

State Leadership Idea Exchange
Utah Association of REALTORS®
President Rick Southwick

Regardless of where you live, clean air is an issue that affects every community. In Utah, specifically along the Wasatch Front, that challenge is especially relevant due to a unique weather phenomenon called an inversion. During the winter, high pressure traps pollution in our valleys, making air quality a top concern.

In response to a call for cleaner air, the Utah Association of REALTORS® partnered with the Utah Clean Air Partnership, a 501(c)3 dedicated to improving Utah's air quality, to create a grant program to convert wood-burning stoves to cleaner sources of heat. The UAR's charity donated \$30,000 and worked withUCAIR to develop a program where low- and moderate-income individuals can receive grant monies for replacing their wood-burning stoves with clean-air alternatives.

The focus on wood-burning stoves is two-fold. First, the particulates from wood smoke significantly worsen our air quality. University of Utah researchers estimate that one wood-burning stove can create as many emissions as five diesel trucks.

Second, REALTORS® want to be proactive on these air quality issues to prevent burdensome regulations that would hinder real estate transactions. In the past, the government has called for every wood-burning stove in Utah to be retrofitted before a home could be sold — a proposal that did not pass but could resurface. We're using ourUCAIR partnership to help address wood-burning stoves proactively rather than with new regulations that could make it difficult to sell homes.

After months of work, our partnership is now giving out the first grants and replacing the first wood-burning stoves. We hope to use this program to show Utahns how REALTORS® are working to improve the quality of life in our communities.