Promoting Professionalism
OREA 2014 Annual Report
About OREA

The Ontario Real Estate Association represents more than 57,000 brokers and salespeople who are members of the province’s 40 real estate boards. OREA serves its members through a wide variety of publications, educational programs and special services. The association provides all real estate registration courses in Ontario.

Our Mission

To help Ontario REALTORS®, brokerages and associations succeed.

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My family ran a Greek restaurant and catering business, and I grew up with a love of food and cooking. A gathering of family and friends around the table in my parents’ home was a common sight, and I developed an appreciation for the way mealtimes can bring people together.

My passion for real estate developed at an early age, around the same time that I became interested in cooking. Real estate has been my first and only career, and as a real estate practitioner of 26 years, I see many similarities between our profession and the operation of a restaurant. Many hands are needed and a variety of skill sets must be employed. As President of the Ontario Real Estate Association, I want to make the best possible use of the talents and knowledge that you – our members – possess, in order to enhance the buying and selling experience for the consumer and advance our profession as a whole. Moving the organization forward requires a reliance on the efforts and skills of many different individuals.

The value of REALTORS® has been a key part of your association’s efforts for the past year. An exciting and robust new ad campaign has generated huge buzz around the province. (See p. 4.) Our message on billboards and TV commercials generated an incredible total audience reach of 169 million. That’s how many times the ads were seen throughout the province. They were seen by one of every two REALTORS®, (52 per cent) and one of every four consumers (25 per cent). We’re thrilled with the campaign’s impact and plan to build on that success in the coming year with continued emphasis on REALTOR® value.

One of my goals is to enhance the level of collaboration at all levels of real estate, whether local, provincial or national. I want to build bridges rather than fences. Members are the key ingredient and common bond in any association, and so I pledge to listen to and work for you with energy and enthusiasm – in order to give you the tools and training you need to continue to serve consumers well.

Your association cares about you and about our industry. The sheer size of our group and nature of our industry can sometimes mean that harmony and unity are a challenge for us, but I feel that we must strive to work together to enhance and solidify our profession. I look forward to working with you in the year ahead to create a recipe for success.

Sincerely,

Costa Poulopoulos
2014 President, Ontario Real Estate Association
The past year has been a busy but successful one at the Ontario Real Estate Association. In the pages of this report, you will learn more about various exciting initiatives led by OREA over the last 12 months. I am delighted to be the bearer of good news on several fronts.

The public perception of REALTORS® has been given a tremendous boost, thanks to a new advertising campaign. Following an extensive survey of our members, we learned that the value of using a REALTOR® was the key message that you wanted the public to hear, and that an ad campaign was the best way to send that message. In 2013, we launched a campaign that has successfully boosted consumer opinions of REALTORS®. Millions of people across the province saw the television commercials and billboard ads that were central to the REALTORS® we do the homework™ campaign.

The advertising campaign was a tremendous success. (See p. 4.) Among consumers surveyed who saw the ads, 84 per cent said they would be more likely to use a REALTOR® for their next real estate transaction, compared to 71 per cent who had not seen the ads.

Our media relations efforts were also highly successful in 2013. We continued to build on the momentum of previous years, and the key theme of REALTOR® value was embedded in all proactive communication with media. (See p. 5.)

We have more good news to share: OREA’s contract for the delivery of real estate courses in the province has been extended for another two years until 2018, through our Educational Services Agreement with the Real Estate Council of Ontario. OREA delivers top-quality real estate education, and Ontario REALTORS® are recognized as among the most knowledgeable and best educated in the world.

On the advocacy front, we are continuing to serve as your voice to policymakers at Queen’s Park, lobbying for a legislative and regulatory environment that is favourable to real estate and the real estate industry to help you do business better. (See p. 3.)

On a final note, I am pleased to report that your association is on sound financial footing. The careful management of funds ensures that we can continue to deliver great value for your membership dollars and be true advocates for the profession. Your association is committed to continuing to work to ensure that you, our members, are receiving the products and services you need to succeed.

Sincerely,

Ed Barisa
Chief Executive Officer, Ontario Real Estate Association
Advocacy is a key service that OREA provides to you. Your association is the REALTOR® voice at Queen’s Park on issues that matter to the real estate industry. The association works to create a legislative and regulatory environment favourable to REALTORS® and real estate. In short, OREA helps you do business better by relaying your views to policy makers.

OREA’s advocacy efforts have led to considerable success. In 2013, OREA convinced the government to amend the Electronic Commerce Act, 2000, to remove the exclusion for agreements of purchase and sale (APS). This change will give REALTORS® and consumers the confidence to use electronic signatures on the APS. The changes are expected to take effect in 2014.

OREA also worked to reduce the red tape burden on real estate brokerages. Specifically, OREA was successful in convincing the government to amend Bill 55, Stronger Protection for Ontario Consumers Act, 2013, to cut down the paperwork for real estate brokerages. The changes should save brokerages thousands of dollars in administrative costs.

Municipal Land Transfer Tax

Some municipalities want the provincial government to grant them municipal land transfer tax (MLTT) powers. Currently allowed only in Toronto, this levy adds thousands of dollars to a buyer’s closing costs. If MLTT spreads, it will increase the cost of home ownership. OREA is lobbying the government to stop the spread of the MLTT.

Marijuana Grow-Operations Registry

It is very difficult for home buyers and REALTORS® to know if a property is a former marijuana grow-operation or clandestine lab. OREA is lobbying for a province-wide registry that discloses this information and protects unsuspecting consumers from health and safety risks on the biggest purchase of their lives.

Personal Real Estate Corporations

Real estate salespeople are one of very few regulated professions in Ontario that are not permitted to incorporate. This means you cannot take advantage of lower tax rates enjoyed by other professions. Six other provinces allow incorporation by real estate salespeople. OREA is lobbying to align the rights of real estate salespeople with other regulated professions in the province.

Mandatory Home Energy Audits

Although OREA supports energy efficiency, it opposes mandatory home energy audits at time of sale. This would make home ownership less affordable and burden the buyer with even more costs. OREA supports voluntary energy audits.

Electronic Commerce

OREA’s advocacy efforts had considerable success at Queen’s Park in 2013. The association convinced the province to amend the Electronic Commerce Act, 2000, to remove the exclusion for agreements of purchase and sale (APS). This change will facilitate faster, more convenient transactions and give you and consumers the confidence to use electronic signatures on the APS. The changes are expected to take effect in 2014.

Video Audience

Viewers of OREA’s YouTube channel have watched a combined total of 42,254 minutes of video since its inception. Put together, that would be 29.34 straight days of viewing – almost a month! This Government Relations (GR) video features GR Committee Chair Richard Leroux with 2013 OREA President Phil Dorner. Visit the GR section of www.orea.com.
COMMUNICATION

Real estate is fundamentally about communicating. Every day you communicate in one form or another, whether you meet in person, talk by phone or use social media. In today’s fast-paced world, you’re expected to respond quickly with up-to-date knowledge and facts using the latest tools and technology. That’s why OREA communicates with you in a variety of ways and gives you the tools you need to engage with others using traditional and new media.

Ad Campaign

A mass advertising campaign was launched across the province with the goal of promoting to consumers the value of REALTORS®—something you viewed as top priority. Keeping the REALTOR® at the centre of the real estate transaction is vital, and OREA’s successful campaign delivered this message and boosted the public perception of your profession. Highly visible and strategically placed billboard ads, along with upbeat television commercials and social media, all conveyed the message to consumers: REALTORS® we do the homework™.

A consumer website was also created: www.wedothehomework.ca.

The ad campaign’s total audience reach was 169 million, a hugely impressive number. That’s how many times the commercials and billboards were seen throughout the province. OREA research surveys before and after the campaign gauged its impact, revealing that more than half (52%) of REALTORS® and one quarter (25%) of consumers in the province saw the billboards or TV ads. The surveys revealed a strong increase in public opinion about REALTORS® among consumers who saw the ads versus those who did not:
- 80% of consumers rated REALTORS® as valuable vs. 65% who didn’t see the ads
- 86% said REALTORS® were looking out for their best interests, vs. 75% who didn’t see the ads
- 94% ranked REALTORS® as improving the buying and selling experience, vs. 83% who didn’t see them
- Most importantly, 84% would be more likely to use a REALTOR® for their next real estate transaction, vs. 71% who didn’t see the ads.
In the News

Media relations efforts continued to promote one overarching message – REALTOR® value. That message was embedded in all proactive communication with media in 2013. This coverage garnered nearly 85 million impressions, a 57% increase over the 54 million in 2012. Impressions are the number of times consumers heard or read a story connected to OREA. A total of 1,025 media outlets (newspapers, magazines, radio, TV and online) covered stories either generated by OREA or including information about OREA, a 44% increase over the 708 stories in 2012.

Newsletters

The REALTOR® EDGE and e-EDGE newsletters contain practical, useful information that you need to do business. Published monthly, they deliver news and commentary to help you stay current on issues that matter in real estate.

Website

OREA's website had 2.24 million visits in 2013 along with 15.3 million page views, up 10% over the previous year. People also visited more pages than in previous years, viewing an average of 6.9 pages over 6.2 the previous year, an impressive 11% increase. The average time spent on the site, a good indicator of viewer engagement, also rose to 6 minutes, 22 seconds, up 3%, and the site had 6,137 average hits per day.

Mobile Devices

Mobile traffic to OREA's website rose sharply in 2013 over the previous year, with the number of people connecting by smartphone and tablet growing in leaps and bounds. A total of 320,000 visits were by smartphone, up a whopping 58%, while 151,000 visits were via tablets, a colossal increase of 74%.

Social Media

In 2013, OREA streamlined its social media properties to better serve members and the public. The 14 accounts spread across a variety of social media channels were combined into seven, with OREA now operating a single account on Wordpress, YouTube, Google+ and LinkedIn, and two accounts on both Facebook and Twitter, one for the OREA Real Estate College and one for general information.

Blog

Publishing new content four to five times a week, the OREA blog covers topics from government relations and continuing education to leadership and advice for young professionals. In 2013, the blog had 71,941 visits, an average of 197 visits a day.

Twitter

OREA’s two Twitter accounts focus on serving members, students and the public. Posting five to seven times a day, they cover topics from real estate news, things to share with clients, and tips for social media and business. Together, the two accounts boast 9,574 followers. With an average growth of 9.6 followers a day, Twitter continues to grow and prosper.

Videos

The OREA YouTube channel continued to grow in 2013. It hosted videos for the new ad campaign, REALTORS® we do the homework™, as well as leadership training blogs and podcasts. Since the channel’s inception, more than 42,254 minutes of OREA video have been watched, with 135,545 total views.

Facebook

OREA’s two Facebook pages cover the spectrum of OREA communication. The College page focuses on education, while the Info page features OREA news, events and the blog. With a combined 6,673 “likes”, an average post on one of OREA’s two Facebook pages generates more than 1,900 impressions. At 8 to 10 posts a week on both pages, that’s more than 15,000 impressions per week.

Webinars

To add member value and encourage member participation in social media, OREA began offering webinars in 2013 to enhance your social media skills on Facebook and Twitter. 3,413 members registered for six webinars last year, an average of 569 members per webinar. These will continue with a new curriculum in 2014.
MEMBER SERVICES

Your needs are the most important driver of your association. OREA provides the tools and services that help you do business as a REALTOR®. Whether you are a commercial or residential practitioner, you can get help, resources and business solutions to navigate the complex world of real estate today.

Forms and Clauses

Stay up to date by ordering the latest, revised OREA standard forms. Commercial and residential NCR® OREA standard forms are available from an order form on the OREA website. In 2013, OREA members purchased about 160,000 forms and accessed 4.2 million forms online from WebForms, available on REALTOR® Link. Updated 2014 clauses are available in the members section of www.orea.com by clicking on Standard Forms.

Member Engagement

To ensure that you get the most out of your association, OREA has enhanced its efforts to engage members right across Ontario. The Member Engagement department offered a series of tools and technology events across the province to help you stay on the cutting edge. The series was called Emerge: Moving You Forward with the Tools for Tomorrow. It was a huge success, with more than 1,100 REALTORS® across the province attending one or more events. Participants surveyed gave stellar reviews, with 9 out
of 10 (88%) rating the events as excellent or good. Moreover, 84% were likely to attend a similar event next year, and 89% would recommend the series to colleagues.

**Saving You Money**

You can get a variety of discounts through OREA affinity programs that offer products and services at reduced rates, including cell phones, benefits and insurance. Affinity partners are: AERO Insurance Brokers Ltd.; Corporate Benefits Analysts Inc. (CBA); MBNA MasterCard; Rent Check Credit Bureau; Rogers Wireless; and TD Insurance Home and Auto. For more details, see the Affinity Programs page. Visit the members page of www.orea.com and click on Affinity Programs in the Quick Links box.

**Research**

OREA has enhanced its research capacity to guide decision-making based on your needs and views. In 2013, research initiatives and studies increased by 133% over 2012. OREA has engaged with a research panel, a group of 4,000 REALTORS® across the province who voluntarily participate in surveys. The panel increased by 1,000 new members in 2013. Last year, 12,000 surveys were completed by members and over 8,000 by consumers. Moreover, OREA’s research unit conducted 28 research studies with members and consumers in the past year.

**Publications**

Books and brochures from OREA help you promote your services and increase sales. Consumer brochures explain complex real estate issues to your clients and cover a range of topics. The books, *How to Buy Your Home*, and *How to Sell Your Home*, help you guide clients through these real estate processes. Course textbooks are also available.

**Legal Forum**

This extremely popular information service enables you to submit general real estate law questions online at www.orea.com and get answers from OREA consultant Merv Burgard. You can also read previous questions and answers to learn more. To date, 5,450 questions have been submitted.

**Commercial Real Estate**

OREA serves the needs of REALTORS® who specialize in commercial real estate through the Ontario Commercial Committee, with the OCC chair representing commercial members on OREA’s board of directors.

**RECO Complaints**

This service helps members navigate the often stressful RECO complaints process and get legal information on RECO’s investigative and adjudicative process. Since the service was established more than a year ago, 175 inquiries have been received and seven information sessions have been held for members across the province, with about 250 people attending.

**Young Professionals Network**

The Young Professionals Network at OREA continues to grow, with about 1,100 members across the province. This group encourages people new to real estate to become more involved with the profession. It also organizes events and is active on Facebook and the OREA blog.

**OREApedia**

This online encyclopedia is a concise source of key information for you. A total of 55 topics are posted to the website.

**Engaged Members**

The Emerge Tools and Technology series drew more than 1,100 members to events across the province. Nine out of 10 rated the events as excellent or good and would recommend the events to colleagues.
STUDENT SERVICES

OREA has a solid reputation for providing quality real estate education and excellent customer service. Whether you’re a student, potential student or practising professional continuing your education, we have what you need to succeed.

OREA is authorized by the Real Estate Council of Ontario (RECO) to deliver the Salesperson Registration Education Program and the Broker Registration Education Program in Ontario. In 2013, more than 48,000 individuals enrolled in both programs, at 46,859 and 1,859 respectively. This education was delivered in three ways, in the classroom, through correspondence and via e-Learning.

The OREA Real Estate College delivers these courses on behalf of RECO, but it does much more. It offers a full range of services and support to you – before, during and after registration to enhance your experience as a student and afterwards when you are a working REALTOR®. Online educational forums, instructor support lines, study aids and mentoring resources for new graduates are just a few of the services available to you. Visit www.orea.com and click on OREA Real Estate College.
Now that's Service
When you have questions or concerns about your real estate studies, the Customer Service Centre can help. A key point of contact for students, it received more than 190,000 calls in 2013. Despite the call volume, a survey revealed a customer satisfaction rate of 93%. A marked improvement in wait times was also revealed, with 94% saying the wait time for service was acceptable, up from 89% a year earlier.

Career Night
The college actively promotes real estate as a professional career across the province, hosting 12 career nights in 2013, to which 1,392 people registered, a 71% increase over the 812 registered the previous year. Various career options within real estate were discussed, from commercial sales and leasing to the sale of new and existing homes, to leasing, rural lands, property management and appraisal.

e-Learning
Your busy life makes online learning convenient for many of you. The college currently offers 15 continuing education courses in an online format and the popularity of this approach is evident. In 2013, the college offered the “Click and Pick” promotion where members could take one or more OREA continuing education courses for only $15 plus HST. This resulted in a total enrolment of 18,931 following the promotional campaign from Sept. 1 to Dec. 31, 2013.

Improved Service

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<th>Year</th>
<th>Acceptable Wait Time</th>
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<td>2012</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>94%</td>
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In 2013, OREA customers ranked OREA as having significantly improved wait times over the previous year. A total of 94% of former callers surveyed ranked the wait time as acceptable, up from 89% in 2012, a 5 point increase following OREA's efforts to reduce caller wait times.

ESA Renewal
OREA is the designate to deliver the Salesperson Registration Education Program and the Broker Registration Education Program in Ontario, authorized by RECO. In 2013, RECO extended the Educational Services Agreement (ESA) for another two years until 2018. The OREA Real Estate College continues to deliver top-quality real estate education, and Ontario REALTORS® are recognized as being the most knowledgeable and best educated in the world.

Course Sessions
The 2014 course schedules were uploaded to the OREA website in September 2013, an initiative that permitted students to plan their course schedules more than a year in advance.

Web and Videos
A total of 173,000 page views of the OREA Real Estate College home page occurred in 2013. The new video series, Our Graduates Speak, features students and instructors sharing their experience on why the college is a great place to learn and how it prepared them for a dynamic, rewarding career in real estate. The series is extremely popular, receiving 11,130 page views last year. Visit www.orea.com and click on OREA Real Estate College.
BOARD SUPPORT

Your association provides many resources and tools to help you and your local real estate board manage your organization, keep abreast of changing laws, and stay current on new trends so you can deliver outstanding service to members. Strategic planning, leadership education and other resources are offered.

Learning to Lead

Leadership skills can be learned. The OREA Centre for Leadership Development (OCLD) offers unique programs that are in demand by other organizations even outside of real estate. The training helps boards to provide leadership education to volunteers and staff across the province and improves the volunteer experience for everyone. Since the OCLD was established in 2006, its courses have reached nearly 9,000 enrolments, with an average satisfaction rating of 4.4 out of 5. Feedback is that the courses help improve succession planning, achieve better results for committees and reduce conflicts. In a recent poll, 88% of volunteers agreed that OREA’s leadership courses are worthwhile.
Leadership Courses
OCLD courses focus on leadership training for staff, volunteers, presidents and presidents-elect of real estate associations. A new online version of the Leadership 100 course is now available free to all members. All courses are listed in the Leadership section of www.orea.com.

Award Winners
In 2013, the OCLD received an award from the Canadian Society for Training and Development for its work in developing Nimble Decision Making, a course designed to empower volunteer leaders to make timely decisions in a fast-paced, evolving business.

Reorganization Support
Boards that wish to reorganize through mergers or other structural changes have contacted the OCLD for help and resources. OREA continues to support boards through these changes.

Legal FAQs
OREA communicates with executive officers at real estate boards daily, fielding questions on governance and legal matters to help them serve their members and directors. In 2013, OREA responded to over 300 questions from Ontario boards. Some general questions are posted in the Legal FAQs for Board Executive Officers in the Legal Resource section of www.orea.com.

Bylaws, Rules and Regulations
OREA continues to update and revise standard board bylaws and standard MLS® rules and regulations for use by real estate boards. In 2013, OREA provided a great deal of information and resources to help boards comply with Bill 65, the Not-for-Profit Corporations Act, 2010.

Training Success
The average satisfaction rate among participants in leadership training courses is 4.4 out of 5. More than 9,000 enrolments in OREA leadership courses have occurred since 2006.

Appeal Panels
When a commission dispute arises between two brokerages in the same real estate board, a brokerage may submit a claim to its local board. Conciliation may occur, but if the conciliator cannot resolve the dispute, the local board sets up an arbitration hearing panel. Decisions of that panel may be appealed to OREA on specific grounds if certain conditions are met, and an OREA arbitration appeal panel is appointed. In 2013, OREA conducted 14 arbitration appeal hearings compared to six in 2012.

Questions and Answers
Real estate boards often have questions on governance and legal issues. In 2013, OREA responded to over 300 such questions. See the Legal Resource section of www.orea.com.

Arbitration Panels
When a commission dispute arises between two brokerages in different real estate boards, a brokerage may request arbitration if certain conditions are met. In these cases, an OREA arbitration panel is appointed.
The Foundation gave out $609,732 in grants to charities in 2013 across Ontario, an increase of 8% over the $568,487 given out the previous year.

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<td>2012</td>
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<td>2013</td>
<td>$609,732</td>
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Grants to Charities

The amount of charity work and volunteer hours contributed by REALTORS® around the province every year is impressive. Many members of the public may not realize the extent to which REALTORS® give back to the community. One key figure in this work is the REALTORS® Care Foundation, which supports shelters and shelter-based charities across the province.

Charitable Giving

In 2013, the REALTORS Care Foundation gave out $609,732 in grants to charities and programs across Ontario compared to $568,487 in 2012, an increase of 8%.

Worthy Causes

Many charities benefit from the time, effort and funds given by the REALTORS® of Ontario. Shelter-based organizations in local communities across the province see the difference that REALTORS® make to those charities. In 2013, members of the REALTORS Care Foundation volunteered at various projects, including Habitat for Humanity, building homes for needy families.

Motorcycle Ride

The motorcycle ride for charity has taken place every summer since 2006, with the amount of dollars raised from the ride growing each year. The 2013 ride from Mississauga to Sault Ste. Marie raised $31,830 in pledges.

Every REALTOR® Campaign

This campaign is a great success story. Participating boards collect $1 a month per member, with funds going to the Foundation for grants to charities. In 2013, this campaign raised $636,209, up from the previous year’s total of $620,000.

Other Initiatives

Every dollar counts, and that’s why even local events and small donations make a difference. In 2013, the “Jam with a Past President”, a musical event led by former OREA president Brian Walker at the OREA Political Affairs Conference, raised $6,531 for charity. Jeans Days, during which association staff members wear jeans to work on the last Friday of each month, raised $490 over the past year for charities. For details on all of these initiatives, visit www.realtorscareontario.ca.
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- Visit our website at www.orea.com
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- Connect with us on LinkedIn at linkd.in/oreagroup
- Watch our videos on www.youtube.com/oreainfo