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Positive movement for the Appraisal Board: Part 1

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The two boards of the Appraisal Foundation - The Appraisal Standards Board (ASB) and the Appraiser Qualifications Board (AQB) - are often thought of as being far removed from the life of the typical appraiser. The Appraisal Standards Board comes in for its fair share of abuse every time it does or does not do something having to do with USPAP: the Board is accused, on the one hand, of being out of touch with the public it serves, and, on the other hand, of constantly fiddling with and changing USPAP. Similarly, the Appraisal Qualifications Board, after undertaking a monumental, long term project to change and improve qualification criteria for appraisers, continues to taking heat for creating barriers to entry and making education and credentialing of appraisers impossibly difficult. The qualifications criteria changes were underway for what seems like nearly a decade, and the end result is to bring appraisal on a par with competitive professions, yet there is still a public outcry about the changes and their effect.

Both Boards are publicly accountable and go "the extra mile" to ensure that there is adequate exposure of proposed changes. The transparency of the Boards' work is evident in the public meetings that are held and conducted, the deliberate way in which issues are presented for comment, and the degree of involvement that interested parties have in the process of achieving change in the name of public trust and for the good of the profession and users. There is a long tradition of involving a wide variety of regulators, agencies, user groups, educators, etc. that contribute mightily to the work of the Boards and the Foundation as a whole.

The perception persists that not all affected parties are being heard. There is a large grouping of appraisers and users that do not belong to any of the "interested" parties and that many on the edges do not feel that they are being given adequate opportunity to be heard. The Boards and The Appraisal Foundation's Board of Trustees determined that something needed to be done to garner more diverse input into two critical areas: Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practice (USPAP) and to evaluate USPAP education

Thus, the two Boards have been charge to work jointly to evaluate the Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practice (USPAP) and to evaluate USPAP education. As a result, an Invitation to Comment was issued to gather information to those ends. The Boards are in the process of asking appraisers, users of appraisal services, and other interested parties to consider and respond to the inquiries noted below.

During a twenty year period, USPAP has experienced regular changes and additions that responded to the needs of the profession. With recent sweeping changes such as Scope of Work, the opportunity was created for the profession to pause and undertake a broad look at USPAP and USPAP education and evaluate how well they serve their varied constituencies. Both Boards are taking time in 2008 to expand and enhance their relationships with appraisers and users of appraisal

services who rely on USPAP. The Boards will hear from all interested parties, and will be proactively engaging a wide array of market participants in many different forums, to discuss the future direction of USPAP and USPAP education. The Invitation includes questions such as

*The goal of USPAP is to promote and maintain a high level of public trust in appraisal practice. Is USPAP achieving its goal? If not, why? Please describe USPAP modifications or other actions that would help in achieving the goal.

*The ASB strives to create understandable Standards for appraisers. Which parts of USPAP are clear and which parts create confusion? Do you have suggestions on improving USPAP understandability for appraisers?

*The PREAMBLE states that USPAP is also for users of appraisal services. Is USPAP understandable to users of appraisal services? Do you have suggestions on improving its understandability for users?

Part two will appear in the April 11th edition of the New England Real Estate Journal

William Pastuszek, MAI, SRA, heads Shepherd Associates, Newton, Mass.

New England Real Estate Journal - 17 Accord Park Drive #207, Norwell MA 02061 - (781) 878-4540