



Santa Fe REALTORS® Launch Broad Effort to Elect Property Rights Candidates to Public Office – July 2013

When the two-term mayor of Santa Fe announced this spring that he would not be running for re-election, the local association of REALTORS® recognized an opportunity. Not only would this be a prime moment to affect change in its city leadership, but it also signaled a chance to take its involvement in local government affairs to the next level.

Donna Reynolds, Government Affairs Director of the 750-member Santa Fe Association of REALTORS® (SFAR,) points out that it is clearly time to take a progressive, pro-active step. As more and more candidates for local office in Santa Fe are making use of public financing, SFAR has already felt the impact of its RPAC funding for candidate campaigns being limited. “All we can do is be engaged, and offer other kinds of support to those candidates we feel represent our values,” she says.

Working with the expert consultants in the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® Campaign Services division, SFAR has found a way to have a significant effect on local elections in general; not just the upcoming mayoral race, but in preparing a cadre of candidates to run for all sorts of elected offices down the road. NAR will be conducting its Candidate Training program in Santa Fe on Aug.10, free of charge, for SFAR members and other would-be candidates who support property rights.

The day-long program is a general introduction to the nuts-and-bolts of running for office, covering topics from reasons for running, to planning and budgeting, to fundraising, to online efforts and volunteers. The seminar comes at no cost to REALTOR® associations, but it is only offered a limited number of times each year, and must be applied for like other REALTOR® Party grants and services.

Santa Fe’s Homebuilders Association and Chamber of Commerce have joined SFAR in reaching out to potential candidates to participate; they are already expecting at least 20. “We intend for this effort to be inclusive, not exclusive,” notes Reynolds, adding that the expectation for participation is a friendly stance on property rights, without regard to social issues. “We especially value open-mindedness – because we know from experience that an official who might stand with you on one issue could still work against you on 10 others!”

The Chamber of Commerce has offered to provide lunch, and may also help with a venue, should attendance outgrow SFAR’s own seating capacity. SFAR will be responsible for audio-visual and for printing all the program materials.



In a highly innovative tactic, SFAR is also making use of NAR's campaign services to conduct a poll of Santa Fe's voting citizens prior to the Candidate Training. "Santa Fe has gained about 4,000 voters in the recent re-districting," explains Reynolds, "and this will be the first time they've ever been polled on city issues." SFAR and consultants from NAR are now fine-tuning the poll. The information gained from it will have significant value for the upcoming campaigns, which, besides the mayoral race, include elections of four City Counselors and two County Commissioners.

Whether the poll results will be revealed only to REALTOR® Champion candidates, or be available to the general public, has yet to be decided. In any event, SFAR will develop a general platform to present to the potential candidates at the training session, "plenty broad, but naturally showing our interest in property rights," says Reynolds.

"Ideally, we'll be building a pool of leaders who will run in local elections in the next few years, as well as a strong base of support, whereby good people can run, and feel like they have other good people behind them," she continues. "Together with the Homebuilders Association and Chamber of Commerce, we're thinking carefully about people we are targeting with invitations to join us in the training program, in an effort to raise the level of accountability and professionalism among our city and county managers."

To learn more about the Santa Fe REALTORS® bringing their political involvement to the next level, contact Government Affairs Director Donna Reynolds, at 505.982.8385 or donna@sfar.com.

