



Bismarck Mandan (ND) REALTORS® Prove That Smaller Boards Can Bring in Big Bucks for RPAC – February 2014

For the fourth year in a row, the Bismarck Mandan Board of REALTORS® [BMBOR] in central North Dakota has leveraged grant money from the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® to add bang to its RPAC bucks. In 2013, the 330-member board raised over \$30,000 for RPAC in its five-month 'fundraising season,' in addition to a significant amount raised for its Issues Mobilization Fund. Whether it was the festive theme, or the existing culture of RPAC-investing in Bismarck, the percentage of RPAC investors reached 60 percent, and well exceeded the state-set goals.

Association Executive Nancy Deichert reveals that BMBOR's fundraising success depends on a winning formula that combines an initial appeal with the dues billing, follow-up email reminders, and personal solicitations by members of the RPAC Committee.

In January, the committee comes up with a theme to enliven all aspects of the fundraising. Last year, it was "Team Competition," and the membership was split in half to promote friendly one-upmanship. "We really underestimated the competitive spirit of our membership!" laughs Deichert. In 2013, the committee decided to have some fun with casino gambling, and increased donations even more. A theme of "RPAC – It's a Sure Bet" was adopted along with the sub-title, "Everyone wins with RPAC".

All RPAC fundraising emails were accordingly "gambling" themed. At BMBOR's general membership meeting in March, which is always dedicated to RPAC, the state Attorney General addressed the assembled members, speaking about the impact the REALTORS® Political Action Committee had had on state legislation and politics over years past. All members who had already made RPAC investments received a deck of cards, compliments of a local casino, to gear up for the culmination of the fundraising season in May: Casino Night! When BMBOR's RPAC Chair took to the podium and called for new commitments, the momentum really rolled, with one member standing up to proclaim one new sparkling Crystal R, which then prompted another member to meet her at that level, followed by seven Sterling R commitments during the campaign.

The big event, complete with a cash bar and hors d'oeuvres, was held at the local Elks Club facility, and BMBOR hired a local company specializing in casino night functions to conduct the games.

"Strictly speaking, the Casino Night was a celebration of our RPAC fundraising, which was already strong for the year," explains Deichert, "because our members do really well responding to dues billing and the other appeals. We used a generous grant from NAR to purchase prizes, but they were won in drawings, not as auction items." Chances for the drawings, however, were keyed to the level of a member's donations to RPAC for the year to date, with each \$30 counting as one entry, and so on. Prior investments in RPAC were credited with play money to enjoy at the evening's table games. The biggest prize, a trip for two to Las Vegas, was only open to members who invested at "99 Club" and higher. A weekend package at a local casino, an iPad mini, a Kindle Fire, and gas cards also attracted enthusiastic flurries of hopeful activity.



"The funds from NAR really let us have so much fun with it," says Deichert. As BMBOR's RPAC fundraising season gets underway again this month, her RPAC Committee is hard at work coming up with a theme for 2014 -- and will certainly be preparing another grant application for this year's effort.

To learn more about how this small board stacks up the chips for RPAC, contact Nancy Deichert, Association Executive of the Bismarck Mandan Board of REALTORS®, at nancy@bmbor.org or 701-255-0712.



BMBOR raise big bucks for RPAC at casino night – and all year long!

