

# Save the Date! RMLS™ Education Summit and Trade Fair Coming March 19, 2015



Real estate professionals: you are invited to save the date for the 2015 RMLS™ Education Summit and Trade Fair! This year's trade fair will be taking place on March 19, 2015, at the World Forestry Center in Portland, OR.

## Why the World Forestry Center?

RMLS™ frequently heard feedback from attendees in past years that they'd like to see the event in a different location. The World Forestry Center offers a new location on the west side of Portland, plentiful parking, easy access by transit, and also enables RMLS™ to offer more amenities to attendees and exhibitors.

## Interested in Attending?

RMLS™ members and non-members are welcome to attend the event,

and class registration will be open by early February. Monitor RMLStradefair.com, RMLS™ on Facebook, or RMLS™ on Twitter for the latest updates.

Whether you'll be attending classes, reaching out to REALTORS®, or window shopping around the trade fair floor, RMLS™ looks forward to seeing you at the World Forestry Center this spring!

### **Thanks, Sponsors!**

Special thanks to our sponsors for making this event possible...

#### **Diamond**



#### **Platinum**



#### **Silver**



---

## **MLS Insight: Want to Get a Discount on Dues?**



The RMLS™ accounting team—Dalece Lauck, Cheronn Foster, Ceri Howell, and Stacy Waples—are the friendly voices on the phone if you call regarding your RMLS™ bill.

*This post is part of MLS Insight, a series about how things work at RMLS™.*

Do you know there is an opportunity for receiving a discount on RMLS™ dues? This year, our annual Subscriber Satisfaction Survey revealed that only around 20% of those responding knew about it.

Generally, subscriber dues are quarterly, billed in advance. However, there are now two options to make discounted payments for a longer time period. If you pay all subscriber dues annually in advance, you will receive a 10% discount, and there is now also a brand new offering of half-yearly advance payment with a 4% discount. With the end of 2014 rapidly approaching, so is the opportunity for making an annual payment to take advantage of this discount opportunity for the full year in 2015. Call RMLS™ Accounting at 503-872-8003 for

more information.

The Accounting Department works hard to make the billing process as easy and streamlined for subscribers as possible, while maintaining the highest level of fiscal responsibility for RMLS™. Last year, our billing process did not allow for payment of fees without penalty in the quarter of service, because this allowed us to virtually eliminate bad debt. No one received service that they had not paid for. However, this policy caused problems for some subscribers who needed to pay in the month or year that the service was actually received to make their accounting work the way they wanted it to. This year our billing timeline allows for payment without a late fee until the sixth of the month after billing occurs, eliminating those problems and not significantly increasing our exposure to unpaid service.

RMLS™ will upgrade its billing and membership system in 2015. The RMLS™ Board of Directors approved a new contract with Abila, Inc, to use their cloud-based system netFORUM Enterprise. RMLS™ has used the same membership system since 1993. A change was needed because that system does not operate optimally over a wide area network—in plain English, this means that our branch offices often experience slow response and other difficulties. It has been increasingly difficult to maintain PCI compliance for credit card processing with the current system. After reviewing many products, Abila was chosen for its solid platform, customization potential, and commitment to PCI compliance and data security. The system will also replace our outmoded HelpDesk software, as well as some other staff tools. Customization of the system and data migration will take place over the next six months or so. We do not expect to bill subscribers with the new system before the third quarter of 2015. When the system is rolled out, it will include an upgrade to the online payment system for subscribers.

*Next month we will spotlight another department at RMLS™. If you have any questions you would like to have answered about how things work at RMLS™, I encourage you to post a comment to this blog.*

---

## **MLS Insight: RMLS™ and OREF**

*This post is part of MLS Insight, a series about how things work at RMLS™.*



RMLS™ is renewing its agreement with Oregon Real Estate Forms to pay for MLS-Connect® for zipForms on behalf of the RMLS™ subscribers who use the OREF Forms. The Board of Directors approved payment of this annual fee of \$3.00/OREF Forms subscriber at its meeting in October. MLS-Connect® allows for auto-population from the listing data. We recently audited the available fields, and are sending all the data that is compatible to OREF for use in this functionality.

RMLS™ and OREF are two separate entities with a history of cooperation in serving Oregon REALTORS®. From 2004 through 2010, RMLS™ provided the on-line forms software solution for OREF. The program was based on Microsoft technology, and after six years of operation, some key components were no longer available to support the software that RMLS™ had built for OREF. The REALTOR®-owned zipLogix platform was chosen by the



OREF Board of Managers and was launched January 1, 2011. RMLS™ has participated in the MLS-Connect® feature from the beginning to add value for our subscribers.

***Thanks to everyone who commented on the last post – Thinking About an MLS Without Area Numbers!*** As I stated, this is not in the works at this time, but discussion about how things might work in the future is healthy. Technology moves at a great rate, and we don't always know where it is headed. Even just thinking about doing things in a different way keeps us mentally agile and a little more ready for whatever changes comes our way. Thanks again for participating.

*I took a detour this month to tell you about OREF. Next month we will get back to talking about the various departments at RMLS™ and their plans for the upcoming year. If you have any questions you would like to have answered about how things work at RMLS™, I encourage you to post a comment to this blog.*

---

# SentriLock                      Spotlight: Changing Your Default Lockbox Hours

The RMLS™ board voted to adjust the RMLS™ default SentriLock hours earlier this year based on feedback received from subscribers after the last change. Default lockbox hours are now 8am-10pm Pacific.



Subscribers will need to take action for these default lockbox hours to be in effect. First, update your SentiCard® using the SentiCard® reader (this is not required if you've been keeping your card in your RAD). Then simply insert the card into each lockbox and wait until the series of beeps is finished.

We know that some of you prefer to set your own lockbox hours based on your clients' needs or your own preferences. We've produced a short video about how to set your own lockbox hours:

(Our trainers say that the later steps in this video, neglecting to use the SentiCard to log in to the SentiLock website *after* inserting a card into the lockbox, is the most frequent mistake users make in this process.)

If you prefer written instructions, see the instructions on changing your lockbox hours in our previous post.

---

## **RMLS™ Welcomes Grants Pass Area REALTORS®**



RMLS™ is very pleased to extend service to a new area!

Beginning Tuesday, August 12th, RMLSweb will contain the converted listing content of Grants Pass MLS (GPMLS), and will provide service from the Grants Pass Association of REALTORS® office at 525 NE 7th Street (above) in beautiful Grants Pass.

Both Josephine and Jackson County, previously areas 280 and 290, will have multiple new area numbers. Josephine County areas will start with 620 and Jackson County will start with 719.

---

## Rules Changing to Clarify Use of SentiLock System

RMLS™ has amended its Rules and Regulations to make sure that brokers know how to properly use codes generated using the SentiSmart™ app.



RMLS™ is pleased so many subscribers are discovering the convenience and ease of using the SentiSmart™ app to open SentiLock lockboxes. SentiSmart™ Mobile Access Codes (SMACs) may be generated for brokers who wish to show a listing, but those **codes cannot be distributed to any other party by those brokers**, such as clients who wish to access a property without their agent present. Providing a code is the same as providing



a SentiCard® to enter a property, and is subject to the same rules and sanctions.

Note that SMACs are different from one day codes and contractor codes which are a separate feature of the SentiLock system. One day and contractor codes can only be used by the listing broker who owns the lockbox.

Changes impact the following documents:

- RMLS™ Rules and Regulations
- SentiLock Authorized User Agreement
- SentiLock Cooperating Authorized User Agreement

These changes to the RMLS™ Rules and Regulations have been approved by the Board of Directors and take effect Monday, June 30th. If you have any questions about the changes, contact RMLS™.

---

## MLS Insight: A Brief History of RMLS™



*This post is part of MLS Insight, a series about governance issues at RMLS™.*

RMLS™ was created when representatives from four Boards of REALTORS® in the Portland metro area decided to form a service that was an alternative to a broker-owned multiple listing service in business since the 1970s. The Articles of Incorporation were filed on August 3, 1990, establishing RMLS™ as a 501C for-profit corporation.

## **Membership**

The first RMLS™ listings went live in May 1991. Within a few short weeks, 3,433 area REALTORS® had subscribed to the fledgling MLS. This was 75% of the possible membership, and RMLS™ never looked back. Membership grew steadily to a high of almost 15,000 subscribers in 2007 and then fell in concert with the recession and REALTOR® membership to a low of just over 10,000 subscribers in January 2013. As the market has improved, subscriber numbers are rising again, and sit at about 11,000 midway through 2014.

## **Listings and Lockboxes**

RMLS™ was computerized and offered a lockbox from the beginning. A staple of a 1990s MLS was “The Book” (*above*), a bi-weekly tome of active listings with a quarterly comparable book. As personal computing and connectivity became the norm, demand for the books waned, and they became optional in 1997. The last book printed was the 1999 4th Quarter Comparable Book.

The first lockbox was a mechanical system made by Multacc, which came with the following tip: *Carry a can of silicone spray with you in case your key gets stuck in a dirty lockbox.* This system was replaced in 1995 by a series of Supra electronic systems. After 18 years with Supra, RMLS™ switched to the SentiLock system in 2013.

## **Areas of Coverage**

In the beginning, RMLS™ served only the five-county Portland metropolitan area in Oregon. The Douglas County Board of REALTORS® initiated discussions with RMLS™ early in 1998 to see if service could be extended to that area. Service to both Douglas and Coos Counties in Oregon was added later that year. The following year a merger with the Clark County, Washington MLS was finalized, bringing membership over the 7,000 mark. Service to Lane County followed in 2001. Curry County and the Mid-Columbia region in Oregon and Washington joined in 2005, with the Columbia Basin and Baker and Union Counties following suit in 2007 and Wallowa County in 2008.

### **Harnessing the Power of the Internet**

RMLS™ utilized a vended dial-up system from Interealty called Stellar as the main MLS system until 2002. Development on RMLSweb began in 1998, and the first version of RMLSweb was rolled out early in 1999 as a parallel, search-only, internet-accessible system. Originally developed by a vendor, the code for RMLSweb was acquired in 2001 and development moved in-house. By the end of the following year, migration from the legacy system was complete and RMLSweb became the sole system, supported and extended entirely by in-house programmers and IT personnel.

RMLS™ first sent listings to the internet in 1996. The first internet policy to govern internet display of listings was crafted in 1998, establishing the RMLS™ philosophy that the broker should determine the destination of their own listings and setting the stage for today's busy internet world of IDX, VOW, and syndication.

### **Communicating with Subscribers**

RMLS™ had a goal of good communication with brokers and subscribers and outstanding customer service from the early days. The Training Department's origins date to 1994, while the first Help Desk calls were taken by RMLS™ staff in 1996.

(Prior to that time, the system vendor handled Tech Support.) A Technology/Trade Fair has been held annually since 1994. Today, our technicians can chat online and webinars have replaced many classroom offerings.

RMLS™ implemented the communication technology of the day as it became cost-effective. Broadcast faxes to brokerages started in 1993, an early predecessor to the current weekly email “RMLS™ Weekly Report.” In 1996, the REALTORS® Fax Service provided a way for subscribers to obtain RMLS™ information and documents 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Today, the Forms and Documents menu of RMLSweb is the mature version of that idea.

It’s difficult to encompass 23 years in a few words, but RMLS™ has changed greatly along with the real estate community and the world at large. MLS staff had one computer to conduct business in 1991, and were excited to have a 24-dot matix printer. Although a fledgling internet existed in 1991, most of us were unaware of it, and it took a largish room to house the computing power of a smartphone.

*Next month we will talk about resources—how to find information you need to enhance your MLS experience online and from our staff. If you have any questions you would like to have answered about RMLS™ governance or operation, I encourage you to post a comment to this blog.*

---

**MLS      Insight:      The      RMLS™**

# Service Advisory Committee



*This post is part of MLS Insight, a series about governance issues at RMLS™.*

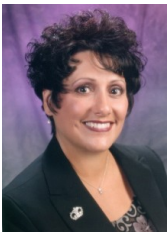
In previous MLS Insight posts, I covered the general governance of RMLS™ including our shareholders, Board of Directors, and standing committees. The Service Advisory Committee (SAC) is a topic that deserves a closer look.

When RMLS™ began serving areas outside the Portland metro area where our shareholder REALTOR® associations were located, we wanted to find a way to make sure that those subscribers' voices could be heard. In 2000, our Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws were changed to establish the Service Advisory Committee. The Articles of Incorporation clearly define SAC's purpose as "identifying the concerns of those who subscribe to the corporation's service but who are not members of shareholders..."

Currently 16 REALTOR® associations appoint representatives to serve on SAC. The chairman of SAC automatically takes a seat on the RMLS™ Board of Directors, and SAC also appoints one

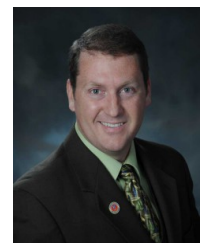
additional director. SAC directors have full and identical rights and responsibilities as shareholder directors.

Our current Service Advisory Committee directors have both made many contributions to both RMLS™ and the broader real estate communities. Cory Neu served as the 2011 Chairman of the RMLS™ Board and a total of five years on the Executive Committee representing SAC from the Eugene Association of REALTORS®. Our current Treasurer, Lori Palermo, represents SAC from the Springfield Board of REALTORS® and has served on SAC since its inception in 2000. I asked them to provide their own insider views on the Service Advisory Committee for this post.



“I have had the pleasure of serving on the Service Advisory Committee since its inception. I especially appreciate the avenue that the committee provides for bringing questions, concerns, and issues of members across the state to the RMLS™ Board of Directors. Several suggestions and enhancements that have come from SAC have been implemented and are in use today.” –Lori Palermo

“I’ve served in several capacities for my local and state associations, and having the opportunity to chair the RMLS™ Service Advisory Committee for the last 11 years has been the most rewarding in my real estate career. In that time, the SAC has brought many recommendations to the board and staff, from rules and regulations to RMLSweb functionality. Those things directly effect our profession on a very real and direct level.” –Cory Neu



*Next month we will give a brief history of RMLS™. If you have*



*any questions you would like to have answered about RMLS™ governance or operation, I encourage you to post a comment to this blog.*

---

## **Update: Office Exclusive Changes to Begin May 5th**

Update (May 28, 2014): RMLS™ recently prepared a FAQ document about the office exclusive changes.

As announced earlier this spring, RMLS™ is bringing changes to our office exclusive form and policies. These changes now have final approval by the RMLS™ Board of Directors and will take effect May 5, 2014.

After carefully considering additional input from subscribers, RMLS™ changed the original revisions in the following ways:

- Removed the requirement to submit a copy of the listing contract when submitting a signed office exclusive form.
- The RMLS™ Rules and Regulations have been revised to reflect that new construction is handled differently.

Retained is the language that prohibits beginning any marketing before “date marketing to begin.” This topic generated much of the discussion among subscribers, but RMLS™ President Kurt von Wasmuth recently explained some important details in how the rule will be administered:

*The basic point of the changes to this (Section 3.2) is to prohibit marketing of a listed property unless the listing broker either submits the listing to RMLS™ or submits an office exclusive form for that listing within the time limits specified. The rule describes marketing activity as*

*including—among other things—placing a sign on the property, social media or internet exposure, or direct marketing of the property to brokers or consumers. This rule does not prevent a listing broker from engaging in general, non-specific discussions about a property that will soon come on the market. Examples of these general discussions would be a broker’s announcement about property in a neighborhood “coming soon” during a company sales meeting, with X bedrooms, Y baths, and a certain kind of yard in a certain price range.*

*Falling under the rule would be specific marketing efforts regarding a particular property, such as identifying an address, a listing price, and the like. These constitute direct marketing, and in that case the listing either needs to be entered into RMLS™ within 72 hours of signing or the signed office exclusive form needs to be sent to RMLS™. This approach was designed to allow reasonable “pre-marketing” activities that the brokerage community generally regards as common, fair, and helpful to sellers, while preserving the basic premise of any MLS that all participants share their listings on a timely basis, unless a seller has made an informed choice to withhold a property from the MLS.*

View a redlined version of the RMLS™ rules impacted by these finalized changes.

View the new Office Exclusive/Authorization to Exclude Addendum.

View redlined versions of the Oregon and Washington listing contracts.

---

# It's Raining Savings in April: Initiation Fees Reduced by Up to 90%



Office initiation fees have been reduced to \$50 in April!

This is a great opportunity for offices to join RMLS™ and experience the benefits of sharing with more than 10,000 REALTORS® accessing your client's listings.

**Main Office Initiation Fee: \$50 (regularly \$500)**

**Branch Office Initiation Fee: \$50 (regularly \$100)**

**Affiliate Office Initiation Fee: \$50 (regularly \$400)**

For more information on this promotion, email our Accounting Department, call them at (503) 872-8003, or stop by your nearest RMLS™ office.

**ONLY Available April 2014!**