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WA's LARGEST MLS EMPHASIZES DATA INTEGRITY
New updates make searching for green homes easier, more accurate

Olympia, WA – Sept 24, 2013 - SEEC LLC (Social, Environmental & Economic Consulting) recently completed its collaboration with Northwest Multiple Listing Service (NWMLS) to create new “green” fields. The changes will enable NWMLS member real estate brokers to more effectively assist their clients when listing and searching for homes with green features. SEEC LLC provided green field suggestions and technical review for updates to NWMLS listing input sheets. NWMLS also received input from other green advisors, including Ben Kaufman of KW Greenworks. In addition, NWMLS also released a Green Building Information Supplement to its members to provide in-depth information on a home’s green features.

In 2006, NWMLS became one of the first Multiple Listing Services (MLS) in the country to include fields for high performance homes. The latest round of updates takes these fields one step further by requiring copies of green or energy-efficient certification documents to be uploaded into the system in order to validate a claim. This feature prevents and corrects broker input errors, establishes a deeper level of sales comparison for appraisers working on green home assignments, and provides marketing value for real estate brokers.

"Built Green is thrilled at last to have the upload of a home’s certification as a requirement when checking Built Green," said Aaron Adelstein, the Executive Director of the *Built Green* program of King and Snohomish Counties. "This will help ensure the accuracy of green listings and give the buyer greater confidence that they're buying a certified home."

These updates also solve another common problem. Previously, real estate brokers were often mistaking a home’s ENERGY STAR®-labeled appliances with a whole-home ENERGY STAR certification. As with green certifications, brokers will have to upload the home’s ENERGY STAR certificate within three days of listing, or that checked feature will be removed from the listing.

"Many homebuyers know of ENERGY STAR as an efficient option for televisions or refrigerators, but there’s even greater savings when you look at the entire house as a system – heating and cooling, water heater, insulation and windows," says Neil Grigsby, initiative manager for the Northwest Energy Efficient Alliance, or NEEA. "We’re excited to see greater accountability for this level of fact checking built into the new system."

Also of significance to the home performance industry is the inclusion of two fields for home energy performance scores: the HERS™ Index Score and Energy Performance Score, or EPS. With the inclusion of the Green Supplement, an addition to the input form that includes a large number of green fields, the NWMLS will be one of the more progressive MLSs in the nation facilitating the residential green or high performance building industry.

Additional searchable green features include:

- Construction methods – such as Structural Insulated Panels (SIPs), Advanced Framing, Double-wall framing, etc.
- Heating, cooling, and auxiliary systems – such as ductless heat pumps, high efficiency 90%, heat and energy recovery ventilation systems
- Home performance scores – including HERS Index Score and EPS
- Energy sources – ground source, solar photovoltaic, wind power, etc.

A Green Features Field Guide, developed by SEEC, will be made available by NWMLS to their subscribers to provide a visual identification of green features along with tips and resources. As an approved green real estate school, SEEC is currently partnering with a number of REALTOR® Associations throughout the state of Washington to offer its three-and-a-half clock hour course, *Navigating Green Fields within the MLS Form*. By year end, SEEC and partner Earth Advantage Institute will also debut a database of local appraisers proficient in high-performance homes.

“Along with NEEA’s Cost Data Addendum for High Performance Homes launched earlier in the year, all these initiatives mean one thing – we are closing the loop on providing a high level of quality data for green homes to real estate appraisers and brokers in the region,” said Fiona Douglas-Hamilton, principal of SEEC.

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About SEEC LLC

SEEC LLC (Social, Environmental & Economic Consulting) is a group of residential green building professionals and appraisers based in the Pacific Northwest whose mission is to ensure, through education and the development of market value transformation programs with stakeholders, the accurate recording of value for green and energy efficient new homes and retrofits. For more information, contact Fiona Douglas-Hamilton at 360-894-6817 or visit: www.seecolutions.com.