



# NEWS AND VIEWS

WINTER 2010

## President's Message

It is a great time to be a REALTOR®; it is an even better time to be a CRS! I like to spend winter months re-evaluating what works and what needs improvement in my business. As Brian Tracy teaches - if I were starting over would I keep this activity or not? I can give a resounding YES to my chosen career field and an even bigger YES to CRS.



**2010 President  
Carol Lawhun, CRS**

One thought that dominated several of the discussions at the CRS annual meetings last fall was the opportunity we all have right now. Education is how we improve our service to our clients, and how we improve our market share. This is the perfect opportunity to maximize the best education which has the best payback for our business - the CRS

courses. Our chapter wants to help you improve your business. We want to synergize in all the different regions of the Dakotas, and work together to take care of our clients. We have kept our dues competitive, with potential for positive cash flow for members. Don't forget to apply for the \$25 (one-time per year) chapter rebate for the first CRS class you take in 2010! That is a benefit we added last year, and is an example of how we are trying to help you become your best. We are always looking for ideas and involvement. Please contact any of us with

## 2010 Leadership

### President

Carol Lawhun  
605-343-8800

### President Elect

Ninetta Wandler  
701-225-8183

### Secretary

Faith Wendt  
605-343-2700

### Treasurer

Steve Lunde  
701-239-5990

### SD Director/Education

Pat Kisely  
605-352-5962

### ND Director/Membership

Vicky Matson  
701-237-5031

### Immediate Past President

Sandy Meyer  
701-775-0013

### Regional Vice President

Mark Hess  
785-979-4663



July 18 -21, 2010  
Paris Las Vegas  
Rooms at \$69 a night!



**Sell-a-bration®** features unparalleled education sessions, top keynote speakers, and social and networking opportunities, which provide attendees with ideas and techniques that will have an immediate impact on their businesses.

## In This Issue...

- Chapter and National Dues
- Marketing Class Offered
- Your Opinion
- 2010 Census
- Education Rebate
- Marketing Materials
- More!

## New Designees

The following REALTORS® earned their CRS designation since our last newsletter:

Valerie Fiske, Fargo, ND  
David Nord, Grand Forks, ND  
Sheila Green, Custer, SD  
Dawna Kuck, Brookings, SD  
Clyde Thorne, Minot, ND  
Lisa Lindberg, Bismarck, ND

Congratulations!



## Did You Know?

Vancouver, B.C., which hosts the 2010 Winter Olympics, is the first host city to hold both the opening and closing ceremonies indoors. *Source: www.vancouver2010.com*

## Stand Up and Be Counted

As National Census Day April 1 inches closer, U.S. residents will begin receiving 2010 U.S. Census questionnaires in their mailboxes beginning in March. Under the U.S. Constitution, a national census is completed every 10 years to get an accurate picture of the nation's growing and changing population and demographics. Every resident of the United States and Puerto Rico, including citizens and non-citizens, is required by law to complete a 2010 Census form to account for everyone living at their household address as of April 1, 2010.

After completing the 10-question form, return it in the postage-paid envelope provided. If you fail to return your census form, a census taker will follow up to arrange a personal interview to collect your information.

The census data is used to determine the number of seats each state occupies in the U.S. House of Representatives. It also helps to determine how \$400 billion in federal funding will be allocated every year for infrastructure and services, such as hospitals, schools, emergency services, roads and bridges, and job training centers. For businesses, census data is critical to help them make strategically and fiscally sound decisions that spur economic growth.

To ensure your community receives the services it needs, everyone needs to be counted.

# Remember



Your CRS National dues are due March 31, 2010.

Members who do not renew their membership with the National CRS Council will lose the privilege of using the CRS designation as of April 1, 2010.

You may pay your National dues online at [www.crs.com](http://www.crs.com) or call 800-462-8841 for assistance. (Renewal cost is \$120)



We would also love to have you as a member of the Dakotas CRS Chapter (North and South Dakota combined). There are many benefits to Chapter membership. Your Chapter dues (\$30) can be paid online at [www.dakotacrs.com](http://www.dakotacrs.com) or mail \$30 to:

Dakotas CRS Chapter  
318 W Apollo Avenue  
Bismarck, ND 58503

## Your Opinion Matters

Planning has begun for the 2010 REALTOR® Convention of the Dakotas. It will be held in Grand Forks, ND September 15-17 this year. For registration details, [click here](#).

For the past few years, the Dakotas CRS Chapter General Membership meeting has been held during a luncheon on the Wednesday of the convention. Some people have had a conflict with the convention golf event held in the afternoon of the same day.

It has been suggested that the Chapter hold the General Membership meeting with a breakfast before the Chapter-sponsored course that morning.

Which time would you prefer? Please send an email to [DakotaCRS@ndrealtors.com](mailto:DakotaCRS@ndrealtors.com) with your choice.

## Get to Know CRS Member Connect

True success doesn't happen overnight. Whether you're building a highly productive real estate career, constructing a dream home or creating a new online resource center for CRS members, it takes time, energy and proper planning to realize your vision. After months of planning and development, CRS members now can enjoy the benefits of the CRS Member Connect virtual community ([www.crs.com/Community](http://www.crs.com/Community)).

This valuable resource provides members with the latest real estate industry and Council news as well as links to current market research and data. It will also provide useful professional resources, such as:

- presentation and marketing templates;
- sample marketing materials;

- audio clips of interviews with industry experts;
- archived articles from *The Residential Specialist*;
- CRS member discussion forums; and
- a CRS blog covering real estate news, trends and market data

Look for Member Connect to evolve over time as new content and resources are added in the coming months. CRS Director of Member Services, Colleen McMahon, manages the Council's virtual community project. "Member Connect will serve as a central destination where members can find a broad range of resources, tools and professional connections to help them succeed," she says.

Visit [www.crs.com/Community](http://www.crs.com/Community) today!

## Dakotas Chapter on Facebook

Online social networks are making a splash in the real estate marketplace. According to the 2009 NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® Technology Report, only 16 percent of agents and brokers said they do not participate in social networks, such as LinkedIn and Facebook, and blogs for business purposes. Over one-third (36%) report using Facebook daily for real estate purposes. When asked how important social networking is in generating leads, Referrals (83%), repeat business (82%), and internet (53%) are 'very important'.



The Dakotas CRS Chapter has a group for Chapter members on Facebook. Log in and check it out!

## New Logos for Chapters

You may have noticed the new logo on the front page of this newsletter. The National Council has asked each chapter to use a new format for a more consistent look.



## 2010 National Leadership Team Installed

The Council of Residential Specialists inducted its 2010 leadership team during the organization's inaugural dinner and awards ceremony on Nov. 14, 2009, in San Diego. Gregg Fujita, CRS, GRI, Frank Serio, CRS, CRB, and Mark Minchew, CRS, CRB, were installed as president, president-elect and first vice president, respectively.

CRS president Gregg Fujita is a recognized top producer in his local market with expertise in client/agent referrals and technology. He has aided in the creation of numerous technology education courses for REALTORS® and has served as president of his local association and as a CRS regional vice president. He was also the president of the Northern California CRS chapter, and was awarded the Northern California Chapter CRS of the Year. Fujita is with Harbor Bay Realty in Alameda, Calif.

Fujita says he hopes his commitment to the Council will help inspire other CRS members to play a bigger role within the organization. "Our CRS family is indeed a true passion of mine. My hope is that I can instill the same passion for the Council in each of our members," Fujita says.

He adds that his goal for his term is to help the

Council attract more leaders at the chapter level. "I hope to see the Council leadership active at the chapter level to let individual members know that they have leadership's ear," he says.

Fujita says that while the CRS members may not always agree, they share one thing in common. "We are all working toward the same goal of keeping the CRS Designation the best in the industry."

CRS president-elect Frank Serio entered the real estate business in 1984, was awarded REALTOR® of the Year in 1994 and served as president of the Coastal Association of REALTORS® in 1997. He has also served on numerous committees on the local, state and national levels, and is currently a CRS senior instructor. Serio is associated with RE/MAX by the Sea in Bethany Beach, Del.

CRS first vice president Mark Minchew, CRS, CRB, served as the first president of the Lone Star CRS Chapter and later as a regional vice president. He has served on several CRS national committees and on the board of directors. Minchew is a recipient of both the CRS President's Award and the Medallion Award. He is broker/owner of two RE/MAX franchise businesses in Austin, Texas.

## Council Unveils Free Online Branding Course

As part of the new CRS branding and marketing initiative unveiled in September (see *The Residential Specialist*, September/October 2009), the Council has launched an online branding course ([www.crs.com/CRS\\_Branding\\_Course](http://www.crs.com/CRS_Branding_Course)) to help agents better understand the initiative and how the CRS brand can make a difference in their business. CRS worked with NorthStar Strategies to develop the innovative course, which gives Designees the tools and strategies they need to create a branding message that is consistent with the CRS brand.

"Branding takes you to the next level and will only differentiate you [in the marketplace] that much more. CRS is a way to set yourself apart," says Catie Garcia, CRS, who took the branding course during its test phase. "It gave me several tools to work with and identify my personality type and what sets me apart from other agents," says Garcia, who is with Coldwell Banker Premier Real Estate in Fresno, Calif.

The easy-to-use, self-study format allows agents to complete the course at their own pace. The course is available for free to all CRS Designees, and can be found

on the CRS Web site under My eLearning Courses ([www.crs.com/Advantage/729](http://www.crs.com/Advantage/729)) in the My CRS Advantage account ([www.crs.com/Advantage](http://www.crs.com/Advantage)). Login is required.

The course focuses on three topics: *The Role of Branding*; *Your Authentic Self-Brand*; and *CRS and Your Self-Brand*. The fourth and final section is a marketing materials portal that allows Designees to download and customize CRS branding materials for their own business.

Each section of the course includes video interviews with CRSs who have branded their own business, and it includes examples of how major companies such as Pepsi, Volvo and Ritz-Carlton successfully branded their businesses. Self-tests and exercises help agents understand the concepts and the process of branding.

Garcia says the course helped her understand why branding is important for her business. "You want others to always think of you when doing business. That is why it is so important to own your own brand. When others see it, they know it belongs to you," Garcia says.



Marketing with



Microsoft Office



Sponsored by Dakotas CRS Chapter - 318 W Apollo Ave, Bismarck, ND 58503 - 701-355-1010  
In conjunction with the South Dakota Association of REALTORS®

Tues, June 8, 2010 - 8:00 - 5:00

# “What” and “Why” meet “How To” ...

... in the Marketing with Microsoft Office class. It's much more than a technology course; it's a powerful marketing class using technology. Imagine learning how to execute proven marketing techniques using software you already have on your computer.

Join the thousands of agents and assistants who have learned tips, techniques, and better ways to use Microsoft Office in their real estate business. By the end of the fact-filled day, you'll have an action plan to improve your marketing materials, organize your business, and have more time to work face-to-face with clients.

Don't miss this class. It will be one “AHA” moment after another.

### Fast Track to Microsoft Office 2007

- ✓ Eliminate agents' biggest time-waster: operating multiple databases
- ✓ Recognize why the new Outlook justifies the upgrade by itself—Explore using Outlook for your contact manager
- ✓ Discover how SmartArt makes plain text powerful and convincing
- ✓ See how Auto-previews of effects saves time
- ✓ Check out how easy it is to format tables and charts
- ✓ Examine how photo treatments can be done inside Office
- ✓ Locate familiar features from previous versions that are hidden in 2007

South Dakota CE approval Pending  
Course meets requirements for South Dakota GRI 206 credit

### Send bottom portion with payment to:

Dakotas CRS Chapter  
318 W Apollo Avenue  
Bismarck, ND 58503  
[dakotacrs@ndrealtors.com](mailto:dakotacrs@ndrealtors.com)  
Fax: 866-665-1011

### Tuition on or before 5/17:

- \$150 REALTOR® Members
- \$200 Non Members

### Tuition 5/18 or later:

- \$170 REALTOR® Members
- \$250 Non Members



Instructor  
Pat Zaby  
CCIM, CRB, CRS  
Dallas, TX



*Pat's easy conversational style and his understanding of marketing and technology have won him a huge national following of successful agents.*



*Approved one-unit course toward the CRS designation*

**Best Western Ramkota**  
920 W Sioux  
Pierre, SD 57501  
605-224-6877

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Company \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Card # (Visa/MC/Disc) \_\_\_\_\_ Expires \_\_\_\_\_

REALTOR® Members:  
Register online at  
[www.dakotacrs.com](http://www.dakotacrs.com)  
(NAR login needed)

*Payments made by credit card will appear on your billing statement under the name REALTOR® Association/MLS.*

## Education Rebate Available

Did you know that Chapter members are eligible for a \$25 rebate? When any CRS course is taken anywhere, Chapter members can complete a simple form and receive \$25 back from the Chapter. The form can be found [online](#). Fill out the form, attach a copy of your course completion certificate, and mail to Dakotas CRS Chapter - 318 W Apollo Avenue - Bismarck, ND 58503. This rebate is available once per member per year.

Other Chapter Member benefits include:

- Free continuing education course at REALTOR® Convention of the Dakotas

- Lunch and General Membership meeting at annual convention

- Networking with other CRS designees and Chapter members throughout North and South Dakota

- Chapter newsletter – emailed three to four times each year

- Website resources: [www.crs.com](http://www.crs.com) and [www.dakotacrs.com](http://www.dakotacrs.com)

## Homebuyer Tax Credit Update

There's still time to take advantage of the first-time homebuyer tax credit. The Worker, Homeownership and Business Assistance Act of 2009 extended the deadline for qualifying home purchases from Nov. 30, 2009 to April 30, 2010. In addition, buyers who enter into a binding contact by April 30 have until June 30 to settle on the purchase. The maximum credit amount remains at \$8,000 for first-time homebuyers – buyers who have not owned a primary residence within the past three years.

The new law also provides a tax credit of \$6,500 to existing homeowners who have owned

and lived in their current residence at least five consecutive years. For all qualifying purchases in 2010, buyers have the option of claiming the credit on either their 2009 or 2010 tax return.

Under the new law, credit is not available if the purchase price of a home is more than \$800,000. Also buyers must be at least 18 years old on the date of home purchase, and dependents are not eligible to claim the credit. For more information about whether the tax credit can benefit you, visit the IRS Web site or consult with a qualified tax professional.

## CRS Marketing Materials Portal

**FOR CRS DESIGNEEES:** CRS has partnered with Express-Copy to develop an online portal that CRS Designees can use to develop customized marketing materials for their clients. Designees can create direct mail materials with personalized logos and photography, upload or purchase mailing lists and print and select delivery options for their materials. Click [here](#) to check out the CRS Marketing Materials Portal.



## Calendar of Upcoming CRS Events

- May 13-16 MidYear Meetings, Washington, DC
- June 8 Dakota Chapter and SDAR sponsored Marketing with Microsoft Office Pierre, SD (register at [www.dakotacrs.com/mmo2010.pdf](http://www.dakotacrs.com/mmo2010.pdf))
- Sept 15-17 REALTOR® Convention of the Dakotas, Grand Forks, ND ([www.grandforksndrealestate.com](http://www.grandforksndrealestate.com))
- Oct 18-19 CRS 201 Course, Bismarck, ND
- Nov 3-8 NAR Annual Convention & Expo, New Orleans

[Click here](#) for National CRS Classes available

## Your 2010 Dakota CRS Chapter Board of Directors



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