



Roy Schaeffer of Providence, R.I., has registered his cat Tobias with the National Association of Real Estate Appraisers to show how easy it is to get professional certification.

## Appraiser's specialties: empty lots, mice chasing

Meet a professionally certified appraiser. Meet Tobias the cat.

The Rhode Island feline has been on the rolls of the Arizona-based National Association of Real Estate Appraisers as a "certified real estate appraiser" since September 1986. Tobias' owner, president of an appraisal company, signed up the black tabby to make a point to his staff of how easily certain trade groups hand out professional accreditation.

"In many states, you could wake up tomorrow, hang a sign on your door and you're in business as an appraiser," said Roy Schaeffer, president of Schaeffer, Bates & Co. of Providence and a member of two other trade groups. "The consumer has no way to know

who's legitimate and who's not."

The appraisal industry has been criticized for being unable to police its own members. A House subcommittee is preparing legislation that would regulate the business, a move that Tobias' Arizona trade group opposes.

"I'm 100 percent for regulation," said Schaeffer, adding that Tobias, who specializes in "surveying vacant lots," got his certification for a \$10 fee and a \$75 annual dues payment.

"P.S." said Schaeffer, "Since Tobias has been certified ... he's been offered a credit card and life insurance."

— By Jonathan Lansner/The Register