Dear Fellow Association Members:

To share or not to share, that has been the big question facing our MLS Board this year.

As you may know, several adjacent (and some not-so-adjacent) MLS boards have

joined into a Data Sharing agreement hosted by Northeast Florida MLS (NEFMLS).

Under this agreement, members from participating associations are provided a link to

the NEFMLS FlexMLS system so that they can search the database of several MLS

systems in one search.

Our Board has spent the last several months researching the pros and cons of joining

this collaborative effort so that we can make a responsible, fully informed decision that

results in the maximum benefit to **OUR** membership. During this time, we have solicited

opinions from individual members and hosted a Broker Roundtable discussion so that

we could understand the position of our Broker-Members. The majority opinion seems

to favor data sharing in some form.

At this point, IF we sign the agreement with NEFMLS to join the data sharing program,

our members would still be required to link out to a 3rd party site (FlexMLS) just as we

do now with the MLS Advantage platform. As part of our due diligence, our board ran

side-by-side comparisons on listing reports from MLS Advantage and the Data Share

portal. While the complete set of data from both systems was similar for the most part,

we did find some limitations to the extent of data available through MLS Advantage,

specifically Listing History and Attached Documents. This is important information that

our members want and deserve to have.

While the majority of member feedback supports our board joining the Data Share

collaborative as it exists, we feel the need to take it one step further so that **OUR**

members will benefit as much as NEFMLS members will from our participation.

NEFMLS members don’t have to link out to a different unfamiliar search interface that

they would have to learn how to navigate, it all lives in the MLS system they are

accustomed to using. Sweet deal for them; just pull up their usual search screen,

highlight the MLS databases to include in their search and, voila, one set of results with

listings from various outside MLS’s that they can email to customers, add to ‘Client

Connect’ feature, etc. This is indeed the ideal data sharing solution; no need to link out

to an unfamiliar system to search or confuse our customers with emails from two

different systems. This is the solution we want for **OUR** members. So, where does that

leave us?

In November, leadership representatives from our board and NEFMLS had a very

productive meeting in which we discussed our willingness to create a better working

relationship and create more synergies between our associations to the benefit of ALL

members of BOTH associations. This was the first official meeting between our boards

for a number of years which is progress in itself. Our proposal was to provide our MLS

data into their system, in exchange for NEFMLS’s data being integrated into our

Paragon system. A truly equitable SHARING of data resulting in equal benefit to all

members and creating a completely level playing field.

Unfortunately, we received notice this week that NEFMLS was not willing to provide a

feed of their data which confirms my suspicion that they are really only interested in

data collection, not data sharing.

That said, in the spirit of trying to accomplish something in this vain for the benefit of our

membership we have come up with a mutually agreeable solution. Both boards have

agreed to an exchange of data via our HomeSnap program. Soon you will be able to

search in HomeSnap, both mobile app and desktop versions, and receive full display

results with listings from both systems. We are also discussing a similar situation via

RPR which will allow our members to work with a more complete set of data when

preparing CMAs. While this is not the ideal solution I was hoping to announce as I

complete my year as MLS President, it is more than we had before and hopefully a

stepping stone to a better agreement in the future.

It has been an honor to serve as MLS President in 2019 and I look forward to continue

service to our association for years to come. Please feel free to call or email your

thoughts to me at [rob@thepremierproperties.com](mailto:rob@thepremierproperties.com) or (904)814-2006

Respectfully,

Rob West, Your 2019 MLS President

P.S. Please consider discontinuing the use of generic dial-up lockboxes, they are

unsecure and expose you, your brokerage and sellers to unnecessary liability risks.

Supra boxes are provided at no cost to our membership.