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Real Estate Industry Moves Step Closer to Statewide Listings

By MICHELLE MOWAD - 3/10/2008

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Residential real estate leaders took a step closer to establishing a statewide Multiple Listing Service late last month.

Two listing providers joined forces to share data and provide one source for agents and brokers to access listings from the Bay Area through Orange County.

Sunnyvale-based MLSListing Inc. announced the partnership with Pomona-based California Real Estate Technology Services Inc. on Feb. 28 and said agents and brokers will soon have access to a greater number of listings in a larger geographical area.

Larry Knapp, board chairman for MLSListings, said the cooperative effort will focus on data consolidation and adoption of standard business rules.

“Our MLS expertise will enable us to accomplish record-setting levels of collaboration and cooperation by implementing new industry standards regarding rules and data, which will improve and simplify the MLS environment for our subscribers and data customers,” said Knapp in a written statement.

Subscribers

MLSListings has 23,000 subscribers in Northern California and Carets another 100,000 real estate professionals in Southern California, including parts of Los Angeles, Orange and San Bernardino counties. Carets is the largest Southern California MLS data collector.

Jim Harrison, president and chief executive officer of MLSListings, anticipates the new single-source service to be running in the fall.

“The first step was for us to create some consolidation locally and then for the north and south to connect to each other and share data with each other,” said Harrison. “So that all our customers can have access to all the information they could ever want.”

MLSListings is owned and operated by the Central Valley, Monterey, San Benito, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, Silicon Valley and Watsonville association of realtors; and Carets by 28 Realtor associations in Southern California, excluding San Diego.

Donna O'Donnell, chairwoman of Carets, agreed this collaboration is the next step toward statewide MLS data consolidation.

“Our goal is the same, we want to better serve our customers and we have the know-how and technology to make it happen,” she said.

Art Carter, chief financial officer with Carets, said 80 percent of all MLS providers have agreed to, or are in, negotiations to share data with Carets.

Already Sandicor, San Diego County's MLS owned by the Coronado, East San Diego, North San Diego County, Pacific Southwest and San Diego associations of Realtors, has agreements to share data with Carets.

Ray Ewing, Sandicor's chief executive officer, said he has been working with Carets for some time.

Sandicor has 20,000 users.

Eager to Participate

“We are eager to participate with them, provide our data to them, get their data back to us, but there are some concerns we have of being an owner of Carets. So we might just be a vendor of data to them and obtain data from them,” said Ewing.

Sandicor is taking a wait and see approach with Carets until data sharing is available to agent and broker users later this year.

“Once we get the database up and running, we will probably have a greater level of participation from Sandicor than there is right now,” said Carter.

Sandicor is also a member of SoCalMLS, a regional multiple listing service that includes San Diego, Orange and Los Angeles counties.

Users can make listings in their own market and view listings in other markets.

The California Association of Realtors is also in the planning stages of creating a statewide MLS.

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