

Southwest Field Report

The Field Report is published by the PAR Field Program, which provides 26 local associations across the state with government affairs representation



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Local Realtors® Give Back

The **Beaver County Association of Realtors®** [recently teamed up with a local organization to help serve nearly 300 meals](#). The Manna Ministries in Aliquippa serves dinner once a week to about 75 to 100 people throughout the year. Since the pandemic, the need has grown substantially, with approximately 300 meals being served. The Beaver County Association received a PAR Century of Service grant to help pay for the expenses to provide a meal for the program. PAR's Century of Service grants allow local Realtor® organizations to help make a difference in their communities during the state association's 100th anniversary. BCAR also provided additional funding. BCAR members purchased food, prepared and packaged the dinners and handed out the meals along with other volunteers

Legislative Update

The **Realtors® of Westmoreland, Indiana & Mon Valley Association** and the **Fayette County Board**, met with Reps. Bob Brooks, Eric Davanzo, Eric Nelson, Mike Reese, Jim Struzzi and Sens. Joe Pittman, Pat Stefano and Kim Ward. Topics that were discussed was the upcoming budget, the First-Time Homebuyers Savings Account Program, the realty transfer tax, the current housing market and rural broadband access. For more information on these issues and if you would like to schedule a meeting with your local legislator concerning these issues, please contact me.

New Tool to Fight Blight

Local governments now have an additional tool to fight blight in Pennsylvania. Act 61 of 2020, which was signed into law by Gov. Tom Wolf, gives localities the ability to offer tax exemptions for new construction in deteriorated areas and improvements to blighted properties. Through this act, local taxing authorities can provide a tax exemption for up to 10 years for any improvements and new construction in blighted areas. The amount of the exemption will decline by 5% to 15% per year before expiring after the tenth year. The act is focused on mixed-use redevelopment including residential and non-residential uses, in order to support the development of vibrant communities. Projects will only be eligible for the tax abatement if all zoning ordinances are observed, all code violations are cleared and the value of the property increases by at least 25%. In addition, the property owner must pay any delinquent taxes related to the subject property. Prior to the governor signing Act 61 into law, the legislation received unanimous bipartisan support in both chambers of the Pennsylvania legislature. The act went into effect on Sept. 12. To learn more, contact me.

NAR's Stabilizing and Revitalizing Neighborhoods in the COVID-19 Era Seminar

I participated in a seminar sponsored by NAR on market fundamentals to address property vacancy and abandonment. This seminar included strategies to address the issues of vacancy, abandonment and deterioration, the critical importance of communities identifying and analyzing a neighborhood's distinct market challenges and opportunities. Market dynamics vary neighborhood by neighborhood. Realtors® can provide this unique market knowledge and their expertise should be leveraged during the development of strategies, initiatives and programs aimed at building neighborhood markets.

Upcoming Events

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| September 17 | Beaver County Landlord/Tenant eviction presentation |
| September 24 | Legislative meeting with Reps. Aaron Bernstine, Josh Kail and Jim Marshall |
| October 2 | Lawrence County annual legislative breakfast |
| November 3 | General Election |