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Association, board endorse candidates; but only those who support unique program

By the June 11 deadline, 15 candidates in the June 22 civic byelection and the Minto provincial byelection had signed a pledge to uphold the Quality of Life program started by the Manitoba Real Estate Association and supported by the Winnipeg Real estate Board.

Lorne Weiss, the chairman of MREA's political action committee and a past-president of the WREB, said those candidates who have signed on will be endorsed by the association and board, regardless of political affiliation (see page six for the list of candidates).

The Quality of Life program encourages economic viability, housing opportunities, preserving the environment and protecting property owners with the aim of building better communities.

This marks the first time that the Quality of Life program is being used during an election campaign. Voting for the civic and provincial byelections is on June 22 and voting for the federal general election is June 28. Next week, a list of the federal candidates who have accepted the principles of Quality of Life will be published in the *WREN*.

"We had an excellent response for the civic and provincial byelections," said Weiss. "We know the candidates are talking about it.

"We're excited about the fact that organized real estate is taking an active part in the process. It's certainly a first for Manitoba, if not Canada, that an association and board are endorsing candidates who are running for election to public office.

"It's also important that the public knows which candidates are supporting our Quality of Life statement and who isn't," Weiss added.

The MREA Quality of Life program is modeled after a high-success program in Washington state started by REALTORS® a few years ago.

In Washington, politicians who sign a pledge to support the Quality of Life program are judged after they enter office on how well they abide to its principles. Each politician is issued a report card from the Washington Association of REALTORS® while in public office which grades them on how well they have upheld the principles.

In Washington, REALTORS® while using the Quality of Life principles as a template were able to persuade policy makers that the state's Growth Management Act should also include economic growth as well as land use. The REALTORS® now believe that economic growth in the state will not be an afterthought for politicians.

Weiss said the program also acts as a blue print for how Manitoba REALTORS® approach issues.

"Quality of Life is a benchmark that we will use to judge our initiatives," he said. "We will judge the positive or negative impact an initiative will have on Manitoba.

The Quality of Life program redefines organized real estate's pursuit of policy and programs.

"We talk everyday with people who hope to build a life for themselves and their children," explained Weiss. "We understand what makes a community attractive and desirable. We know a community is more than homes.

"People want safe streets, jobs that pay well, and roads that take them to where they want to go without delay.

"We're not just REALTORS®," added Weiss. "We're neighbours. Our children attend the same schools. play the same sports, and we go to the same places of worship as our neighbours.

"Our interests are not at odds with those of our neighbours," he added.