



**Jason Copeman, 2017 President**  
**MICHIGAN REALTORS®**

As the Michigan Realtors® 2017 President, I have the opportunity to set the bar high in terms of what we as an association strive to achieve this year. One of the biggest initiatives that I have championed is to increase member participation in all facets of the industry. This can be through leadership involvement at the local, state, and national levels; more member involvement in our already-established platforms, such as the Realtor® Party Mobile Alerts; or local community outreach groups. Having a variety of opportunities for members to be involved will greatly assist in elevating our strong Realtor® profile, and help to build upon our robust membership outreach data.

There are a host of participation opportunities at the local and state level for motivated members to join in, or sign up for. Many programs that have launched out of Michigan Realtors® continue to remain highly successful. **Michigan Realtors® Leadership Academy** has established its reputation as a prime platform for emerging leaders in our industry. This year-long program aims to promote leaders who have demonstrated their potential through job-related and community activities. In addition, the Academy provides access to a network of industry experts across the state, all of whom are actively involved in improving our Association and profession.

Placemaking initiatives provide another opportunity for members not only to participate, but to see tangible results within their communities. This year, our Association will be collaborating with different municipalities across the state who are taking part in the **“Realtor® Lighter Quicker Cheaper”** Placemaking initiative. These community revitalization efforts turn underutilized common spaces into vibrant, bustling, usable shared places quickly and creatively. This is a perfect opportunity to get involved in local outreach programs, while creating a sense of place within the community.

In addition, the **CE Marketplace**, our one-stop shop for Continuing Education for licensees, is thriving, and continues to see a steady rise in enrollment. We have an effective working relationship with the Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA) and are fully embracing opportunities to take the lead as an organization that values education and professional development. We continue to work towards enhancing CE legal content along with innovative models for distribution. For our membership and the Michigan consumer, we remain focused on education and accountability.

In legislative news, Michigan Realtors® Public Policy staff is working with our state elected officials in creating sound public policy initiatives for both our membership, and their clients:

- ***Protection of Vacation Rentals***

There have been a number of initiatives put forth, both nationally and statewide, that seek to ban the practice of private property vacation rentals. This trend, initiated by a growing number of local governments, have elected to fully *ban* vacation rentals as a prohibited commercial activity in a residential zone. Specifically, supporters would like to prohibit renting out any property for less than 30 days. Not only would this, essentially, wipe out tourism that many local communities depend on in the summer (especially in coastal areas and lakeshore communities in Michigan) but it also stifles property owners’ rights, and what they can legally do with their properties.

Michigan Realtors® believes that a property owner’s ability to periodically rent their property as a vacation rental is an important right to preserve. In the grand scheme, Michigan is relatively new to the debate over prohibiting vacation rentals. Communities across the state have allowed vacation rentals to persist absent any direct language within their zoning ordinances. Additionally, Michigan vacation property owners – many of whom reside elsewhere throughout much of the year – have found an opportunity to maximize the value of their property and to aid in the payment of non-homestead property taxes. In many instances, this ability to rent is an important variable in their decision to purchase a vacation home in the first place.

Michigan Realtors® has established a ***Vacation Rental Task Force***, a group who supports enacting a statewide prohibition on short-term rental bans. The Task Force has identified a solution where the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act (MZEA) is amended to consider the periodic rentals of one’s property for less than 28-30 day terms as residential in nature. While we respect a local government’s right to reasonably register and regulate vacation rentals, we believe the availability of these types of rental arrangements offer a unique benefit and draw

for Michigan property owners and communities. We are working with members of the Michigan Legislature, and have developed model language to amend the MZEA to effectively define this type of use as residential. Legislation is currently being drafted to be put forth in front of House and Senate members for consideration.

- ***Continuing the Fight against any Sales Tax on Services***

The new legislative cycle brings with it a host of newly-elected state House members. Many of them have shown interest in pursuing a variety of both new and old policy ideas. In Michigan, there has been a lot of buzz surrounding talks of a potential elimination of the state Income Tax. Discussions include proposals on how to capture that lost revenue stream should the elimination pass, and many arrows point to a Tax on Services to fill that gap. Michigan Realtors® remains vigilant in fending off this harmful proposal, along with any tax proposals that would be detrimental to our membership.

- ***First-Time Homebuyer Savings Account***

Lastly, in lockstep with many other state associations, we are working towards the establishment of a Michigan First Time Homebuyer Savings Account to provide an enticing opportunity to save and grow funds for homeownership *in* Michigan. Saving for down payment assistance and closing costs for a first home is difficult, and time-intensive. Factor in rapidly growing student-loan and credit card debt, this long-term investment goal requires and deserves addition tools for smart financial planning and homeownership. Creation of this type of savings plan would promote Michigan's housing market and retain Michigan talent.

The goal is to provide a strong incentive for investors and savers in the form of a meaningful income tax deduction and tax free gain on the account. The legislation is in the drafting stages and should be introduced this summer.

As a closing personal note, I continue to be amazed at how strong our Realtor® community is throughout Michigan, and how much can be done with a unified voice. Coming from our beautiful Upper Peninsula and routinely traversing the entire state as President, I see the value of Realtor® membership in our resurgent and thriving communities, and the impact and respect that our voice carries within our State Capitol. This year represents a year of building upon past successes and taking bold new strides for the next wave of Michigan homeowners.