



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Aug. 19, 2020

Contacts: Melissa Maldonado, SMDRA
 303-797-3700
 Karen Becker, AAR
 303-369-5549

Aurora and South Metro Denver REALTOR® associations merger creates state’s second largest local REALTOR® association

Aurora and Centennial, CO – Members of the Aurora Association of REALTORS® (AAR) and the South Metro Denver REALTOR® Association (SMDRA) have approved a merger of the entities that will create one of the state’s largest local REALTOR® associations with more than 5,000 members. Effective Oct. 1, 2020, the merged organization will retain the name South Metro Denver REALTOR® Association.

The merger provides a significant expansion of member resources covering programs, services, education, political advocacy and events including:

- Access to more than 250 annual education courses and events, with FREE continuing education and career enhancing education for all REALTOR® members;
- Expanded networking opportunities;
- A stronger, more powerful voice for political advocacy and protection of Private Property Rights at the local, state and national level;
- Expanded committee and leadership opportunities including Diversity and Inclusion; political advocacy; philanthropy; Young Professionals Network;
- Enhanced presence with local businesses and economic development organizations;
- A stronger association capable of navigating market fluctuations and managing operating costs efficiently for its membership.
- A larger professional staff and related services;
- Reduced direct costs tied to multiple office buildings, staffing and service duplication while also enhancing staff training and services; and
- Combined Industry Partner membership providing an economical membership benefit and industry partner support for the Association.

“The overwhelming vote of approval from our respective membership validates the combined vision of our directors and leadership teams to bring these two great organizations together and deliver the resources today’s REALTORS® need to be successful and thrive, both in their businesses and for their clients,” said SMDRA CEO Melissa Maldonado.

Serving Aurora, Centennial, Littleton and the South Metro Denver Communities, the consolidated organization will operate from the nearly 30,000 square-foot headquarters that has served as SMDRA's home for the past two years and was completely remodeled and upgraded in September 2019. Located at 6436 South Racine Circle in Centennial, the two-story building features a 300-seat event center, 48-seat REColorado Training Center, extensive REALTOR® retail store, video recording studio, private meeting rooms and expanded office services, indoor and outdoor event space and additional space available for lease or future growth.

"While the decision was difficult and emotional for all of us, this is an opportunity to both preserve our strong Aurora heritage and culture while expanding our footprint and service to our valued members and the communities we serve," said AAR Board Chair Barb Riley. "Our goal has always been to create and deliver the programming, education, leadership training, political voice and business tools required in today's competitive real estate market. The consolidation of our organizations simply catapults us to the forefront in every measurable category that our members need and deserve from us."

SMDRA Board Chair Heather Hankins added, "From our initial conversation through today's final vote, we've said, together, we are better, and with the backing of our membership, we're now prepared to move this tremendous service-focused association into the future," said.

A combined board of directors and integrated staff will help lead the organization in the next two years with AAR's former CEO, Karen Becker, taking on the role of Chief Operating Officer for the merged association and Melissa Maldonado continuing her role as Chief Executive Officer.

"At the very foundation, this was an opportunity and a decision focused on serving our members," said AAR CEO Karen Becker. "I'm incredibly proud of the work that our volunteer leaders have done over the past year to research, identify and now implement a plan that truly delivers the best-in-class REALTOR® resources in the region for our members and I'm excited to be a part of the staff that will now serve this outstanding membership."

Effective with the consolidation, the organization's 2021 board of directors will be chaired by SMDRA's Brian Anzur, with Heather Hankins serving as Corporate Secretary. The executive team will be completed with a Chair Elect and Treasurer to be named by AAR's current board. In addition, AAR's Aaron Ravdin will be the Appointed Advocacy Vice Chair for the SMDRA Board of Directors responsible for Government Affairs, RPAC Fundraising, candidate interviews and statistics.

Additional steps required to complete the merger process will be managed by a Joint Merger Task Force comprised of members from the respective organizations including:

- Larry McGee, Joint Task Force Chair – SMDRA
- Heather Hankins, Chairman of the Board – SMDRA
- Brian Anzur, Chair Elect – SMDRA
- Kay Watson, Past Chairman of the Board, SMDRA
- Melissa Maldonado, CEO – SMDRA
- Barb Riley, Chair of the Board, AAR
- Jo Ann Patrick – Chair Elect – AAR
- Aaron Ravdin – Corporate Secretary – AAR
- David Barber – Director and Past Chairman of the Board, AAR
- Karen Becker, CEO, AAR

#