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SAN DIEGO ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®



**Greater San Diego Association of REALTORS®, California Bureau of Real Estate,
Apartment Association, District Attorney and U.S. Attorney Fight Real Estate Fraud**
New 'Not for Rent' Stickers to Deter Online Scammers

SAN DIEGO (July 25, 2014)---The Greater San Diego Association of REALTORS® (SDAR) unveiled a new tool today for fighting real estate and rental fraud in San Diego. In association with District Attorney Bonnie Dumanis, the U.S. Attorney's Office, the California Bureau of Real Estate (CalBRE) and the San Diego County Apartment Association (SDCAA), the program is designed to combat an increasing number of online scams.

SDAR's Ambassadors Foundation has made a new sticker available that can be placed on windows in vacant, for-sale homes announcing that the residence is "Not for Rent." The Ambassadors Foundation is a non-profit organization committed to supporting local charities and San Diegans.

"We've all heard the stories," said SDAR President Leslie Kilpatrick. "A vacant, for-sale home is fraudulently advertised online for rent for an incredibly low price. The potential victim calls the number and is instructed to drive past the property to see if they like it. There's usually an excuse why they can't show the inside, such as the landlord is out of town. The person then requests a wire deposit, the money is sent, and that's the last they ever hear from him or her."

The stickers will make it clear to anybody viewing the outside of the home that it is for sale and not for rent. Information on the stickers includes a phone number for the listing agent and the District Attorney's Office, and also a link to the FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center, www.ic3.gov.

"These types of crimes are nearly impossible to prosecute because the scammers are usually based overseas," District Attorney Bonnie Dumanis said. "That's why it's important for consumers to do their homework. Don't wire or send money unless you have personally verified that you are dealing with the person authorized to rent or sell the home."

Alan Pentico, Executive Director of the SDCAA, emphasized that no one should ever rent a property sight unseen.

"Make sure you meet the landlord or a representative in person and gain access to the inside of the home or apartment. If you're out of town, send someone you trust to inspect the place," Pentico said.

The SDCAA has put together a list of helpful tips to help renters and landlords avoid rental scams. It can be found here: <http://www.sdcaa.com/resident-resources/renting-in-san-diego/426-rental-scams>.



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Wayne Bell, the chief executive of the California Bureau of Real Estate (CalBRE), said his organization has received reports about online rental scams on such Internet sites such as Zillow, Trulia, Craigslist and HotPads.

“There are almost endless varieties of real estate and rental fraud,” Bell said. “Some are new. Many are old, and some are just variations on timeworn scams.”

“Broad use of these innovative sticker signs, along with consumer education, will effectively help reduce the incidence of imposter landlords and rental fraud,” Bell said.

To obtain stickers, or get more information, visit:

<http://ambassadorsfoundation.org/programs/fraud-prevention/>

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About [Ambassadors Foundation](#): *The Greater San Diego Association of REALTORS® (SDAR) Ambassadors Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization with a passion for serving San Diego communities. In 2012 alone, we raised nearly \$20,000 in cash and donations, a goal we promise to beat every year. Our annual events engage San Diego's local community in our giving initiatives. These events include a [Golf Tournament](#), [Holiday House](#) Charity Drive, and more. For a list of our upcoming events, [please click here](#).*

About [SDAR](#): *With more than 12,000 members, the Greater San Diego Association of REALTORS® is the largest trade association in the county. Our REALTORS® adhere to a code of ethics and professional standards above and beyond the norm. We help our members sell more homes. We help people realize the dream of home ownership. And we are dedicated to protecting private property rights.*

About [California Bureau of Real Estate](#): *The mission of the California Bureau of Real Estate is to safeguard and promote the public interests in real estate matters through licensure, regulation, education and enforcement.*

About [SDCAA](#): *The San Diego County Apartment Association is a member of the largest and most influential rental housing coalition in California. A non-profit organization that has served the rental housing industry since 1919, SDCAA's 2,200 members are rental property owners, rental property managers and suppliers of goods and services to the rental housing industry. The overall improvement of the rental housing industry is a primary focus of SDCAA, which represents single-family rental homes to the largest multi-family rental communities. SDCAA provides a wide range of services to its members, including legislative advocacy, education and resident screening.*