

Realtor training schools start working together

As Florida continues the slog through a gloomy housing market, with 2006 sales down about a third, the impact is being felt in Realtor schools.

Two of the area's leading real estate schools, The Landlord Academy and Ed Klopfer Schools of Real Estate, have teamed up in a sort of cross-registration scheme, where Klopfer students are able to access Landlord Academy courses.

The Klopfer Schools of Real Estate have seen that students are looking for another avenue within the real estate industry to earn an income, and with so many homes sitting idle, landlording is a natural.

The Landlord Academy offers courses for continuing education credits, with topics ranging from evaluating rental areas, fair housing law, maximizing cash flow, day-to-day property management, landlord/tenant issues and marketing techniques.

The Landlord Academy is in Tampa, but its courses will be offered at all Ed Klopfer Schools of Real Estate, including those in Sarasota and Port Charlotte.

Bers e-blasts known universe

Andrew Bers, a Prudential Palms Realtor in Sarasota, has launched a national e-mail broadcast or "e-blast" to 1.1 million Realtors featuring six real estate listings. With a click, viewers are linked to a comprehensive Web page for more information.

E-blasts are a marketing tool facilitated by Nu Image Group, a collaboration of real estate marketing professionals based in Sarasota.

Watkins joins Manatee County Citizens Review Board

Pat Watkins, a sales associate for Coldwell Banker Residential Real Estate's Anna Maria office, was recently sworn in to the Manatee County Citizens Review Board, a panel that reviews cases of abused, neglected or abandoned children placed in out-of-home care.

Atrium team announced

Cheryl Loeffler of Prudential Palms Realty, the marketing agent for Sarasota's Atrium on Ringling, has announced the sales team for the condominium tower.

The team will include Stephen and Vanessa Carns, Peg Ross Davant and Jane Weil, who will operate from the Atrium sales center on 1753 Morrill St.

The Carnses joined Prudential Palms in 2004, moving from the Las Vegas real estate market. Before joining the Atrium, they were on the sales team for Serenata condos in Sarasota.

Davant joined Prudential Palms last year after 18 years as an independent sales consultant.

Weil joined in 2003, serving as a general Realtor and sales associate at Serenata.

The Atrium is on a 2.2-acre site at 1750 Ringling Blvd., extending from Ringling Boulevard to Morrill Street, just west of Osprey Avenue.

It will consist of 88 condos, 4,500 square feet of retail and 40,000 square feet of office space.

Loeffler handles the residential sales, for developer Leonard Garner, while commercial sales are being handled by Harshman & Co. of Sarasota.

Hudson Crossing begins vertical construction

"Vertical construction" has started on Hudson Crossing by 888 Partners LLC, said Harry Rosenblum, the company's managing principal.

The development, at 888 S. Orange Ave. on Hudson Bayou next to the Marie Selby Botanical Gardens, features residences with three-bedroom floor plans of about 2,500 square feet.

Each of four penthouses includes a terrace with 1,000 square feet of outdoor private living space.

Other amenities include a pool with cabanas, private elevators, ground floor storage and private two-car garages.

The residences are priced at \$1.575 million and the penthouse is priced at \$2.395 million.

Rosenblum's partner is George Graham. Their team also includes The Evans Group of Orlando as architects, Tandem Constructions as construction managers and Michael Saunders & Co. as real estate adviser and sales agent.

HomeAway scores \$160 million, acquires VRBO.com

HomeAway Inc. landed \$160 million in debt and equity financing "to fund the vacation-rental Web portal's continued expansion," Inman News reports.

Those plans include the acquisition of Vacation Rentals by Owner, VRBO.com, one of the largest vacation-rental Web sites in the United States. The company said it also plans to boost marketing efforts to grow traffic and continue developing technology for finding and renting homes online.

Existing investors include Austin Ventures and Redpoint Ventures and new investors are American Capital, Institutional Venture Partners and Trident Capital.

Founded in February 2005, HomeAway has already raised more than \$200 million.

The company features 130,000 properties in nearly 100 countries. Its Web sites include homeaway.com,

cyberrentals.com, greatrentals.com, alvacations.com, triphomes.com, holiday-rentals.co.uk in the United Kingdom and fewo-direkt.de in Germany.

FarmRanchHome.com offers free listing and photos

FarmRanchHome.com allows you to create listings based on a variety of criteria, which quickly directs visitors to your home, farm, ranch, land or commercial property listing.

Check out www.farmranchhome.com/create.php. Then you can begin adding what the Web site describes as an absolutely free, unlimited number of listings.

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