

FOR WHAT IT'S WORTH

For What It's Worth is a service for members of the Oklahoma Homebuyer Education Association. We welcome your responses or other information you would like to share with us. Send items to Tricia Auberle at HomebuyerEd@okacaa.org

The 65 people who attended the 9th Annual Homebuyer Education Conference got a few surprises as they learned things from our lending and government partners that had not been shared with us before. Without a doubt this conference, more than any previous homeownership conference in Oklahoma, informed us of new, substantive change that requires action on our part and coordination with our partners to enable more homeownership opportunities in Oklahoma. Among the challenges ahead:

- The Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform bill that created the new HUD Office of Housing Counseling also requires that office to certify individual counselors instead of agencies. Conference participants were able to provide input to HUD's Ashley McAskill. OHEA will be keeping in touch with HUD to provide additional input to them and determine how best to support our members throughout their certification process. Please note this is an ongoing process and will be sent out for public comment before it is finalized. We expect it to take most of 2013 before anything is implemented, and then HUD will give agencies time to come into compliance after that.
- Certain types of programs utilizing HUD dollars will require HUD-approved housing counselor sign-offs. Again OHEA will work to identify more specific information and we will get it to you as it becomes available.
- Oklahoma's revised Real Estate Broker Relationship Act eliminates cumbersome language about single-party brokers that tried to explain whose benefit the broker represented. Under the new law, brokers and associates have the same responsibilities in all transactions. The Act allows brokers and their associates to use the term "agent", abrogates the common law principles of agency, and exempts a party to a real estate transaction from being vicariously liable for the acts or omissions of a broker. The law took effect November 1.
- Opportunities for energy efficiency mortgages and other beneficial homeownership programs are difficult to obtain because of a shortage of inspectors in Oklahoma and we will try to initiate a task force to identify inspection needs and resources to meet them.
- Inventory levels on homes in Oklahoma are low. At one points there was a five-year supply of homes and a 5-year supply of lots for building. Now the supply is 5-6 months.
- Lenders are concerned that increased fees to cover compliance with Dodd-Frank will result in an increased APR that would kick some loans into the "High-Cost" category. The "High Cost" designation means a second appraisal and mandatory housing counseling will be required, adding expense for the buyer and delaying the sale.

Once again I want to thank our conference sponsors, without whom the conference could not have taken place: First Mortgage Company, Oklahoma Housing Finance Agency, MidFirst Bank, OG&E, Rural Enterprises, Oklahoma State Home Builders Association, Oklahoma Bankers Association, Stratos Realty and USDA Rural Development.