

MONTANA ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®
State Leadership Idea Exchange Council Annual Meeting
Thursday, November 6, 2014

Getting Ready for the Legislative Session

Quality of Life Principles especially as they relate to protecting private property rights and protecting property owners are key MAR Legislative Position Statement components.

The Montana association is sponsoring several land use bills, electronic notification for property managers and clarification of townhome and condo financing, but the top issue continues to be water use regulations. MAR fights hard every legislative session to continue to allow development using an exemption from permitting for individual water wells. A recent District Court ruling struck down a rule that had allowed residential subdivisions to drill multiple wells without obtaining permits, stating that the rule violated the intent of the Legislature when it set limits on permit exemptions in the 1980s. The judge ruled in favor of the Clark Fork Coalition and ordered the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation to come up with a new rule.

The Court's decision put an immediate halt to all permits on new wells and even those that have not completed finally platting. This will have a devastating impact on all construction and MAR is monitoring the situation closely and may participate in an appeal with the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, Montana Building Industry, Montana Well Drillers, and many other coalition partners.

MAR supported the rule that was in place previous to the Judge's actions and in past sessions tried to reinforce the rule by having it placed in statute. We are currently assessing this situation to determine how best to move forward.

Raising the Bar in Education

MAR led the charge in looking at ways to raise the educational bar for all licensees in the state. Shortcomings experienced by dealings with the Board of Realty Regulation (BRR) led to a request to the Governor to conduct a special audit of this group to make sure that they were making consistent and timely decisions that would not slow the system, but rather allow for consistency and uniformity in their dealings.

Recently, a structural audit was approved by the Governor's office which will occur as a result of the state and local associations' efforts. We have already had an initial meeting and eagerly await the opportunity to enact change.