

## Staying Ahead of the Curve

Realtors Association of Maui welcomes new slate of directors and officers, and ushers in a new year of positive changes for the industry. "Changes are coming."



In addition to the installation of the 2012 officers and directors and the presentation of other accolades, the event featured a silent auction to benefit the RAM Presidential Scholarship Fund.

Sarah Ruppenthal

September 15, 2011

The mood was perceptibly optimistic as more than 200 real estate professionals arrived at the Kamehameha Golf Club on Friday, Sept. 9, for the 43rd Annual Realtors Association of Maui (RAM) Installation Luncheon. The theme of the event, "Stay Ahead of the Curve," reflects a determination to become—or remain—the forerunners within an industry that has endured significant changes within the last few years.

Newly elected RAM President Bob Lightbourn admitted the real estate market has seen its fair share of challenges recently, evidenced by the staggering number of RAM members who hadn't sold any properties in 2011. "It was a tough year," he said, "But changes are coming."

Lightbourn said he foresees a momentous shift in the right direction for many within the real estate market—and soon. "I see an increase in active Realtors this year," he said. This is not just good news for Maui County's real estate market—it's also good news for the island economy. With more than 1,300 active members, RAM is the force behind one of Maui County's economic drivers, and trends and figures within the industry itself reflect current economic conditions.

According to RAM's August 2011 sales statistics, residential sales rose to 81 homes sold last month, while condo sales declined to 86 units sold. Land sales were reported at 11 lots sold. In August, the median prices for a single-family home "held steady" at \$410,000, while the median price of condominiums slipped to \$266,000. The median price for land was \$180,000 last month.

Within the immediate past 12 months, the organization reported 849 residential sales, 1,160 condominium sales and 128 land sales. "Things are definitely looking up," said Lightbourn, "and it will only keep getting better."

And Friday's luncheon was not just a social gathering. In addition to the installation of the 2012 officers and directors and the presentation of other accolades, the event featured a silent auction to benefit the RAM Presidential Scholarship Fund. Since the scholarship fund was established in 1989, the organization has awarded more than \$400,000 in scholarships to high school seniors across Maui County, as well as past recipients the RAM Presidential Scholarship.

According to the RAM Website: "The purpose of the fund is to award Maui County graduating high school seniors with scholarships to obtain a college degree in the field of their choice."

Before ceremoniously passing the torch—or, in this case, wooden gavel—to her successor, outgoing RAM President Sarah Sorenson thanked the membership for their generous contributions to the RAM Presidential Scholarship Fund and the "Wishing Well for Maui Students" program. As the visionary behind "Wishing Well," Sorenson has a special connection to the program. "My conservative estimate is that we have raised about \$1.3 million for Maui County schools," she said. "It's rewarding when you see what little we do... can make a big difference."

RAM's 2012 Officers and Directors include: President Bob Lightbourn; President-Elect Denise La Costa; Secretary Rhonda Hay; Treasurer Keone Ball; Treasurer-Elect Patty Angulo; Directors-at-Large Josh Jerman, Steve Baker, Toni Johnson, Lee Potts, Steve Fuller, Marilyn Griffin, Dave Futch, Sallie Zaugg, Casey Fukuda, Wendy Peterson, Ken Hayo, Paul MacLaughlin and Elaine Waldow; and Hawai'i Association of Realtors (HAR) Directors-at-Large Bob Lightbourn, Bruce Faulkner and Felix Osorno.

RAM will sponsor the annual Presidential Scholarship Fund Golf Tournament on Saturday, Oct. 15, at the Kahili Golf Course in Waikapu. Registration for the tournament begins at 7 a.m., with a shotgun start at 8 a.m. All residents are invited to "take a swing" at raising funds for island youth.

To learn more about the Realtors Association of Maui or to register for the Presidential Scholarship Fund Golf Tournament, visit [www.ramaui.com](http://www.ramaui.com) or call (808) 873-8585.