

## Here's Some of What I Learned at Last Weekend's NAR Convention/Expo

Every November I like to attend the National Association of Realtors' annual convention and expo. This year it was in San Diego, Nov. 12-16. There were hundreds of educational sessions to attend, and I took extensive notes at the few I attended, while leaving adequate time to visit the expo hall where I learned about (and purchased) new products and services — of which there were tons!

Fortunately, the rest of those 100-odd educational sessions can be listened to after I get home, and there are a few I will indeed listen to on my computer.

As a broker/owner, I look not only for products and services that will increase my own productivity and effectiveness, but also for ones that will help my broker associates do the same.

There was lots of inspiration to be had as I mingled with agents from across the country and from 60 other nations. In the general session five agents were honored as "good neighbors," selflessly serving their communities. [Susan Stearns](#) was honored for transforming the lives of adults with special needs. [Nancy Hines](#) keeps a spotlight on the detection of early stage ovarian cancer (when it has a high cure rate). [John Kersten](#) is a power fundraiser for Easter Seals. [Barbara Mills](#) ensures a proper homecoming for returning soldiers. And [Dan Goodwin](#) empowers struggling families with affordable housing.

Yes, Realtors are go-givers, not just go-getters.

During the general session, agents representing each of those 60 countries came on stage waving their nation's flags. All received polite applause and isolated cheers from their compatriots until the flag-bearer for France came on stage. The process came to a halt as the audience of thousands rose as one and applauded loudly for several minutes. The terrorist events in Paris had occurred only 24 hours earlier.

At one educational session, I learned about some cutting edge technology incubated under NAR's "REach" program. One such company, [Pro.com](#), has created a smartphone app for preferred (screened) vendors. I'll be able to create a Golden Real Estate branded version of that app which combines Pro.com's screened vendors with our own preferred vendors — plumbers, electricians, handy-men, etc. This will be a great resource for both clients and non-clients alike.

I was impressed by two other REach projects:

[BoostUp](#) is a terrific program which helps people save up for their down payment on a home (or other big purchase). Again, it's a program which real estate brokerages can private label. It provides a mechanism for people to start saving for a down

payment, and the brokerage or agent contributes part of their commission when they're ready to buy.

[August](#) is a "smart home" company which has developed four clever products which allow a homeowner to provide access to their home in a smart, secure way. For example, they have a doorbell camera device which connects to your home's WiFi. When the doorbell is activated, it rings on your smartphone wherever you are (the person at the door thinks you're home), and you get to look at the visitor on your phone and converse with them. You can then "buzz them in" if you also have the WiFi-enabled deadbolt opener. I bought this product and a matching keypad. The keypad allows a homeowner to give specific people a code which opens that deadbolt but

only at times specified by the homeowner.

Other highpoints for me included the following:

I visited [On the Move Trucks](#), which sold me our moving truck 11 years ago. They have a newer model I really liked, but I told them I'm waiting until they have one with an electric power train. I explained that Tesla sells power trains to other manufacturers, which they didn't know. They are going to look into the concept and let me be their first customer for their electric truck. (Box trucks are perfect for this concept because they have so much undercarriage space for a battery pack.)

I signed up with a company called [YouMail](#) which replaced my iPhone voicemail with an intelligent system allowing me to get transcripts of voicemail messages which they archive in folders I create and/or send to my email so I can archive them on my computer. I can also read my emails instead of listening to them, which is helpful in meetings when I have my phone silenced. I can create different greetings for different callers based on their Caller ID, and I can block anonymous calls, giving them a greeting all their own which says that if they unblock their Caller ID, I will answer their call. I can also have a greeting with instructions to press a certain number (or numbers) to be transferred to other team members or to anyone else. Super cool!

Cost: \$25/month (show special) but definitely worth it! I already have it implemented. This product, like many others I saw in the expo hall, would be useful to any business, not just real estate.

I signed up with a lead generating company, [Landvoice](#), which provides leads and tools that will be useful to my broker associates in generating business.

Another exhibitor, a portrait photography company called [Image 1 Studios](#), took the picture you see on this page and then put the Colorado scene in the background using Photoshop. This replaces the lesser quality, unretouched photo that appeared for the first time last week. I have other versions of this photo with white, black and maroon backgrounds — all for \$150, with copyright released to me.

There were several vendors selling backlit photo frames for hanging in storefront windows. I bought from [Distinct Displays](#) a couple of those plus a 1-inch thick 16"x27" frame for hanging in our office window which plays a video of our choice. Really cool! We will use it to display active listings to people without them having to come into our office.

[Zillow](#) had a drawing for a Tesla if you signed up as a Premier Agent, which I had already done, so I was entered in the drawing, which will be this Friday. One can never have too many Teslas, right?

I have mentioned only a few of the learnings and purchases from my trip to the NAR convention. As you can tell, I had a good and productive time in San Diego. Now it's time to implement some of those great products and services!

### REAL ESTATE TODAY



By **JIM SMITH**,  
Realtor®

### HUD Announces Relaxation of Condo Financing Requirements

This was huge news, timed for release at the NAR convention in San Diego. A few years ago, HUD implemented re-certification requirements that were completely unreasonable for condo association boards to comply with. The result was that a majority of condo complexes became "unwarrantable" meaning that FHA and other loans were virtually impossible to obtain. Thanks to NAR's efforts, HUD has now relaxed those requirements. See link at [JimSmithBlog.com](http://JimSmithBlog.com).

**Jim Smith**  
Broker/Owner  
**Golden Real Estate, Inc.**

DIRECT: 303-525-1851

EMAIL: [Jim@GoldenRealEstate.com](mailto:Jim@GoldenRealEstate.com)  
17695 South Golden Road, Golden 80401

WEBSITE: [www.GoldenRealEstate.com](http://www.GoldenRealEstate.com)



Like us on Facebook at  
[www.Facebook.com/GoldenRealEstate1](http://www.Facebook.com/GoldenRealEstate1)



All Agents Are Certified EcoBrokers

