real Estate College is entering all real estate industry professionals who complete the survey by the deadline into a draw for a chance to win one of ten \$50 gift cards to Amazon.ca.

Please complete the [survey](#) before December 5, 2011.

If you have any questions about the survey, please contact John Howie, Assistant Manager, Education and Membership Records, at the Calgary Real Estate Board, john.howie@creb.ca.

AREF Thought Leaders Series: Edmonton Luncheon – You're Invited

What are the characteristics of a livable, vibrant, sustainable neighbourhood?

The sustainability challenges facing Canadian communities and neighbourhoods are unprecedented: urban sprawl, growth in major city centres, shrinking populations in rural communities, greenhouse gas emissions, falling incomes of immigrant families, summer water shortages, declining participation rates in elections, increased air and water pollution, increased health impacts, waste management issues, and a widening gap between wealthy and poor families all present serious risks to quality of life both today and in the future. Neighbourhoods are the building blocks of society. They are the places we call home, where we live, work and play. What are the characteristics of a liveable, vibrant, sustainable neighbourhood?

Join us for lunch with The Natural Step Canada on November 30th to engage in a conversation about the future of our neighbourhoods. Building on a decade of experience working with sustainable communities, The Natural Step Canada will present the results of an online forum with hundreds of Albertans and conversations with a number of sustainability leaders from across Canada on re-imagining the sustainable future of our neighbourhoods. This lunch will be an interactive dialogue to bring together opinions and insight on the characteristics of sustainable neighbourhoods in Alberta.

Wednesday, November 30, 2011
11:30am-1:30pm
Salon 10, Shaw Conference Centre
9797 Jasper Avenue
Edmonton AB

Speaker: John Purkis, Senior Sustainability Advisor and Senior Manager of The Natural Step's Canada's Sustainable Communities Program.
Moderator: Cheryl De Paoli, Executive Director, AREF

Lunch will be provided and there is no cost to attend

Please **RSVP** and direct any questions to Dora Bundgaard at dorab@aref.ab.ca. Limited seats,

space is filling fast!

Re-Imagining our Neighbourhoods is an initiative of The Natural Step Canada and the Alberta Real Estate Foundation (AREF) as a contribution to the Foundation's 20th Anniversary Thought Leaders Series. The purpose of this initiative is to engage Albertans in a dialogue about what it means to be sustainable at a neighbourhood scale.

Council Members 2011-2012

BILL BUTERMAN, Chair Elect

Appointed from non-AREA industry members

KEVIN CLARK

Appointed from residential real estate industry members

CINDY DUBRAY

Appointed from the property management sector

GORDON GRAYDON

Appointed from the public

CONNIE LECLAIR

Appointed from the public

WAYNE MCALISTER, Chair

Appointed from the Calgary Real Estate Board

KEN MCCOY

Appointed from the Edmonton Real Estate Board

WENDY ROBSON

Appointed from boards outside of Calgary and Edmonton

RALPH SALOMONS

Appointed from commercial real estate sector

CHERYL SCHINDEL

Appointed from boards outside of Calgary and Edmonton

GARY SIEGLE

Appointed from the mortgage brokerage sector

ROBERT TELFORD, Past Chair
Appointed from the real estate appraisal sector

Contact RECA

Case Summaries is published by the Real Estate Council of Alberta. Please forward your comments and suggestions to communications@reca.ca.

Executive Director - Bob Myroniuk
Director of Audit and Investigations - Joseph Fernandez
Director of Corporate Services – Dale Cawsey
Director of Education – Kirk Bacon
Director of Industry Standards – Charles Stevenson
Director of Legal Services - Jean Flanagan