



# CONSTRUCTION INSPECTOR REVIEW

VOLUME 2, 3RD QUARTER 2006

## WORD FROM THE HOME OFFICE

Over the last two years GCI has experienced tremendous growth and success due in large part to the hard work and dedication shown by the members of our Nationwide Inspector Network. We would like to thank you for your patience and cooperation as we continually work to improve and streamline the inspection and reporting process through technological advances as well as in-depth inspector training. We are proud to announce that we have taken on two new nationwide lenders and look forward to providing additional volume to our inspector network. Thank you again for all your hard work and we'll see you next quarter.

*The GCI Inspection Team*

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P: 800.919.8903

F: 888.647.4677

inspectorinfo@gcinspects.com

www.gcinspects.com

## Inspector Has Tough Time Getting In Front of Agents

by Blanche Evans<sup>1</sup>

**A** Columbus-area home inspector says he's having a tough time getting in front of real estate agents.

Dear Blanche,

I am a home Inspector of an independently owned/operated Inspection in the Columbia, Howard County, Maryland area. I have been properly educated in the state of Texas and am AHIT (American Home Inspectors training) Certified and have obtained enough credits to satisfy the Texas Real Estate Commission.

I have recently returned home to Columbia and began with great enthusiasm, a push to market my business and services. I understand the area is booming in the real estate home buyer/home seller market. However, local home inspectors properly trained, educated and certified don't seem to be getting any attention from the Realtors.

I'm not certain as to what the reasons are why I am not receiving clients from Realtors in the area, and will not go as far to saying I am not receiving contacts due to the accuracy of my inspections. I guess what I am trying to ask is: Are home buyers and sellers even being educated on the importance of a home inspection vs. appraisal? Are they being advised to obtain an inspection?

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<sup>1</sup>Reprinted with permission from Realty Times, May 2006. Copyright © 2006 Realty Times. All Rights Reserved. www.realtytimes.com

## New! GCI DEVELOPMENTS

### GCI Web Site:

**Stay Focused!** Starting October 1st 2006, the GCI web site will not allow any inspections to be submitted that do not have at least eight (8) photos uploaded in addition to the inspection report. As you know, if you cannot properly document your inspection in the required eight (8) photos, than you will need to take additional pictures to ensure you have adequately documented the work in place.

### Additional Volume:

As some of you may have heard, we have taken on new clients that are adding significant volume to our portfolio. What this means to our inspector network is that you may experience additional inspection volume and you may be working on projects that

*(cont'd page 4)*

## GCI'S TOP 5

### Top 5 Most Easily Overlooked Inspection Items

1. Wells and Septic Tank Caps and/or Covers
2. Stored Materials
3. Shoring Labor or Materials
4. Pools and Spas
5. Outbuildings



## **Inspector Has Tough Time Getting in Front of Agents** *(cont'd)*

As you know, an appraisal gives the value of property and assists in the mortgage loan process regarding the loan to value issues. An inspection evaluates the condition of the property and components, the life expectancy of said components, as well as safety hazards which may or may not be. Home Inspections prove to be very valuable when protecting the buyer or seller's investment.

I have marketed throughout the Columbia, Howard County Maryland area, handed out brochures and business cards. Real estate seems to be booming here, but I don't believe the information regarding home inspections is being taken seriously, in fact it has been almost impossible to get past the receptionist desk to speak to an agent or office manager in person.

Further, I feel this information would be beneficial to both buyers and seller agents. A buyer will no doubt use the inspection information to negotiate the price of the property. A seller will have sufficient information to support the value given prior to pre-sale listing their home or have information about conditions which may be helpful to make improvements if necessary, prior to pre-sale listing.

I am wondering if you would be able to assist in this matter? Any information or assistance will be greatly appreciated and I thank you in advanced for your time.

Realty Times has some suggestions.

*Dear Home Inspector,*

*I'm glad to see you are doing your own marketing. Getting a start or restart in*

*any business is tough, especially when you have credentials that may have to be recertified.*

*One problem you may run into is that established agents may already have home inspection contacts that they know and trust, so your job will be harder because you not only need to get in front of these agents, but convince them you are doing a better job for their clients.*

*Says Andrew Show, a buyer's agent in Columbus, Ohio, "Has he/she any credentials and experience, or are they a rookie? I get an occasional home inspector letter with a business card and a flyer and/or cover sheet and it goes into the trash. Personal visits aren't much better because I already have four excellent (ethical) companies, so a fifth one doesn't do much for me."*

*However, Show advises, "Short of affiliating with a known inspection company and getting more experience and personal reputation with the buyers' agents he might serve, the one thing he might do is to go to area Realtor weekly meetings and introduce himself. Join the Columbus Board as an affiliate member, and contact the Columbus Independent Brokers Association as well."*

*Realty Times has some other suggestions:*

*Contact the managers of brokerages and offer to speak at one of their morning meetings about the value of home inspections, how they are different from home appraisals, how they can protect buyers and sellers, and what kinds of problems sellers are most likely going to run into when they buy a home. Offer to consult with agents and their seller clients on the value of seller home inspections. Offer to consult with buyer's agents on how home inspections can help the buyer make good decisions.*

*Become the educator and develop trust. Agents are going to have to trust you before they recommend you to their clients. Educate agents about the types of problems they are most likely going to come up against when selling certain neighborhoods and homes. For example, one of the wealthiest neighborhoods in Dallas where I live has a terrible reputation for shifting soil, so million-dollar plus houses routinely appear with cracks in the walls, and no one tiles the floors because they show cracks quickly, especially in newer houses with slab foundations.*

*Educate agents about the types of problems that might not appear on a home inspection that could cause problems for the buyer or seller, such as gas lines from the city that may need to be replaced at the owner's expense. Have the answers and tell agents where they can get gas lines checked.*

*Be available to answer questions either via Blackberry, your website or by pager. When you give your talks, make sure all the agents get your contact information.*

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## **JOIN OUR NETWORK!**

GCI is constantly recruiting qualified individuals for our nationwide Inspector Network.

If you are qualified to perform either residential or commercial construction inspections and are interested in applying, please email us at:

**[inspectorinfo@gcinspects.com](mailto:inspectorinfo@gcinspects.com)**

to learn more about what GCI can offer you!



# INSPECTOR CENTRAL

## Time is of the Essence:

In this deadline-oriented environment, we are required to have draw inspections back to our clients within 36-48 hours. This includes our front and back-end processing time in addition to the inspection that is performed in the field. As you know, with the numerous steps that are involved, every minute is critical.



For example, if an inspection is not confirmed on the GCI web site by **12:00 Noon (MST)** on the following business day

after it was ordered, it will be automatically reassigned to another inspection company. So when we send an inspection assignment out, we notify you in a variety of ways

- ✓ **EMAIL:** An initial email is sent to the email address provided to GCI.
- ✓ **PHONE:** A phone call is made to the primary phone number that was provided to GCI.
- ✓ **FAX:** An inspection request form is faxed, unless we have been directed that email only is preferred.

We want to give you every opportunity to accept an assignment, so **GCI will call and email you one hour before the reassignment is to occur.** This "last attempt call" is to inform you of the pending inspection. We will even accept and schedule it for you online if you can't get to your computer – just ask us!

## "OUTSTANDING... IN THE FIELD"



**Tom Quinn of Quinn Building Consultants (QBC)** in North Dartmouth, Massachusetts always exceeds GCI's standards. He has excellent turn times and always includes great wide-angle photos. Tom contributes a great deal to his work for GCI and we mean quite literally! Once on a site, Tom was walking through the mud and lost his shoe in the muck. He finished the inspection but sadly had to leave behind his shoe. Now that's dedication!

Specializing in historic homes in Southeastern MA and all of RI, Tom has been a full-time Home Inspector/Building Consultant since 1989. QBC offers detailed structural/mechanical inspections of residential and commercial buildings; environmental testing and State and Federal, Section 8, HUD and FHA inspections

A Massachusetts-licensed Home Inspector, Tom is also a member of ASHI (American Society of Home Inspectors) and FREA (Federation of Real Estate Appraisers).



848 Old Fall River Road  
North Dartmouth, MA 02747  
888.327.7400

## Communication is Key!

Anything that may delay the delivery of an inspection is very important to us. Please contact us immediately by phone at **1.800.919.8903** or by email at **[inspectorinfo@gcinspects.com](mailto:inspectorinfo@gcinspects.com)** whenever you encounter obstacles that may cause a delay.

We can then assist you in resolving the issue and provide valuable information to our clients to keep them up-to-date. Some reasons for a delayed inspection may include:

- **Incorrect Borrower or Contractor contact information**
- **Locked Gates, Lock Boxes**
- **Incorrect or Poor Directions**
- **Appointments not being met by Contractor or Borrower**

## WIN A \$50 GAS CARD TODAY!

**MAKE A REFERRAL TO GCI AND FREE GAS IS AS GOOD AS YOURS!**

GCI has launched a referral program to recruit qualified inspectors in rural areas across the country. If you know a qualified inspector who can service one of these areas, and they are accepted into the GCI network, you will receive a \$50 gas card.

For more information contact Angie Kelley, Inspector Network Coordinator at **[angie.kelley@gcinspects.com](mailto:angie.kelley@gcinspects.com)**.

## Comments & Compliments

We are always looking for feedback from the field. If you have a suggestion to make your job more efficient or have something nice to say, let us know.

We appreciate your input and look forward to hearing your thoughts and ideas.

### New! GCI DEVELOPMENTS (cont'd)

are in varying stages of construction. We realize that these inspections can sometimes be more difficult as you will be working off of someone else's information. As always, if you have any questions please don't hesitate to contact us to clarify the situation. Our toll free Customer Service group can be reached from 7:00am until 6:00pm MST at 1.800.919.8903.

## Granite Commercial Management (GCM)

Granite is proud to announce it's newest entity – **GRANITE COMMERCIAL MANAGEMENT (GCM)**. Created to more effectively capture and manage the commercial risk mitigation market, GCM will broaden Granite's platform of services, increase our inspection business by incorporating the commercial market, and augment company recognition industry-wide.

For more information on our commercial product, visit the GCM website at [www.granitecm.com](http://www.granitecm.com) or contact our Sales and Marketing Group at 1.866.710.4099 or via email at [sales@granitecm.com](mailto:sales@granitecm.com).

### Inspector Has Tough Time Getting in Front of Agents (cont'd)

*Offer to speak at other agent gatherings, such as the local association meetings, MLS weekly broker tours, and local NAR affiliate organizations -- such as CRS Council. See Realtor.org for more information on councils.*

*Consider offering CE classes to the local association at a low cost.*

*Offer to be a source for the real estate columnist(s) for your local newspapers and Internet columnists. Call or email often with ideas to offer them, such as educating readers to the difference between home inspections and home appraisals and why they shouldn't go without one.*

*Are you on the Internet in any professional directories? You should be.*

*Be careful of your attitude. Educate, but don't preach. Nobody likes to be browbeaten - especially with the truth. Remember, it's not about being right, it's about getting what you want. You want business, not converts.*

*With perseverance, your business should improve. ■*



### UPCOMING EVENTS:

GCI will be exhibiting at the **2006 Construction Expo** in Denver, CO, October 17-18, 2006.

### When in Doubt, Shoot ...

Your pictures, that is.

Photos tell the story of what is currently occurring on the jobsite, so give us the "Big Picture".



While close-in shots are great for making us aware of unusual or problem items; wider shots may be able to show us what is going on overall and highlight other items that are included within a project budget. In addition to the required "Photo Focus Items" please include photos of the following key areas so that we have a comprehensive understanding of the entire project's progress:

1. Front Elevation (Wide)
2. Rear Elevation (Wide)
3. Side Elevations
4. Living Room / Fireplace
5. Entire Kitchen
6. Master Bathroom
7. Basement / Mechanicals (If Applicable)

**NOTE:** If there are any inspection items that you have a question about on a project, please shoot additional photos and submit with your inspection report.

### Construction Inspector Review

10770 Briarwood Avenue, Suite 280  
Centennial, CO 80112  
800-919-8903

Customer Service  
800-919-8903  
[inspectorinfo@gcinspects.com](mailto:inspectorinfo@gcinspects.com)

Sales & Marketing  
866-380-9504  
[sales@gcinspects.com](mailto:sales@gcinspects.com)