

The 89th Texas Legislature was incredibly successful for Texas REALTORS® and property owners p. 12





**SPECIAL PULLOUT** 





# Honoring the 2024 RPAC Hall of Fame Inductees

**Congratulations** to these highly dedicated leaders, who were inducted at the NAR **REALTORS®** Legislative meetings earlier this year



\$275,000 LEVEL **Bill Evans** 



\$225,000 LEVEL

• Mike Brodie COLLIN COUNTY AREA



Each

over

inductee

\$25,000

in RPAC/

**TREPAC** 

careers.

their

throughout

has invested

\$125,000 LEVEL

GR. FORT WORTH



\$100,000 LEVEL **Chance Brown** HOUSTON



\$75,000 LEVEL

Leslie Cantu TEXAS REALTORS



\$75,000 LEVEL

• Lance Lacy



\$75,000 LEVEL

**Ben Rodriguez** 

\$50,000 LEVEL

**Russell Berry** METROTEX

**Brenda Cole** METROTEX

Cade Fowler LUBBOCK

Paul French AMARILLO **Job Hammond** AUSTIN

Terri Hardee-Romere FIVE POINTS

Marvin Jolly COLLIN COUNTY AREA

**© Tony Lloyd** LUBBOCK

Sharon Morton

Mary Miner

**FIVE POINTS** 

HOUSTON

Mvra W. Oliver GR. DENTON/WISE CO.

Jennifer Parker COLLIN COUNTY AREA

**FOUR RIVERS** Hanne **Sagalowsky** METROTEX

Renae Pretty

Kay Spiva **ABILENE** 

O Jo Ann Stevens HOUSTON

Robert Wright AUSTIN

\$25,000 LEVEL

Shana Acquisto **Mandy Balch** 

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COLLIN COUNTY AREA Donna Sue ClementsOlivia Kiritsy

• Kayla Click **COLLIN COUNTY AREA** 

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**Reuben Gregorian** 

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Virginia Kettler BRYAN-COLLEGE STATION

Eliza Knapp

**Carol Knott Tefft** 

Lori Levy TEXAS REALTORS®

Nicole Lopez HOUSTON

Johnny Mowad METROTEX **Kevin Reed** 

BEAUMONT **Chaille Short** 

**Teresa Smith** LUBBOCK

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A HOME FOR

You can help your veteran

clients and their families

by learning about state

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might even save them

thousands of dollars

and a lot of stress.

THE BRAVE

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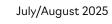
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# **CHAIRMAN'S CORNER**

#### LIKE EVERY EAGER NEW AGENT.

I was anxious for my first transaction. One day I picked up a call to the brokerage, and a man named Gary told me he was moving to Round Rock. He said he was outside one of our brokerage's listings that looked perfect for his family could someone show him the home?

A lead! I told him I'd be there in 20 minutes.

As I approached the house, I saw a white Jeep Wrangler in the driveway. Yay—a real call! As we both walked toward the front door, though, a wash of anxiety flowed over my body. Something just wasn't right about "Gary."

I blurted out, "I'll open the door, but I have to grab some flyers from my car to leave inside the home. Please go inside and I'll be right back."

I opened the door, and he stepped inside. I walked back to my car parked on the street, got in it, and closed the door. My gut was on fire; I wasn't sure what to do. As I was taking several deep breaths, "Gary" walked back out, looking agitated. I lowered my window a bit to hear him vell. "You weren't easy enough!" and he jumped in his Jeep and drove off.

I started my car, locked the doors, and realized that—despite serving for nearly nine years with the Travis County Sheriff's Office, and with all my training and years developing awareness as a female deputy patrolling remote areas of Travis County parks—I had been baited into a very dangerous situation at a vacant home.

Today, we have many tools and training opportunities to help us stay safe. But, sadly, evil people will always exist. REALTORS® are frequent targets for criminals, and you cannot eliminate threats no matter how much training you have. That's why it's so important to trust your gut. Doing so can save your life.

My intuition did not let me down that day in Round Rock. Had I bounded through the door in front of that man, I'm sure my outcome would have been different. I like to think that I would have fought him off and escaped, but even

If you haven't taken training on how to avoid and get out of dangerous situations, the time to do so is now. I also cannot stress enough that you should trust your intuition when it says it's time to get away.

Stay safe, fellow Texas REALTORS®!







#### ONE MORE THING...

My favorite podcast, Crime Junkie, has a saying to help you get out of a dangerous encounter: "Be weird. Be rude. Stay alive!" I also implore you to be prepared. That means learning and training to stay safe. Check for resources from your broker, your local association, your colleagues. texasrealestate.com/safety, self-defense classes—but don't delay; your life may depend on it!

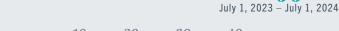
better that I didn't have to.

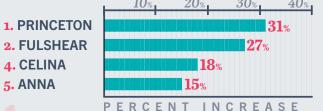
CHRISTY GESSLER

# **BIG PICTURE**

Find research and statistics at texasrealestate.com/research

# Texas cities dominate lists of fastest-growing in the U.S.





2. HOUSTON





Texas metro areas ranked by highest average apartment rental costs

1. DALLAS-FORT WORTH

2. AUSTIN

3. HOUSTON 4. SAN ANTONIO



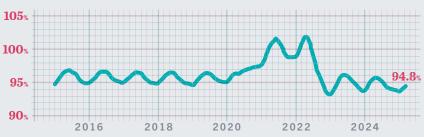


The digital communications

members of Texas REALTORS°



# RATIO OF CLOSING PRICE TO ORIGINAL LIST PRICE



# Texas has 16 TINY HOUSE communities

That's second in the U.S., behind Colorado



#### **Best Housing Markets** in the U.S. for First-**Time Homebuyers**

1. MCALLEN, TX

2. LAWTON, OK 3. KILLEEN, TX

Ranked among 180 U.S. large metro areas in a 2025 study. Factors included affordability, housing inventory/demand, projected price appreciation, and population in 20s and 30s

#### Counties with the most new housing stock in the U.S. July 1, 2023 - July 1, 2024

1. MARICOPA, AZ (38,000)

2. LOS ANGELES, CA (32,000) 2. HARRIS, TX (32,000)

4. TRAVIS, TX (22,000)

5. COLLIN COUNTY, TX (18,000)



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# INSIGHTS **\***

# Is Reddit Your Next Big **Opportunity to Connect** with Prospects?



#### Reddit can be a powerful channel for networking.

With a highly engaged user base, the forum-like platform has a topic for everything—including real estate.

Here are some ways you can get involved with the Reddit community to showcase your real estate knowledge and connect with potential clients.

#### Contribute to relevant subreddits (communities within Reddit focused on a particular topic or theme)

Use the search function to find active subreddits related to your real estate niche, geographic area, or expertise—such as r/FirstTimeHomeBuyer, r/ BastropTX, or r/RealEstateAdvice. Explore each subreddit or search within them for specific questions or topics where you can offer insights. Don't forget to upvote posts or comments you find helpful or interesting (more on why down below).

#### Share but don't spam

If all you do is post listings or other unsolicited information, you could be flagged as a spammer. Instead, focus on adding value to the conversations. Offer resources that help others and establish your credibility, like infographics from MarketViewer, neighborhood guides and news, or practical tips on staging a home.

#### Create a subreddit

Is there a topic you would like to discuss or a question you'd like answered? By engaging with the community and upvoting posts, you earn Karma points, giving you the ability to start your own subreddit. This can expand your brand awareness and provide opportunities to develop relationships.

#### Host an Ask Me Anything (AMA)

AMAs are scheduled, interactive Q&A sessions where Reddit users can ask you questions on a topic you choose. For instance, Moving to Houston? I'm a Texas REALTOR® with over 10 years of experience helping buyers find the perfect home. AMA. These sessions are a great way to build your reputation as an expert.

#### Reach out to other REALTORS®

Are you a new agent or even an experienced one looking to broaden your professional network? Consider direct messaging fellow agents or creating a subreddit specifically for real estate professionals in your area.

**IDEAS** 



### **BONUS TIP** MINE REDDIT **FOR CONTENT**

Need ideas for your blog, video channel, or newsletter? Within a subreddit, search for phrases like "How do you," "Help me," and "Where can I" to find relevant topics that resonate with your audience.







# Texans honored and appointed at the national level

Brooke Hunt [1] was honored with the NAR Distinguished Service Award—the highest accolade NAR bestows—for her commitment to advocacy and leadership over the years. For three decades, Hunt has served on numerous NAR committees, held leadership positions at the Greater Lewisville Association of REALTORS® and Texas REALTORS®, and has mentored numerous leaders at the state and national levels throughout her career.

Russell Berry [2], Carrollton, will be the 2026 NAR Region 10 Regional Vice President for Texas and Louisiana. RVPs oversee NAR's work in their respective regions and act as the representatives of the president in assigned matters. Jef Conn [3], Lubbock, will serve as the 2026 Commercial and Industry Specialties Liaison, and James Martin [4], MetroTex, will serve as the 2026 Public and Federal Issues Liaison. Liaisons are conduits between the NAR Leadership Team and their assigned committees, ensure that committees operate effectively, and help identify future committee leaders.

#### **INSIGHTS**

# Want better responses from AI? Try asking it to ask you questions



Would you start on a task without understanding the instructions? Probably not. You would ask for more explanation first. But Al doesn't work that way. It will answer even if it lacks the context it needs to produce good results. A handy workaround for this problem is to include an instruction in the initial prompt that opens the possibility of a dialog with you. You might say, "Before you begin, ask me any clarifying questions you have."

If that produces too many questions, you may need to refine your prompt or tell the AI to ask you a maximum number of questions, to ask the questions in multiple choice format, or to ask questions one at a time.

Experiment with your prompts and with asking Al to ask you questions and see if it improves the quality of the responses you get.

### **DEFINE THIS**

### metes and bounds

A legal description of the boundaries of a property, using natural or man-made landmarks.

Metes are the measurement of distances and directions between bounds, which are physical features like trees, rivers, or stone markers. Metes are generally assumed to be straight lines. A metes-and-bounds description identifies the outline of a property as if someone were walking around the edge of it.





Seth Juergens [LEFT] is Associate Director of Public Policy.

Julia Parenteau [RIGHT] is Director of Public Policy.



# THINGS YOU DON'T KNOW ABOUT THE TEXAS LEGISLATURE

To keep Texas a great place to sell, buy, and lease real estate, Texas REALTORS® spends a lot of time at the state Capitol. But what really happens in the halls of power? Your Texas REALTORS® lobby team takes us behind the scenes of the Texas Legislature.

#### IT'S NOT AS DIVISIVE AS IT SEEMS

Juergens: You may see representatives arguing at the microphones and then sharing a joke off to the side. At the end of the day, they're friends. A lot of members are just regular people who would prefer you don't call them by their title.

#### **REALTOR® DAY MAKES A SPLASH**

Parenteau: Everyone's always impressed by how we communicate, how we stick to REALTOR® issues, and how detailed our information is. Not a lot of groups go to that level of effort.

#### **REALTORS® HAVE A REPUTATION**

**Bates:** The Texas REALTORS® brand is strong; when we walk in the room, there is that gravitas there. Legislators know we are always going to shoot straight. These representatives also know REALTORS® from their districts. REALTORS® helped get them elected. They know we represent a vast number of constituents in their district.

Juergens: As the session goes on, the timing and notification system for committee next just by watching the legislative body work from the gallery.

#### WE WORK WITH TOP OFFICIALS, TOO

Bates: Part of my job is to maintain relationships with key leadership such as the lieutenant governor and the governor. We have a great relationship with the speaker's team. We want to check in about our priorities and where things are going.

#### YOU MUST ACCOUNT FOR TURNOVER

Juergens: There may be a whole new office hired since the last session. Staff are moving up, moving around, and figuring out if they like working in the Capitol. That's important to keep in mind as you explain REALTOR® positions on issues.

#### **LEGISLATORS MOVE FAST**

Parenteau: You may have a three-minute conversation with a legislator or a staff member about a bill. It doesn't matter how complex it is, the representative has to make a decision for or against it. We have to communicate quickly and succinctly. You don't get an hour to talk about policy.

#### **REALTORS® CAN TELL THE STORY BEHIND THE POLICY**

Bates: Representatives may have a position from their campaign. But they may not realize the full scope of that position. We can share with them the unintended consequences or how that stance may affect their constituents back home.

#### **BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS IS THE ENTIRE POINT**

Parenteau: That is our most important job. And we can see the results in all sorts of ways. Primarily it's information, such as when a meeting would happen. But, beyond that, it's the trust we've built so we can ask for their support or share our concerns. 1





hearings and votes becomes less reliable, so we've developed our own systems so we don't miss important discussions. We're also in constant communication with representatives and staff. If you pay close enough attention, you can get a pretty good idea of what may happen

Tray Bates is Vice President of Governmental Affairs.



# **LEGAL**

Don't Disregard This Lawsuit Add-On

Breach of fiduciary duty is a serious accusation in its own right. Here's how to avoid it.

Your real estate license requires you to put your clients' interests first. That fiduciary obligation is the highest duty recognized under law.

If your clients file a lawsuit against you, they may also allege a breach of fiduciary duty—it almost always appears alongside another claim. How can you defend yourself against this serious accusation?

Matt Ehmann and Brian Callahan, of Great American Insurance Company, explain breach of fiduciary duty and how you can avoid it.

#### LIKE NEGLIGENCE, ONLY WORSE

Breach of fiduciary duty claims arise from situations where a client has the perception that their agent was not looking out for their financial interests. Unfortunately, these claims often hinge on conflicting versions of events with little to no evidence of what was actually said or discussed.

Alleging a breach of fiduciary duty broadens the scope of the claim. It accuses you of not only being negligent—you also didn't put your client first. "It opens the door to much broader damages," Callahan says.

Breach of fiduciary duty claims are often more fraught, adds Ehmann. That's because they're filed by former clients instead of third parties. "There's personal feelings involved."

Callahan gives the following examples of breach of fiduciary duty:

- Disclosing confidential information to the seller, such as your buyer client's highest offer price
- Not bringing all offers to your seller client's attention in order to close more quickly
- Glossing over the details of a buyer's backup offer with your seller client
- Dissuading buyer clients from getting inspections or walkthroughs with detailed explanations from qualified experts.

#### WAYS TO PROTECT YOURSELF

A breach of fiduciary duty claim functions similarly to a negligence claim. If the allegation is a failure to disclose a leaky roof, for example, you would defend yourself using emails and documentation to show you did tell the client about it or try to prove you didn't know the roof leaked.

To help avoid or mitigate these situations, Ehmann and Callahan suggest that agents consider the following:

- Keep the decision-making processes in the hands of clients wher-
- Keep the transaction fully transparent. Share all communications with clients and ensure that they receive all offers, reports, and other documents.
- Refrain from offering opinions on matters outside of your competency or matters for which you lack adequate information.
- Document, document, document. Avoid the "he said/she said" problem by creating a paper trail of all material communications with the client and all events that occur during the transaction. To the extent possible, confirm conversations with clients with follow-up emails and/or have the client sign off on any changes in writing.

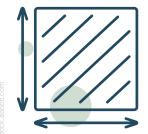
**FACT OR FICTION?** 

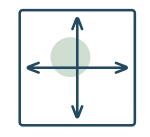
The TREC seller's disclosure form is the most comprehensive disclosure available.

**FICTION:** While the TREC form meets statutorily required minimums of disclosure, the Texas REALTORS® Seller's Disclosure Notice (TXR 1406) includes additional prompts and scenarios to provide more information and clarity. There is also a simple way to add new information after the form is signed by using Update to Seller's Disclosure Notice (TXR 1418), if the seller becomes aware of any new information.

I represent a seller whose existing appraisal has one number for the square footage while the appraisal district has another number. How should I report this to potential buyers?

If you list the square footage of a property, you should always quote the information source and let prospective buyers know if you have any reason to know that the information is false or inaccurate. Use the Notice of Information from Other Sources (TXR 2502) to report this information. In this scenario, you could report both square footage numbers and cite the source for each number.





#### YOUR FORMS

# Seller's Invitation to Buyer to Submit New Offer (TXR 1926)







When one or more offers come in that the seller does not want to accept, the seller can use Seller's Invitation to Buyer to Submit New Offer (TXR 1926). Rather than making a counteroffer, this form lets the buyer know what different terms would be more acceptable to the seller. The form explains that it is not a counteroffer—the property remains on the market and the seller may accept another offer. The form can be used in residential, commercial, and farm & ranch transactions. This is one of more than 140 forms available to members of Texas REALTORS®.

### **TRANSLATIONS UPDATED FOR 4 FORMS**

Revised Spanish and Vietnamese translations for four Texas REALTORS® forms are now available:

- Intermediary Relationship Notice (TXR 1409)
- One to Four Family Residential Contract (Resale)
- Notice of Buyer's Termination of Contract (TXR 1902)
- Information About Brokerage Services (TXR 2501)

Visit texasrealestate.com/realtorforms to access these updated translations.

Remember: These translations are for informational purposes only and may not be used in place of English versions.

To clarify REALTORS®' duties under Article 10 of the REALTORS® Code of Ethics, NAR modified Standard of Practice 10-5. Article 10 prohibits REALTORS® from denying equal professional services and employment opportunities based on race, color, religion, sex, disability, familial status, national origin, sexual orientation, or gender identity. The change to the standard of practice specifies that the definition of harassment applies when REALTORS® are operating in their professional capacity.



Matt Ehmann is Vice President of Professional Liability Programs, and **Brian Callahan is Financial Products** Claims Director, at Great American Insurance Company, Great American works with The Herbert H. Landy Insurance Agency, a Texas REALTORS® risk management partner.

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# JUMP/ INI

What Every REALTOR® Should Know About Backyard Pools.

BY ALISHA AUSTIN

he pandemic led to a surge in backyard entertainment, and swimming pools quickly became one of the most sought-after additions.

Demand skyrocketed, pushing prices up, creating material shortages, and sparking a rush to hire project managers.

But not every homeowner who installed a pool was ready for the long-term cost and maintenance. Now that public pools have reopened and demand has cooled, some sellers may be second-guessing the value of their backyard pools. Buyers may have questions about what they are getting into, as well. Basic pool knowledge is important for real estate professionals who deal with these properties.

You don't need to become a pool expert. In fact, you should always refrain from operating outside your area of expertise. But gaining a foundational understanding, refreshing your vendor list, and reviewing key portions of contracts can make you more confident—and more effective.

# REPRESENTING SELLERS: Ask the sellers for information

Asking a few basic questions about features, maintenance, installation dates, and warranties is a great start. Especially if they lived through the pool-building process, the sellers are sure to know about the selections they made and other helpful details. Even if the pool already existed when they purchased the property, the sellers' answers can provide important information for marketing and, possibly, disclosures.

I ask my sellers to put together an "introduction to your new pool" for buyers. They can include details like the type of pool (chlorine, saltwater, or UV), the type of filtration, how deep the pool is, whether it's heated, the type of deck material, and other aspects buyers will want to know. I also prep them for the possibility of a pool walk-through with the buyers to help the new owners.

# REPRESENTING BUYERS: Ask the sellers for information

It's also helpful to ask the sellers for important details when working with buyers interested in a pool property. I not only will ask the other agent for any available information from the sellers, but I will also find out if the sellers are open to a walkthrough with my clients. If there's no walkthrough or information—and if my buyers don't have previous experience owning a pool—

my closing gift is usually "pool school" from a trusted provider.

When working with buyers who've never owned a pool, it's important they consider factors like utility expenses for water and electricity, liability insurance, and safety issues. Remember, it's not your role to provide specific advice about matters outside of your expertise, but you can bring up these topics to ensure your clients can work with the appropriate professionals to understand the full picture of pool ownership.

# Have you reviewed the One to Four Family Residential Contract regarding the portions that pertain to pools?

Make sure you understand the language of Paragraph 2 regarding

improvements and accessories that convey in the sale. Many sellers don't want to take all the patio furniture or are willing to negotiate including some of it in the sale. Outdoor speakers, TVs, and cameras have become common. Once a buyer sees these items, they're very likely to want them. But are they built-in? If not, is the seller willing to include them in the sale? Figuring out whether they convey requires some investigation and may require a conversation.

# QUESTIONS ABOUT CONTRACTS?

Call the Texas REALTORS® Legal Hotline at 512-480-8200. While hotline attorneys cannot give legal advice regarding specific transactions or factual situations, you can get answers to questions about how contract provisions work from a general perspective.

Can you identify "swimming pool equipment and maintenance accessories?" Note that most pools have controller apps, which are also listed in that paragraph. There may also be parts of the contract that come into play with lender-required repairs and smart devices. These details matter—whether you're helping a seller prep their listing or guiding a buyer through an offer. Having answers—or knowing where to get them—is important.

#### Make sure you have an updated reference list

While you shouldn't put yourself out as a pool expert, you can be the "source of the source." Reach out to neighbors, past clients, and other professionals for trusted pool people. It can be helpful to collect resources for:

- Pool maintenance
- Pool inspections
- Repairs (plumbing, decking, plaster, tile, masonry)
- Pool supply stores
- Residential service contracts with pool coverage.

A pool can be a dream feature—but only when the owners understand what they are getting and what it takes to maintain it.

Helping your clients navigate that reality is part of the job. It could be the difference between a costly headache and backyard oasis.



ALISHA AUSTIN is a real estate instructor and the broker-owner of Homes in Heels in Round Rock. She was the Texas REALTORS® 2023 Educator of the Year and holds 15 real estate designations and certifications. A passionate "pool person," Austin teaches the course "Pool Crack or Concrete Cancer."



# WHAT'S THE DEAL WITH CONCRETE IN POOLS?

You may have heard of problems with the concrete in some pools built in recent years. This has been making headlines, especially in Central Texas. The issue is due to an alkali-silica reaction (you'll see the acronym ASR or the slang term concrete cancer) that can cause cracks or structural problems in the pool.

Not every pool built in recent years in Central Texas is affected, and there are still many lawsuits making their way through the courts. There also have been reports that the problem may be present in other areas of the state or even with other types of construction, but that, too, is not yet clear.

Your role isn't to diagnose or reassure. Never say that something you see is ASR. Never say that ASR is nothing to worry about. And never provide your opinion about the seriousness of a specific condition with a pool. That's outside your expertise. Stick to what you do know, and always guide clients to professionals who can give them the answers.

The issues related to ASR do not change the basics. Sellers must disclose known defects. Buyers may come in with concerns. When ASR comes up, lean on your broker, encourage professional inspections, and keep your list handy for pool vendors.

# BIG WINS FOR TEXAS REAL ESTATE AND PROPERTY OWNERS FROM THE 89<sup>TH</sup> LEGISLATURE



#### **WANT MORE DETAILS?**

Download the Real Estate Wins from the 89th Legislative Session booklet with summaries of all 60 REALTOR®supported bills.



The 89th Texas Legislature was one of the most successful ever for Texas REALTORS®, with 60 association-supported bills passing that will make a positive difference in real estate transactions, property ownership, and the operations of small businesses.

These new laws bring more clarity to how you serve your clients and reduce costs to run your business. Texas REALTORS® also helped pass significant property-tax savings and lower business taxes—measures that mean Texas property and business owners keep more of their hard-earned money.

Here are some of the highlights from the 89<sup>th</sup> Legislature. Texas REALTORS® will share additional information on these and other new laws in the coming months.

#### **MODERNIZING REAL ESTATE AGENCY LAW** SB 1968 - Effective January 1, 2026

This bill updates real estate agency law by ensuring that rules reflect modern practices and provide more clarity to brokers,

agents, clients, and customers. Among its provisions, this law: ■ Eliminates subagency in all real estate transactions. That includes residential, commercial, vacant land, farm & ranch—every type of real estate transaction. Subagency—typically when a license holder shows properties to an unrepresented buyer and thus owes fiduciary duties to the seller—created confusion for consumers

and agents alike. This change gives consumers greater clarity on their relationship with agents, offers more choices in how consumers work with agents, and makes agent-client responsibilities more transparent. Requires all agents—not just REALTORS®—to have

- a written agreement with prospective buyers of residential real property:
  - Before showing a property to a prospective buyer.
    - Can be a full representation agreement or a showing-only agreement without representation.
    - The showing-only agreement must be nonexclusive and expire within 14 days.
  - Before presenting an offer to purchase on behalf of the buver.
    - A representation agreement is always required before presenting an offer to purchase.
    - If you entered into a showing-only agreement and the prospective buyer wants you to perform any other acts of real estate brokerage, you must enter into a separate representation agreement with the buyer.
- Expands the requirement for taking a broker responsibility course to all brokers. Previously, the course was mandatory only for designated brokers, supervising brokers, and sales agents who supervise other license holders. The new law also requires all broker applicants to take a broker responsibility course.
- Recognizes a category of "associated brokers." This will allow TREC to provide a notice to the sponsoring broker when an affiliated associated broker is the subject of an investigation.

Texas REALTORS®—recognizing a need to update some aspects of real estate license law to address areas of confusion or practices that were out of date—worked with elected officials to promote the best interests of consumers and license holders. Association leadership saw this legislative session as a perfect opportunity to make positive changes for license holders and the clients and customers they serve. Texas REALTORS® will provide additional information to members about SB 1968 prior to the law becoming effective at the beginning of next year.

#### **REGULATION OF PROPERTY OWNER ASSOCIATIONS**

SB 711 - Effective September 1, 2025

This new law builds on progress made two sessions ago when a new law brought more transparency and accountability to homeowners associations. SB 711 extends those same protections to condominium associations by requiring better information on management certificates, adding condo association information to hoa.texas.gov, requiring association information be acces-

**NUMBERS** 

# 9,014 bills filed

89<sup>™</sup> LEGISLATURE — **REGULAR SESSION** 

13% of filed bills passed

2.534 bills and joint resolutions monitored by

6 out of 6 Texas REALTORS® priority bills passed

Texas REALTORS®

60 Texas REALTORS®supported bills passed

150 bills were opposed by Texas REALTORS®

O bills opposed by Texas REALTORS® passed

sible online to members, and limiting the fees for condo resale certificates. This means greater transparency for existing property owners and potential buyers, providing enhanced fairness in HOA operations.

#### MORE TRANSPARENCY FOR **PUBLIC IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS**

SB 1106 - Effective January 1, 2026

When this law takes effect, PID assessments will be included on central appraisal districts' tax transparency websites so that property owners have a full picture of the taxes and fees assessed on their properties. Some central appraisal districts are already adding this information to their sites.

Another bill, HB 2468, which went into effect June 20, eliminates some liability for sellers when providing the required PID notice to potential buyers if the PID information was not properly filed with the county. In those cases, the buyer can't cancel the contract solely because the seller didn't provide the PID notice.

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#### HELP FOR PROPERTY OWNERS IN CAMERON COUNTY

HB 3680 gives county officials discretion in determining whether a property owner's land meets the requirements of the model subdivision rules designed to prevent development of colonias—housing developments typically along the Texas-Mexico border where residents lack services such as clean drinking water and adequate sewage treatment. This targeted legislation maintains all the protections for property buyers while ensuring landowners aren't trapped paying taxes on land they can't legally sell. This bill goes into effect on September 1, 2025.

#### **IMPROVEMENTS RELATED TO FLOOD NOTICES FOR LEASES**

SB 2349 - Effective September 1, 2025

After September 1, landlords and property managers will no longer need to provide a tenant flood notice for leases of less than 30 days or in leaseback situations of 90 days or less. This law also provides additional methods for providing the notice, no longer requiring a separate document, and the document containing the notice must now be signed by both the landlord and the tenant.

#### **MORE PROPERTY TAX RELIEF**

Texas REALTORS® has been a driving force in property tax relief for many years. This session, the association played an integral role in efforts to provide even more savings. If approved by voters in a state constitutional amendment election in November, these changes take effect retroactively, providing property tax relief for the 2025 tax year:

- The standard homestead exemption will increase from \$100,000 to \$140,000. (SB 4/SJR 2; Proposition 13)
- The homestead exemption for elderly and disabled homeowners will increase from \$10,000 to \$60,000. This gives those eligible a total \$200,000 homestead exemption. (SB 23/SJR 85; Proposition 11)
- The business personal property tax exemption will

see a huge increase, from \$2,500 to \$125,000. This will encourage investment in income-producing properties and will provide some small business owners a significant amount of tax savings. (HB 9/ HJR 1; Proposition 9)



Texas REALTORS\* Chairman Christy Gessler [left] and members of the Texas REALTORS® staff with Gov. Abbott at a bill signing related to property tax relief.

#### **INCREASING HOUSING AVAILABILITY AND AFFORDABILITY**

Texas REALTORS® leaders and committees have been studying housing availability and affordability challenges and working toward solutions. Several pieces of legislation passed this session start to address these issues, including the following:

- In cities with populations over 150,000 in counties over 300,000, SB 840 makes it easier to convert office buildings that are at least five years old to mixed-use or multifamily residential, and to build multifamily and mixed-use development in commercial zones. It also limits some costs to housing development by prohibiting costly, unnecessary rezoning meetings, impact studies, and fees.
- HB 24 changes how Texas cities amend zoning codes and zones on specific parcels by streamlining notice requirements for comprehensive zoning changes and updating posted signage requirements, and by raising the bar for neighbor protests of zoning changes on specific parcels or groups of parcels. This will make zoning amendments simpler and allow for housing developments to start more quickly.
- Landowners with at least 5 acres of unplatted land in the 20 largest Texas cities will be able to bypass municipal minimum lot size requirements and build homes on as small as 3,000-square-foot lots. Higher density development can increase housing availability, which may also help with affordability. The bill still preserves some local control over what can be built. (SB 15)
- A law requiring that cities allow for some development of new HUD-code manufactured homes increases affordable housing options. This ensures broader access to housing while preserving certain local controls and protections. (SB 785)

#### **RESTRICTIONS ON FOREIGN ACQUISITION OF PROPERTY**

After an unsuccessful attempt in 2023, state legislators once again brought proposals to bolster state security by restricting real estate purchases and leases by certain foreign entities and individuals. SB 17, which goes into effect September 1, 2025, has the following provisions:

- ◆ Prohibits certain real property purchases by countries—and entities and individuals from those countries—deemed a risk to national security.
- Includes countries named in one of the last three Annual Threat Assessments of the U.S. Intelligence Community and any additional countries identified by the Texas governor.
- Provides civil penalties, creates a criminal offense, and gives investigation and enforcement authority to the Texas attorney general.
- Restricts entities and individuals from the designated countries to leases of less than one year.
- Includes an exemption for all legal U.S. residents to purchase a homestead.
- Does not require real estate professionals to screen purchasers.

While Texas REALTORS® remained neutral on this bill, the association has been engaged with legislators on this issue since it was introduced last session to ensure real estate professionals and their clients are protected from liability and to defend fair housing laws. Even with the passage of SB 17, REALTORS® should always follow fair-housing laws and the Code of Ethics regarding equal treatment of protected classes. At press time, a lawsuit has been filed challenging the new law. Texas REALTORS® is monitoring legal challenges and rule-making as the bill is rolled out and will consider whether additional notices in Texas REALTORS® forms are needed regarding this law.

#### YOUR ASSOCIATION IS WORKING FOR YOU!

REALTORS° and association staff testified at dozens of committee hearings during the 89th Legislature and prior to the session. Involvement in committee hearings, advocacy such as REALTOR® Day at the Texas Capitol, support of political candidates through TREPAC, and many other efforts contribute to the ability of Texas REALTORS° to help shape the laws that support a strong real estate industry and protect private property rights.

















# 89TH LEGISLATURE REALTOR® CHAMPIONS

Texas REALTORS® proudly recognizes these elected officials for their dedication to real estate consumers and private property rights during the 89th Texas Legislature.



GOVERNOR **Greg Abbott** 



LT. GOVERNOR **Dan Patrick** 



THE HOUSE **Dustin Burrows** 

#### TEXAS SENATE



Sen. Charles Schwertner R-Georgetown



Sen. Bryan Hughes



Sen. Paul Bettencourt R-Houston

#### TEXAS HOUSE



Rep. Angie Chen Button R-Garland



Rep. Sam Harless **R-Spring** 



Rep. Cody Harris



Rep. Todd Hunter R-Corpus Christi



Rep. Chris Turner D-Grand Prairie

#### **ADDITIONAL LAWS THAT** AFFECT REAL ESTATE

Other Texas REALTORS®-supported bills include new laws to:

- Amend the Property Code to comprehensively revise procedures for evictions, providing more-uniform processes that balance the interests of landlords and tenants while ensuring due process.
- Amend the Property Code and Penal Code to allow property owners or their agents to request immediate removal of unauthorized occupants (squatters) by law enforcement, provided that specific conditions are met.
- Prohibit HOAs from fining property owners for discolored vegetation or turf during times of watering restrictions imposed by municipalities or water suppliers.
- Prohibit HOAs from prohibiting property owners or residents from inviting governmental officials or political candidates to meet in common areas.
- Clarify that solar roof tiles are included in the definition of "solar energy device" under the Property Code, preventing HOA restrictions on them.
- Invest in water infrastructure to serve a growing Texas population in order to maintain healthy real estate markets.
- Invest in workforce development to ensure economic growth in the state. 📆

#### IT'S NOT OVER YET

The governor called a special session of the 89th Legislature that began July 21 and will include many issues related to real estate. Topics include additional work on propertytax relief, protection from deed fraud, and other matters that affect real estate. Rest assured that Texas REALTORS® is engaged and looking out for the interests of members and property owners.





# 

How to help clients slither out of snake encounters.

#### BY KELLIE BARTLETT

IF A SNAKE SHOWED UP at an open house or as your clients were preparing their yard for sale, would you know what to do?

Jerrod Tynes, agent at Monument Realty's Rockwall office, doesn't just sell houses; he sells snakes and teaches about them as a college professor of herpetology. He comes from a real estate family and has helped identify and remove many reptiles on building sites or listed properties. "I've long been the person that friends and family call to come get something out of their dryer trap, garage, attic, barn, or whatever it is," Tynes said.

#### **Learn Which Snakes Live Near You**

Texas is home to 115 species and subspecies of snakes—more than any other state—and 15 of them are potentially harmful to people: coral snakes, cottonmouths, three kinds of copperhead, and 10 varieties of rattlesnake.

Fortunately, you aren't going to have all of those in your area. "The best thing to do is know the two to four venomous species that are in your county and be able to recognize those at different ages," Tynes said. It's important to know what a snake looks like when it's young and as an adult, because many snakes change their appearance as they mature. "Young cotton mouths, for

example, are banded. They're not solid black or solid green, like we typically see when they're adults. And young copperheads have a very bright yellow tail because they use that to lure prey."

Tynes recommends finding a Facebook snake ID group that covers your area. "There are a lot of really good administrators who monitor those," he said. "Somebody can snap a picture, upload it to social media, and within seconds might have a pretty accurate identification." Plus, just scrolling through the posts shows you which snakes are nearby. And it may be reassuring that so many of them are considered harmless.

#### Do Not Touch

Tynes's top tip for handling snakes? Don't. "Most bites occur when someone is trying to pick up the snake or mess with it. You're putting yourself in more danger, especially if it's venomous," he said. That's even true after the snake is dead. "Let's say someone kills a copperhead. If I grab that thing wrong and the fangs accidentally puncture the base of its jaw, they'll go through the jaw and into my hand. I can get envenomed from that snake post-mortem.

"If you don't know what you're doing, you don't want to

pick up a snake," even if it's nonvenomous, he said. "The Texas rat snake is probably the most likely species that anybody would encounter, and while it's not venomous, it can certainly draw blood."

#### Wait It Out

"If you can leave it alone, leave it alone," Tynes said. "It'll be gone within probably 30 minutes." Snakes are shy and sensitive to vibrations, so they don't like to be in humans' way. "They're more scared of us than we are of them."

#### Call For Backup

If you must move the snake, call someone who is experienced with snake removal. "Have a couple of folks in your contact list you could call" so you'll be ready, Tynes advised. Depending on where you are, police, animal control, or Texas Parks and Wildlife might respond to your call, he said, but it's also good to find people in your area who are snake enthusiasts. "Most of us that are into reptiles are willing to drop what we're doing and go save a snake." Types has sometimes responded to posts on the NextDoor app and says local science museums, zoos, colleges, or even high school science departments could also be good resources.

#### Live and Let Live

All snakes are beneficial. Rat snakes are known as the "farmer's friend," but even snakes that don't help keep the rodent population in check play important roles in their environment. And humans often build right next to or on top of that environment. "We all like to live up against woods or next to a creek. So, with our clients who are in a neighborhood that backs up to something like a forest or desert or park, we see what is called the 'edge effect'—the line where the two ecosystems cross is going to have the highest propensity to see a variety of different species." Tynes encourages enjoying that variety from a distance and, whenever possible, giving our snake neighbors the chance to slip away in peace. 🔀

KELLIE BARTLETT is assistant editor for Texas REALTORS °.

#### IN CASE OF **EMERGENCY**

If someone is bitten by a snake, the American Red Cross says to call 9-1-1 immediately and keep the person still and calm, with the injured area lower than the heart. While waiting for help to arrive, wash the bite with soap and water and cover it in a clean, dry dressing. The Red Cross cautions not to apply ice or a tourniquet and not to cut or suction the wound. Don't try to catch the snake, but Tynes says if you can take a picture of it, that may help emergency personnel.



#### **HOW OWNERS CAN MAKE HOMES LESS APPEALING TO SNAKES**

One of the best ways to deal with snakes is to make a property less appealing for them to visit in the first place. Snakes can't control their internal temperature, so they have to move to warmer or cooler spots as the outside temperature changes. Removing access to snake-friendly shelter can discourage them from lingering on your clients' property. Pay particular attention to anything stacked against the house or fence that could provide good cover. "A lot of us like to store bricks behind our house that match the house. Well, that's a really great place for snakes because it's essentially a concrete insulator. It helps them cool off in the summer, and it stays relatively warm in the winter.

"Around the house, close separations between the roof line and places where they can weasel their way in. If it can fit its head in it, the snake will be able to get in there."

But the main thing that attracts snakes is rodents, so anything that makes a home hospitable to rats and mice will also encourage the snakes that feed on them. "If you store animal food on the property, that has the potential to bring in mice, and mice are going to attract snakes."

One thing snakes particularly dislike, Tynes said, is cedar. They can't stand the smell of it "to the point where you cannot keep captive snakes on cedar bedding, because it will kill them." He suggests using cedar mulch in flowerbeds and sprinkling a small amount of it around the foundation of a house, if your clients want to discourage snakes.



**JERROD TYNES** is happy to help identify 2 Rat Snake snakes. Send a photo to jerrodtynes@ monumentstar.com

#### **ANSWER** KEY:

- 8 Copperhead 6 Coral Snake
- 4 Garter Snake
- 5 Hognose Snake
- 7 Milk Snake
- 3 Rattlesnake
- 1 Ring-Necked Snake



Texas is home to more than 1.4 million veterans—6.7% of the population.

#### **START WITH THESE PUBLICATIONS**

Department of Veterans Affairs, Federal Benefits for Veterans, Dependents, Survivors, and Caregivers, 2025 Edition.



Texas Veterans Commission, Texas State Veterans Benefits.



# Rebecca McMahon wants her veteran clients to have a better homebuying experience than she did.

In 2005, McMahon and her husband had just finished serving in the Marine Corps and were excited to buy a home in Texas. "We were completely unfamiliar with our veterans benefits," she says. "We just called the number on the *for sale* sign."

The transaction was chaotic and stressful, she recalls. Only later did they learn about the state and federal programs that would have made the process much easier and more affordable.

"At the time, I was trying to find a new path after the Marine Corps," she says. "I thought that if I got into real estate, I could help other veterans. I wasn't educated on homestead exemptions or disabled veteran benefits or any of those things. I didn't learn about them until I took real estate courses." For example, McMahon didn't know she would have qualified for a VA funding fee exemption. She had already paid the fees but later secured a refund.

After almost 20 years in real estate, serving veterans has become a specialty for the sales agent with North Pointe Group-Real in Flower Mound. Colleagues and contacts will refer to her veteran clients who believe they can't use their benefits or could never buy a house. "It often turns out that the information they were given was wrong, and we can absolutely get them into the home they want. It's just about knowing the processes and benefits. This is why we specialize in veteran benefits and military relocations."

Regardless of how often you work with veterans, McMahon recommends learning more about the benefits and resources available to these clients. Your help could save them thousands of dollars and a lot of stress.

#### ${\bf Start\ Your\ Basic\ Training\ with\ Federal\ Veterans\ Benefits}$

If you want to better serve veterans, you're going to need to become familiar with their benefits. The Department of Veterans Affairs publication *Federal Benefits for Veterans, Dependents, Survivors, and Caregivers* is a good place to start.

Benefits.va.gov is another essential resource, McMahon says. While you will not be helping your veteran clients secure VA loans, it is important to be knowledgeable to explain the basics to them. However, you should be aware that TREC Rule 537.11(b) prohibits you from practicing law or giving opinions on the legal effect of contract forms or instruments that may affect title to real estate. Therefore, if the client has more detailed questions of this nature, it is best to refer them to an attorney who can provide the legal advice they need.

The Center for REALTOR® Development offers the Military Relocation Professional certification to REALTORS® who complete a one-day course online or in-person. Coursework includes learning about the VA loan process as well as information to serve active-duty clients and their families.

#### Train on These State Programs

The Texas Veterans Land Board offers home loan and land loan programs for qualifying veterans, explains Jimmy Smaragdis, Director of Marketing and Outreach.

VLB partners with lenders around the state to offer veterans a market-competitive interest rate on their VA, FHA, or conventional home loan, Smaragdis says. VLB offers an even lower rate to veterans with a qualifying service-connected disability.

Veterans can receive up to \$806,500 on a fixed-rate loan for up to 30 years, plus little to no down payment. Loan officers with VLB's lending partners can help veterans confirm their eligibility and apply for the loans. Veterans can use the loans for existing homes or new construction, Smaragdis explains. As of February, VLB has worked on 104,523 loans for Texas veterans, totaling over \$13.8 billion.

The Texas Veterans Land Board also offers land loans to help veterans buy raw land. A veteran can receive up to \$150,000; if two qualifying veterans are married, they can receive up to \$225,000 toward their purchase. The loans require a minimum down payment of 5%. If the veteran has past credit issues, a higher

Rebecca McMahon

Jimmy Smaragdis

#### TEXAS PROGRAMS YOU SHOULD KNOW

Texas State Affordable
Housing Corporation is
a nonprofit created by
the Texas Legislature.
Its Texas Homes for
Heroes program helps
veterans with down
payments and offers
fixed rate home loans:
tsahc.org/homebuyersrenters/homes-fortexas-heroes-program

The Texas Legislature created the Veterans Housing Assistance Program to help veterans with home financing: glo.texas.gov/ veterans/home-loans

The Veteran's Land Loan Program can offer qualified borrowers up to \$150,000 to buy land: glo.texas.gov/veterans

The Texas Veterans Portal gathers federal and state resources in one easy-to-access site online: veterans. portal.texas.gov

**SOURCES:** Texas General Land Office, TSAHC, Texas Veterans Commission

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Approximately 85% of veterans are not utilizing their benefits.



#### **WHY USE VA HOME LOANS?**

- Little to no down payment
- No loan limit
- No mortgage insurance costs
- No minimum credit score
- Comparatively low interest rates
- Access to 100% equity if the home is paid off
- No funding fee for eligible veterans and surviving spouses
- Can be used to buy a home or condo, build a home, refinance, or buy a multiunit residence.

**SOURCE:** Department of Veterans Affairs

down payment may be required. "We don't want to tell a veteran no unless we have to," Smaragdis says. VLB has worked on 136,733 land loans for Texas veterans, totaling over \$2.9 billion.

VLB offers a TREC-approved continuing education course so agents and brokers can become more familiar with these programs. The hour-long class is held in-person and online. VLB has outreach representatives who schedule courses. "Agents may not be familiar with

our different programs and how they work. This really helps them have a better understanding. They can not only better serve their clients, but they also can promote themselves with it, saying "I have gone through the

#### Recruit Knowledgeable Partners

VLB course," Smaragdis says.

McMahon says it's valuable to make connections with professionals who have experience working with VA loans and benefits. "It's really important to have those partners in place," she says. "You want somebody who knows about the VA funding fee exemptions, for example. That fee is almost always going to be waived."

Meeting with potential lenders can also help you assist veterans. When McMahon is considering working with a new lender, she vets them by asking about the last circular they read. "If they cannot tell me what a circular is, I know they don't do enough VA work," she explains. "Circulars are very important documents that notify everyone of changes to VA loans and processes. A lot of people don't keep up to date on those. That's a red flag for me."

You can find VLB's lending partners at glo.texas.gov/veterans/home-loans/ find-lender.

You can also help your existing professional contacts, such as fellow

agents or lenders, become more veteran-friendly by inviting them to learn more. Continuing education classes, seminars, and webinars can offer an overview to real estate professionals.

#### Educate Your Clients-They Could Use It

If a lender can't tell

me what a circular

is, I know they don't

do enough VA work.

—Rebecca McMahon

McMahon remembers being briefed on her veterans benefits before the end of her service, but she had forgotten the details when it came time to purchase a home. She says it's safe to

> assume your veteran clients are not fully aware of everything that's available to them.

> "I remember hearing the phrase zero down and thinking, 'Oh, good: I don't have to come

to the closing table with money," she says. "It wasn't explained to us about earnest money, the option fee, inspections, and everything else."

It's important to ask every client if they served—spouses may be able to use their benefits in the transaction. Clients who are surviving spouses of deceased veterans or soldiers missing in action or prisoners of war may also be eligible.

Does your veteran client have a disability? Approximately 29% of Texas veterans do, according to a 2024 Texas Workforce Investment Council publication. They may be entitled to additional benefits.

Today McMahon offers her buyers the walkthrough she wishes she had. "We do a thorough consultation and explain their benefits," she says. "We go through all these different questions. I share with them our buyer's guide and the VA manual. We talk about everything related to VA loans and the process, earnest money, and the closing so they're informed before starting the process."

JOE OLIVIERI is Content Specialist for Texas REALTOR®.

#### ADDRESS THEIR MISCONCEPTIONS

There are many misconceptions about veterans benefits and programs, Rebecca McMahon says. Some of the information is outdated or misunderstood, while other ideas are completely incorrect. Even your veteran clients themselves may not have all the information.

"Bad information has spread for years," she says. "Real estate agents, lenders, and title reps have been trying to fight it and separate the myths from the facts." Here are facts you can share with your clients.

#### Veterans cannot waive appraisals

This was a hot topic during the pandemic-era housing market. Veterans using VA loans cannot waive an appraisal. However, veterans can offer to pay the difference between the appraised value and the contract price of a home if the appraisal comes in lower than the agreed-upon purchase price, but the veteran must disclose the source of the cash used to pay the excess amount and such amount must not be from borrowed funds except as approved by the VA. "You can't waive it, but you can pay it," says McMahon.

VA appraisals don't take longer than regular appraisals Data shows VA appraisal timelines are comparable to appraisals for other loan types. "In 2023, VA appraisal timelines averaged seven business days," McMahon says.

#### VA appraisals don't always come in low

Ninety percent of initial VA purchase appraisals met or exceeded the contract sales price in the 2023 fiscal year, according to the Department of Veterans Affairs.

#### VA appraisals aren't set in stone

VA buyers can appeal through a reconsideration of value, also called a VA Tidewater. "This creates opportunities for the appraiser and borrower to add market data for additional consideration in the appraisal process," McMahon says.

#### Lenders like lending to veterans

According to the Department of Veterans Affairs, the typical veteran borrower has an average credit score of 721, a gross income of over \$9.400 a month, and nearly \$60,000 in assets. In 2023, the typical veteran home loan borrower had a downpayment over \$80,000.

Veterans don't need a minimum credit score to get a VA loan There is no VA guideline on a minimum credit score, McMahon says. It's up to individual lenders to decide. While some lenders might require a 620 FICO score or higher, others might accept lower scores, potentially with additional financial scrutiny or higher interest rates. It's recommended to check with multiple lenders to understand their specific credit score requirements and how they may impact loan terms.

VA loans can be used for homes at almost any price point McMahon knows of veterans using VA loans to purchase million-dollar houses. Veterans with full entitlement can borrow as much as a lender will approve, and there's no VA-imposed limit.

#### Veterans can now pay commissions

This changed following the NAR settlement last year, McMahon says. Veterans can now pay their agents' commissions.

### ISRAEL SUSTER, Attorney

- Disputes between Managers & Owners.
- Disputes and Litigation Regarding Sale of Homes and Commercial Properties, including Fraud and DTPA Claims. Litigation stemming from foreclosure sales.
- Representation of Owners and Managers in Disputes and Litigation involving Residential and Commercial Properties.
- Tenant Claims, Suits, Evictions and Appeals.
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Visit texasrealestate.com/ magazinesubmission or scan the code to see the current topics we're working on or to suggest a topic of your own.

> Note: Not all submissions are quaranteed to be published

# TEXAS HOMESELLERS



# Who They Are and What They Want

The previous issue of Texas REALTOR® featured survey results about Texas homebuyers. This issue highlights homesellers in Texas. Responses are from NAR's nationwide homebuyer and seller survey and include homesellers who also purchased a primary residence between July 2023 and June 2024. \*Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding or other responses not listed.

### Top reasons for selling



Move closer to friends/family



Job relocation





Home too large



Neighborhood became less desirable



of sellers did not offer incentives to attract buyers\*

\*Down 5 points from 2023

#### **MOST FREQUENT INCENTIVES:**



warranty



closing costs

**Credit for** repairs/





% OF SELLERS REDUCED THEIR PRICE ONCE BEFORE

**AS QUICKLY AS** 

**POSSIBLE** 



38% OF HOMES SOLD FOR



or more



{\*Up 7 points from 2023}



How quickly

sellers need to sell

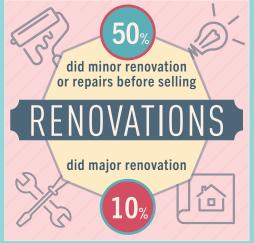
IN A REASONABLE

TIME FRAME

REDUCED % THEIR PRICE TWO OR MORE TIMES

THEIR HOME SOLD







# OF SELLERS USED AN **AGENT OR BROKER**

3% sold their homes to a homebuying company

### **Most important factor** when choosing agent



#### How seller found agent



3% Referred by another real estate agent

**2**% Referred

by employer or

**27**% Used agent previously

**7**% Website

2% Open house 12% Other

contact info on For Sale/Open House sign 1% Walked into or called office relocation company

2% Saw agent

**6**% Personal contact by agent

### What sellers want most from real estate agents



potential buvers Price home

home to sell for more

14% Help find buyer for home Find ways to fix up

### Level of service provided by agent



A broad range

of services \*

{\*Up 7 points from 2023}

A limited set

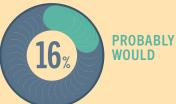
of services

# the MLS and performed

### **Number of agents contacted** before selecting one







**RECOMMENDED** 25% THEIR AGENT TO OTHERS 4 OR **MORE TIMES** 



**RECOMMENDED** THEIR AGENT TO OTHERS

**OF SELLERS** 

### Top methods agent used to market home







PAID THE LISTING BROKER A FLAT **FEE TO SELL THEIR HOME\*** 



Was seller's agent a member of NAR?





# **COMMERCIAL CONNECTIONS THAT CLOSE DEALS**

Texas Commercial Overlay Boards Are Your Source to Foster Commercial Real Estate Knowledge and Deal-Making.

#### BY QUENTON ROCKWELL

n commercial real estate, success doesn't happen in a vacuum. It's built on Linformed strategy, trusted partnerships, and a network that turns introductions into opportunities. That's where being a member of a commercial overlay board can make a major difference. These associations help you make connections, increase your industry knowledge, and drive business.

Whether you're negotiating an industrial lease, sourcing land for development, structuring capital for a mixed-use project, or working on any other type of commercial real estate activity, seasoned commercial real estate professionals know that strong relationships are the foundation of strong deals. Commercial overlay boards exist to cultivate those relationships with meaning and integrity.

#### Beyond Networking-It's Deal-Flow with Purpose

Texas's commercial overlay boards prioritize quality over quantity. The focus is on building high-trust, business-minded relationships. Within these associations, your peers don't just recognize your name—they know your expertise, your market, and what kind of deals you're working to close.

I've spoken with many members who say the relationships they built through a commercial overlay board directly led to referrals and partnerships—often resulting in thousands of dollars in income and long-term collaborations. The model is clear: align with the right professionals, and the opportunities follow.

#### **Education and Insights That Matter**

Commercial overlay boards also serve as key educational hubs. Luncheons, speaker events, and workshops provide actionable insight into the topics shaping commercial real estate today—everything from shifting capital markets and land use policy to lease structuring and property repositioning. Some commercial overlay boards offer commercial-specific contracts and forms to members.

#### A Culture of Collaboration, Not Competition

While commercial real estate can feel isolating or transactional, the three commercial overlay boards in Texas foster a strong sense of community. Whether you're a veteran with institutional clients or a rising commercial real estate professional working on your first deal, these associations offer a space to grow and collaborate.

For example, commercial overlay boards often give members a platform to market listings and client needs in a results-driven environment. It's not just networking—it's business development with people who genuinely want to see each other succeed.

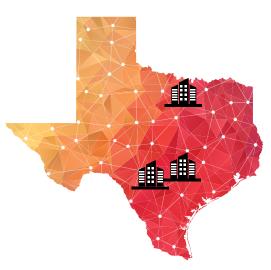
#### Why Now? Because the Market Is Moving Fast

The commercial real estate landscape is shifting quickly—with interest rates, policy changes, and market dynamics evolving in real time. In this environment, having a responsive, informed, and well-connected network isn't optional—it's essential.

If you're ready to grow your pipeline, sharpen your strategy, and connect with like-minded professionals across Texas, STCAR, CTCAR, and NTCAR provide the infrastructure, insight, and relationships to move you forward.



QUENTON ROCKWELL is the President of CREN (Commercial Real Estate Network) and serves on the Board of Directors for the Houston Association of REALTORS®. Texas REALTORS®, and the National Association of REALTORS®. He is the TREPAC Commercial Trustee and is active in brokerage for Coldwell Banker Commercial.



**Commercial overlay boards** are specialized real estate associations focused exclusively on the needs of commercial real estate (CRE) professionals.

They provide an organization for CRE professionals to network, collaborate, access education, and advocate for policies that impact commercial real estate.

Commercial overlay boards offer different categories of membership, including affiliate memberships and student memberships. Members of these boards often are also members of another general REALTOR® association, but some commercial overlay boards allow people to join as primary members.

#### **COMMERCIAL OVERLAY BOARDS IN TEXAS**

- South Texas Commercial Association of REALTORS® (STCAR) - stcar.org
- **Central Texas Commercial** Association of REALTORS® (CTCAR) - centraltexas commercialrealtor.org
- **North Texas Commercial Association of REALTORS®** (NTCAR) - ntcar.org

# **SHARE THIS**

Content you can provide to prospects, clients, and other real estate professionals.

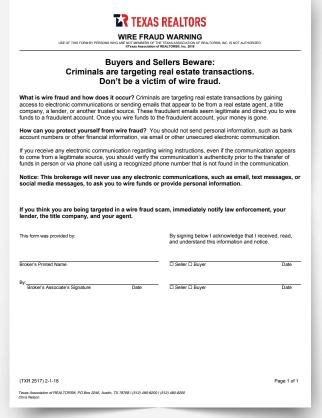
# THE FORM THAT **COULD SAVE YOUR CLIENTS A FORTUNE**

Wire fraud is a real threat. but good communication can protect buyers and sellers from losing tens or hundreds of thousands of dollars.

You've seen the statistics: thousands of consumers getting swindled out of hundreds of millions of dollars through real estate wire fraud every year. But big numbers like those sometimes don't feel urgent or real. Just imagine, then, if one client—your client—called you in a panic to ask about the \$140,000 down payment that he wired but the title company has not received.

Some agents start educating consumers about wire-fraud prevention at the first buyer meeting or listing presentation. Continued cautions, especially as the financial part of the transaction approaches, can also help,

You can share the Texas REALTORS® Wire Fraud Warning (TXR 2517) with your clients. This informational form explains what wire fraud is and how people can prevent it. Presenting this form and getting your clients to sign it also reduces your risk of a lawsuit if a client does fall for a fraudulent scheme.





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# THE CLOSING

# What Your **Client Really** Wants to Know

People won't ask you this question. But it's the key to giving them what they want.

What's In It for Me?—often abbreviated WIIFM—is a powerful way to ensure you provide the outstanding service buyers and sellers want. By answering WIIFM from the other person's perspective, you're sure to exceed clients' expectations.

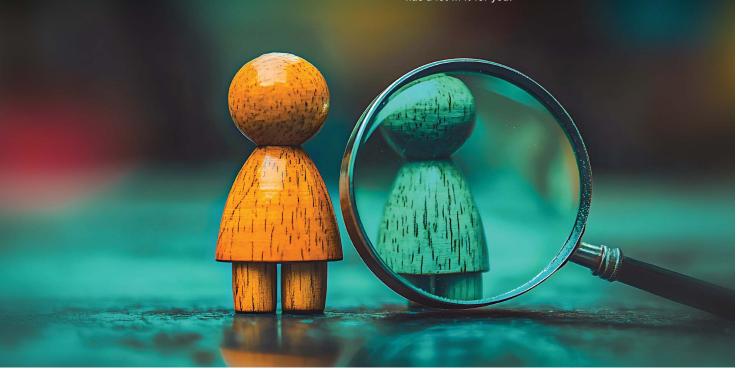
#### MORE ISN'T BETTER. ONE SIZE DOESN'T FIT ALL.

Your clients and prospects don't need to know everything rectly—the ones they've told you matter most

#### GET TO THE HEART OF THE MATTER—AND THE CLIENT.

Show that you are thinking from your buyer's or seller's perspective. What have they told you is important? What topics or questions keep coming up? This isn't to suggest that you leave out critical details, but fantastic customer service depends on not only listening for what clients mean but also for what they find meaningful

Once people know you approach everything by looking at what's most important to them, you'll have a foundation for the kind of working relationship that leads to happy clients, repeat business, and referrals. So focusing on WIIFM also has a lot in it for you!



# Serving More Buyers Starts with Down Payment Assistance



Expand your reach with assistance options from TSAHC.

### Fixed Rate Loans with Down Payment Assistance (DPA)

- · Several rate, loan and DPA options available
- · DPA up to 5% of the loan amount

## **Mortgage Credit Certificates**

- · A special tax credit that refunds a portion of the mortgage interest a home buyer pays each year.
- · For first-time buyers
- · Must be used with TSAHC's DPA



Learn more by visiting: www.tsahc.org







