

From the Director

New features on SFAR website

It's been nearly a year since the Santa Fe Association of Realtors had a soft launch of its new and enhanced website at www.sfar.com. Since that time, the association has added some additional features that can benefit the consumer. Searching properties for sale is available through the support of our multiple-listing service (MLS) now featuring a quick link for new listings and price changes.

When consumers search for listings, they can also readily link to the Realtor or brokerage selling the property. For consumers and those in the industry that want to track housing data, the home page lists a daily total of active listings.

Another great new feature is the ability to view upcoming open houses; just click on the "Weekly Open Houses" link at the top of the main page. You can focus your search by selecting criteria such as property type, price range, number of bedrooms and bathrooms, by subdivision or street, and square footage. This feature is interactive for our members, so open

houses can be set up and promoted every day of the week. The new website tool allows the househunter to check for open houses over a two-week period. Once you get to a listing, you can see photos, map, a virtual tour, if available, and additional details. Check it out today!

Access to information about local rental properties has been enhanced through a new, interactive search feature on the Web site. A residential rental form has been added to the association's MLS, which is providing the support behind this new search feature. The "Rentals" search tool offers an area map, photos, and more detailed information on the rental property similar to a regular home-for-sale listing. The information is updated once a day rather than weekly so remember to visit often, especially if you're looking for rental property in Santa Fe.

The "Consumer Info" link on www.sfar.com has information explaining what a Realtor is and the benefits of using a

Realtor. In this section of the website, visitors can also learn how to find and choose a Realtor, and the association has added links to sites of our Realtor members and Affiliated members.

On the Consumer Info homepage, you can find, embedded, the National Association of Realtors-produced *Real Estate Today* radio show. It covers the benefits and challenges of homeownership, expert advice on buying and selling, and information on remodeling and landscaping, the state of the current market, and home financing issues.

Two new features of the website are under way and should launch in the next month. A "Santa Fe Realtor Blog" collector will offer members the opportunity to highlight snippets of their blogs in a central online repository for visitors. Blogs are unique online tools that allow Realtors to share their industry expertise and market knowledge with the public in a friendly, conversational style.



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A second tool will provide a way to use key words to search Realtor-only member sites for information.

To keep up with the expanding web world, SFAR is providing new avenues to communicate with Realtors and the public through Facebook and Twitter. You can sign up for these social-media tools at www.sfar.com.

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Our water Quality

A bit about turbidity in water

Turbidity, simply stated, is the reduction of water clarity caused by suspended or colloidal matter or impurities. High turbidity (low clarity) in water is caused by suspended matter such as clay, silt, organic matter, and microscopic organisms that interfere with the passage of light through the water.

Turbidity is not the same as color, but the intensity of scattered light is affected by many variables including color, wavelength, and particle size and shape. The suspended or colloidal particles will not settle out by gravity. Turbidity is closely related to total suspended solids, which is measured on a sample of settled water that has particles that will not pass through a very fine filter (usually 0.45 micrometers).

Other impurities contributing to turbidity include soluble colored organic compounds, industrial waste, sewage, algae, and microscopic organisms. Turbidity often increases during spring runoff, and sudden occurrences of turbidity in private wells may indicate a breach in wellbore integrity. Turbidity in a public distribution system may indicate

construction activities or a break in a water line.

The most obvious impact of turbidity is that it makes water aesthetically unappealing as it may cause odor and taste problems. Turbidity is also an indicator of water quality and may signify the presence of potentially harmful constituents. High turbidity can impact the cost of disinfection for public systems as organic turbidity particles compete with disinfectants. And high turbidity can increase the risk of drinking well water as high organic contents may provide food for microbial growth. Small microorganisms may also be physically shielded by turbidity particles during the disinfection process, including UV (ultraviolet) sterilization.

Pathogens, such as the parasitic spores Giardia and Cryptosporidium, are often found in surface water and can cause gastrointestinal distress (diarrhea, vomiting, cramps) which may be severe in people with weakened immune systems and sometimes fatal in people with severely compromised immune systems. Increases in waterborne-disease

outbreaks and gastroenteritis occurrences have often shown close correlation with increases in turbidity; numerous EPA studies have shown a strong relationship between removal of turbidity and removal of protozoa. These organisms are of particular concern because they are resistant to chlorine and other conventional disinfectants.

Turbidity is measured in NTUs or nephelometric turbidity units — the root word for this measurement unit comes from the Greek for "cloudy." Primarily because of concerns about Cryptosporidium, the EPA has twice modified its Surface Water Treatment Rule and specified the required removal of Cryptosporidium, as well as the maximum levels of turbidity (less than or equal to 0.3 NTU for 95 percent of all continuous sampling runs and not to exceed 1.0 NTU). In 1993, a major outbreak of Cryptosporidiosis occurred in Milwaukee even though the system was in full compliance with the existing Surface Water Treatment Rule. Dramatic temporary increases in treated-water turbidity levels were reported: 2.7 NTU in



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a system that had not exceeded 0.4 NTU in the previous 10 years. The Fort Marcy pool in Santa Fe was closed in September 2008, because a case of Cryptosporidiosis was linked to the pool.

Removing the Cryptosporidium threat from residential well water is relatively simple using the latest "green" technologies.

Stephen Wiman has a background in earth science (Ph.D. in geology) and is the owner of Good Water Company in Santa Fe. He may be reached at 505-471-9036 and skwiman@goodwatercompany.com.