

Today, Ms. Annie Ives, the CEO of Combined Los Angeles/Westside Multiple Listing Service (CLAW), sent an email to her membership containing a number of inaccuracies regarding CRMLS. Because a large number of CRMLS members are also members of CLAW, I feel it is necessary to address a number of these inaccurate statements contained in that email.

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- **Misstatements About a Statewide MLS.** The letter made statements about MLS choice and cost. Since merging with the California Association of REALTOR's (CAR) statewide MLS initiative, CRMLS, with the support of CAR, has pursued the possibility of a statewide MLS, with the intermediate goal of a statewide database. This goal was approved by a vast majority of the CAR directorship, and CAR maintains a relationship with CRMLS as a Member of the organization. Choice is exactly what CAR and its directorship wanted to deliver out of their efforts. CRMLS has been pushing for and has delivered varying levels of choice, including choice of software front ends that our member Associations can offer to their membership. I would challenge any member of CARETS, much less any other MLS in the state of California to match the level of choice we offer.

Ms. Ives further made a statement that pursuing a statewide MLS would result in increased fees and costs. This is absolutely false and absurd. CRMLS' goal is to provide data access to every real estate professional in the state of California and for that professional to only pay one MLS subscription fee. Making an argument that boundaries are more important than data access ignores the needs of the real estate brokerage community and advancement of technology. Living in the past to protect politics and ego rather than doing what's best for the agent should not be tolerated by our state's real estate professionals.

- **Misrepresentation Regarding Zillow.** CLAW made a decision to delay the syndication of all its brokers' listings to third party listing portals, such as Zillow, Trulia and REALTOR.com, by 48 hours. In the email sent by CLAW, the CEO states that Zillow is contacting CLAW members and encouraging them to leave CLAW to join a CRMLS association. To my knowledge, Zillow is not contacting members of CLAW and making this statement. Rather, Zillow is responding to a myriad of complaints from CLAW brokers who are seeking help to locate channels who will help them syndicate their listings without CLAW's interference.

In the past, the Board of Directors for CRMLS discussed the option of delaying listings leaving the CRMLS system for syndication. After discussing this with our brokerage community, we learned that most of the franchise brokerages would not be affected by the delay because they have developed expensive mechanisms for direct syndication to third party portals without MLS involvement. However, the small to medium sized brokerages informed us that they would be harmed and would face added expense if they tried to develop those same syndication methods in order to ensure that their listing data would be kept up to date, if they so choose.

The CRMLS Board of Directors wisely decided, in keeping with a long standing CRMLS policy, that syndication choices are best left to the individual brokerage community, not dictated by the MLS. If CLAW members choose to vacate the CLAW system, it won't be because Zillow forced them to, it will be because they are exercising the choice Ms. Ives so strongly touts in her letter.

- **CARETS Decision.** CLAW made the announcement for CRMLS that we have given notice to leave CARETS by June 18, 2014. That portion of their announcement is correct, but what Ms. Ives failed to mention was that we have offered datashare agreements to each of the existing members of CARETS, that, if agreed to, will offer little or no interruption or change to the data being offered to our membership. CRMLS has further offered to host RETS servers for the existing CARETS members at NO COST to them in order to maintain the brokerage and third party product providers' abilities to receive ONE feed of MLS data. Furthermore we offered to handle the initial mapping of data from our systems into their systems at no cost.

Why are we doing this? CRMLS' decision to head down this path is a simple one. CARETS is very expensive and CRMLS can provide the same level of service to our membership for significantly less. In acting in our fiduciary role of providing the most access to data at the lowest possible cost, we have been talking with CARETS about CRMLS taking on the primary technical role for over 18 months, with no movement. The Board is tired of delay tactics and is ready to move on the data agreements and they would HIGHLY recommend that you contact the other members of CARETS and encourage them to participate with CRMLS in this effort to save YOU the member the unnecessary cost of paying for CARETS. CLAW has indicated that they will not participate with CRMLS in discussions with some shared brokerages. If you don't have access to CLAW's data on June 19, it will not be because CRMLS is unwilling. CRMLS believes it is time to put the political maneuvering aside and act in our members' best interests, not in the interests of a small group of people who benefit directly from their employment at the MLS level.

CRMLS remains committed to the premise that the multiple listing service is the Brokerage community's most important tool and an incredible gift to buyers and sellers. Our Board, entirely made up of working REALTORS, representing both agents and brokers, large brokerages and small, is actively involved in the management of YOUR service. The internet has been an incredibly valuable tool to deliver real estate information to the consuming public, and in many ways the consumer has access to a greater breadth of information than the average agent has access to in their own MLS. However, there is no substitute for the depth of information available in your MLS. Since the advent of the large third party portals, more consumers are working with real estate agents than ever before. However, it is time to work on providing you the broker and agent paying for this service the same breadth of information without having to pay for the inefficiencies of a system like CARETS, or to have to face imaginary boundaries to that breadth of information that politics and money too often place on the data. As with all that we do, we look forward to your feedback. We know we will receive it!

Art Carter
CEO CRMLS