

Renaming the local REALTOR® organization

Omaha Area REALTORS® Association

What are the benefits of a name change?

- It's long term. It's board vs. association. The benefit of moving from a “board” name to an “association” name is a long-term strategy and part of an overall effort to improve effectiveness.
- Over time, the public will better understand who we actually are and who we represent – all REALTORS®. Right now it is believed that is not the case. In due course, the public will come to understand that the organization's advocacy efforts on behalf of home ownership and private property rights – as well as the organization's community service efforts – are provided by and represent the work of all REALTORS®, not a subset or a select group of REALTORS® as the “board” name implies.
- An “association” name generally implies an organization of all REALTORS®. This also adds strength to our public policy and political efforts that are on behalf of all REALTORS®.
- Members – especially new members and those not active in the REALTOR® organization – will also better understand that the organization includes them and they are welcome to participate.
- The “association” name is also consistent with the state and national levels of the REALTOR® organization (Nebraska REALTORS® Association and National Association of REALTORS®).
- Nationally, the majority of local REALTOR® organizations no longer utilize a “board” name. In fact, 86 percent of those over 2,000 members (117 total) now have an “association” name.

What about the costs involved?

- The organization's Board of Directors is a group of 13 dues-paying volunteer members (twelve REALTORS® and one Affiliate, from eight different firms) that closely monitor the finances of the organization on a continual basis. When the Directors approved the name change and authorized the member-vote for the bylaw change, they reviewed the costs and the consensus was that the long-term benefits outweigh the one-time conversion costs, which were not dismissed without discussion.
- Currently, the Omaha Area Board of REALTORS® has not raised local REALTOR® dues in over ten years and no dues increases will be made for the name change. There is no fiscal impact on the MLS operation.

Why did the member-survey not allow a choice to keep the existing “board” name?

- The Directors wanted REALTOR® members to determine which “association” name was best, with the vote on renaming having been set for August 7.
- The Directors previously approved having the members vote on a bylaw amendment to rename the organization. That vote requires that REALTOR® members vote in person.

- In the April *FOCUS* newsletter, members were asked for name suggestions and several were submitted. President Matney again discussed a name change in the May *FOCUS*. The Directors reviewed those suggestions, made other suggestions, and considered variations of the names. At the end of discussion, there were three names which garnered the most support. Although one name received more support, the Directors felt the final decision on the name should be in the hands of the REALTOR® members.
- Over 650 REALTORS® participated in the online survey over a three week period; the final results were:
 - ✓ **65% – Omaha Area REALTORS® Association (OARA)**
 - 22% – REALTORS® Association of Greater Omaha (RAGO)
 - 13% – REALTORS® Association of Metro Omaha (RAMO)

What is the process from here?

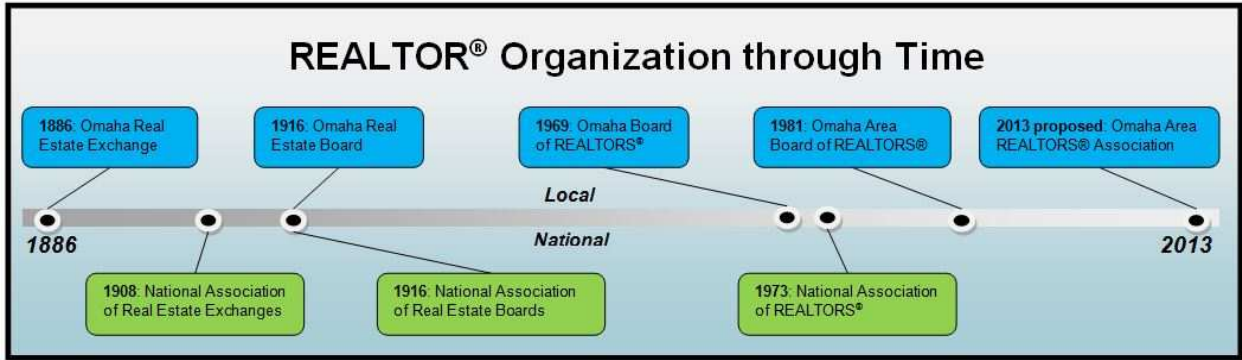
- On August 7, 2013 all REALTOR® members will have an opportunity to vote in person from 9:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. when the voting will cease.
- Renaming the organization represents a bylaw amendment, and thus requires a vote in person at 11830 Nicholas Street in Omaha.
- **The written ballot will contain two choices:**
 - Keep the current name, Omaha Area Board of REALTORS® (OABR), or**
 - Rename the organization, Omaha Area REALTORS® Association (OARA).**
- The Annual Picnic is the same day as voting, August 7, from 11:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. and will give REALTORS® additional opportunity to vote. All members are welcome to attend the picnic.

If approved, when will the renaming take place?

- Expect to see the new name around the end of the calendar year. If approved on August 7, the National Association of REALTORS® and the Nebraska REALTORS® Association will complete an administrative review and the name will be published to ensure it does not conflict with another association (which is unlikely).
- After that, most of the other changes will occur over sixty days; however members are likely to receive something in an old envelope, or see an old note pad or two as those supplies are utilized to minimize waste.
- The existing web address OmahaREALTORS.com will remain unchanged. The old acronym-name (OABR.com) and the new name (OmahaAreaRealtorsAssociation.com), will also redirect users to the current website. All staff email will continue to forward and function normally and will not be interrupted.

Questions?

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Omaha Area ~~Board of~~ REALTORS® Association

DRAFT SAMPLE

