

First of all, I would like to thank Dakota CRS for the opportunity to attend the CRS mid-year meetings in Washing DC. There was a ton of great information packed into a short time frame. This was my first experience at a national level leadership meeting and it was enlightening to see how the CRS Council business is run. It is like our state organization with the work being done by volunteers and fantastic staff help. (In talking with others it was brought home to me how incredibly lucky we are for Jill & Moni and all they do for Dakota CRS).

We don't want to be redundant, so I will cover different topics from Sandy's report. There was discussion on social networking and the value it can bring to individual agents. Please link in your social networking pages to the CRS sites available. This should help both in attracting clients and in receiving clients. The new CRS "Proven Path to Success" look and branding were rolled out. The new logos are available on the national website.

Several of the meetings included discussion and brainstorming on improving class attendance. As Sandy mentioned, they looked extensively at what people want. Several sponsoring organizations have also had luck with setting up phone trees and making calls seven to ten days before the class. They divide the calls and call boards in the class area, company brokers, and some also call agents to promote the class. They use statistics of increased production to promote why people should attend CRS courses. There were many who implanted this in addition to email notifications and have had great luck. People were amazed when they found out how well our Bismarck class was attended, and our Dakota Chapter should be very proud.

Speaking of classes, the Tax Advantages class Pat Zaby did in Rapid City was another class worth every cent we charged. This two day class was attended by 21 people. I have been able to use the information several times. We also should feel good about our class attendance in that we get a high percentage CRS designees coming to our classes in addition to people working towards their designation.

Starting in 2010 the process of scheduling classes is changing. The instructors now have a speakers bureau. The new general process is:

- Check the CRS website to see if there are other CRS classes scheduled during the same three month period within 100 miles
- Check with the speakers bureau to see if it looks like it will work
- Submit application to CRS
- Finalize with instructors through speakers bureau

This is a great time to capitalize on your CRS designation and your affiliation with the Dakota Chapter.!

If you have any questions about what I have written please contact me so I can fill in any missing details.

Thank you again for sending me to Washington DC.
Carol Lawhun