

# TEXAS REALTOR®

September/October 2020 \$3.50

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1920-2020

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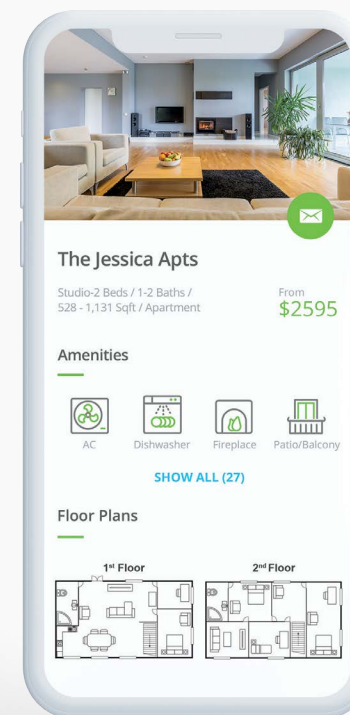
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# Texas REALTORS® ADVOCACY During COVID-19

Even while sheltering in place, REALTORS® have been advocating to protect consumers, professionals, and the real estate industry.



**ENSURE REAL ESTATE IS AN ESSENTIAL SERVICE** statewide to protect real estate transactions



**PROVIDE GUIDANCE** for serving clients safely and responsibly



**PROVIDE RECOMMENDATIONS** for conducting in-person real estate license exams



**SHARE INSIGHT** into impacts on real estate industry and how REALTORS® have adapted to serve clients safely



**REAL ESTATE PROFESSIONALS ARE ELIGIBLE FOR FEDERAL RELIEF**, including small business loans and unemployment insurance



**ADVISE STATE LEADERS** on reopening government offices for real estate consumers



**PROTECT REAL ESTATE LICENSE HOLDERS** seeking renewal and applicants



**EXPAND NOTARY SERVICES** for real estate documents



#TREPACTogether

See Texas REALTORS® resources, updates, FAQ, and other content related to COVID-19 at [texasrealestate.com/coronavirus](https://texasrealestate.com/coronavirus)

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by Joe Olivier

Even seasoned pros can benefit from working on the fundamentals. Three industry experts share their tips to build your success through consistent application of eight business skills.



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## SPECIAL TEXAS REALTORS® ELECTION GUIDE

by Jaime Lee

The November 3 election will affect the lives of Texans on many levels and could have far reaching implications for real estate. Find out where to get a list of Texas REALTORS®-supported candidates, dates to know, what's on the ballot, and more.



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## FEATURE

**ASIAN REAL ESTATE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA** AREA promotes sustainable homeownership for Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders by advocating for AAPI communities and real estate professionals. This is part of a continuing series of profiles of multicultural allied real estate associations.

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Sellers who get inspections before putting their houses on the market can head off many problems. Learn about this strategy, plus find out who typically pays for a pre-listing inspection.



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## FEATURE MEET 7 REALTORS® TO WATCH

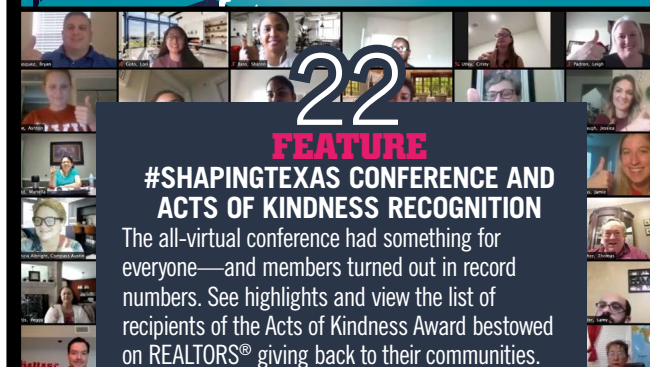
The Texas REALTORS® to Watch award recognizes Texas REALTORS® under the age of 40 for excellence in leadership, community involvement, and everything else that makes a well-rounded young professional.



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## FEATURE #SHAPINGTEXAS CONFERENCE AND ACTS OF KINDNESS RECOGNITION

The all-virtual conference had something for everyone—and members turned out in record numbers. See highlights and view the list of recipients of the Acts of Kindness Award bestowed on REALTORS® giving back to their communities.



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## Chairman

### Greetings, fellow Texas REALTORS®!

This edition features a recap of our now famous Texas REALTORS® 2020 #ShapingTexas Conference. The member reviews were stellar, and we even received recognition by some high-profile NAR leaders.

Our tale of success and beginner's luck includes countless staff and member heroes from all across Texas working almost around the clock. On June 24, five years of centennial planning was scrapped to switch to a virtual platform, leaving just a few short weeks to start over. Distancing, masking, and limited travel opportunities presented plenty of challenges, but two days before production deadline, we had a "good" conference experience almost ready for edits and assembly.

That's when the magic began to happen. Fellow member Kristy Wages, from 2021 Chairman Marvin Jolly's hometown of Palestine, called with an idea to create a surprise video tribute featuring Marvin's mother. With little time left and no way to provide input, VP of Marketing and Communications Angela Brutsché took a leap of faith to include it in the program. Kristy delivered an unforgettable work of art that became a highlight of Marvin's installation.

For the Centennial Celebration, we had four heart-stopping stories of member heroism as well as some magnificent member talent, including 2019 installation favorites Aaron Nelson, Ernesto Calderon, Jacky Howard, and Hector Guerra Jr. We

also had a brilliant performance by Socar Chatmon-Thomas. What we did not have was the perfect ending to highlight the Acts of Kindness recognition. That all changed when I stumbled across the song "Rise Up." The team agreed it was perfect, but what member could record and deliver that difficult song by the deadline? Fellow member Christi Borden assured us that Texas REALTOR® Jennifer Wauhob was capable if she would agree. I called Jennifer with an appeal not just to sing it but to get to a studio as fast as she could and hire an accompanist on the way! Not only did she say yes, she said she would just play the music herself. Keep in mind, we had not heard her singing voice. As fast as she could book the studio, Jennifer sent the audio that took our collective breath away. Perfection!

Those last-minute gems were added to an amazing array of fellow member contributors; engaging speakers, including keynote Trey Gowdy; and special guests, such as Gov. Greg Abbott, to take our first-ever virtual conference from good to great! 2021 Chairman Marvin Jolly tied it all together with his beautiful "Together" speech, punctuating our theme of how unity is not threatened but rather enhanced by our diversity. Simply put, the who, what, how, and why of the conference, the selfless efforts of so many, and indeed our entire first century can be stated in one word: members.

#ShapingTexas

*Cindi Bulla*  
**Cindi Bulla**



**THOSE LAST-MINUTE GEMS WERE ADDED TO AN AMAZING ARRAY OF FELLOW MEMBER CONTRIBUTORS, ENGAGING SPEAKERS, AND SPECIAL GUESTS TO TAKE OUR FIRST-EVER VIRTUAL CONFERENCE FROM GOOD TO GREAT!**

Texas REALTORS® in March launched the COVID-19 section of [texasrealestate.com](http://texasrealestate.com). The pages in this section have been continually updated, including recent FAQs about the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's eviction moratorium. Visit [texasrealestate.com/coronavirus](http://texasrealestate.com/coronavirus) to access these FAQs and more pandemic-related resources.



## UPDATED COVID-19 RESOURCES FOR YOU

## REALTORS®, RACISM, AND SOCIAL MEDIA

**A fellow REALTOR® has posted racist content on social media. Is there a process in place for me to lodge a complaint?**

Texas REALTORS® and all levels of the REALTOR® association are committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion. The Code of Ethics, however, only applies to real estate-related activities. If the posts you describe are real estate related—for example, about clients or transactions—you may file an ethics complaint through normal channels.

Racially offensive posts that are not related to real estate activities may fall under local association bylaws and membership duties. For example, according to a local association bylaws provision required by NAR, members must "promote the standards, interests, and welfare of the association and the real estate profession."

If the racially offensive posts are not tied to real estate activities, you can contact the member's local association for potential processing under that association's complaint procedures.



## SEE HOW YOU COMPARE TO YOUR PEERS

Curious how you stack up against your competitors? *The Profile of Texas REALTORS® Members* includes data on incomes, specialties, licenses, transactions, technology use, expenses, compensation type, and much more. Download the 122-page report at [texasrealestate.com/memberprofile](http://texasrealestate.com/memberprofile).



## REALTORS® FIGHT FOR LOCAL ISSUES

The Texas REALTORS® Issues Mobilization Program is designed to help local REALTOR® associations act on local issues that affect REALTORS® or private property owners. The program provides associations with funds or staff support to help fight for or against proposed local ordinances, ballot measures, or other issues.

Here's how three local REALTOR® associations used the Issues Mobilization program this year.

**The Four Rivers Association of REALTORS®** successfully conducted a public education campaign in August that urged the San Marcos City Council to reconsider potentially harmful changes to the city's land development code. After years spent updating the code, an appointed task force of diverse

community members reviewed proposed code updates and provided the council with suggestions for making the code more inclusive.

However, the council instead considered proposed changes that would keep San Marcos limited in its housing options and make the housing development process overly complicated, time-intensive, and costly.

Thanks to REALTOR® advocacy through public education, the City Council ultimately agreed on several of the task force's recommendations.

**The Bryan-College Station Regional Association of REALTORS®** has been fighting to keep housing options available in College Station. Members of the College Station City Council are pushing for unfair ordinances against short-term and long-term rental housing options, including severely limiting how many unrelated persons can live in a home and eliminating many short-term rental options.

BCSRAR is working with community stakeholders to ensure housing access is preserved in the region.

**The San Antonio Board of REALTORS®** got involved when the San Antonio City Council was considering an ordinance that would have required residential landlords to take costly and time-intensive steps before giving tenants a notice to vacate for failure to pay rent. SABOR opposed the ordinance for multiple reasons, including legal concerns and the adverse impact it would have on landlords and property owners.

Along with dialogue and engagement among SABOR staff, members, and City Council, SABOR launched a call for action urging REALTORS® to contact their council members. In only two days, 632 members called and emailed their council members. Then, more than 100 REALTORS® attended a City Council meeting, wearing face coverings and armed with talking points. They shared emotional testimonies about the impact the ordinance would have on their businesses as "mom and pop" landlords.

These actions changed the outcome of the vote by educating the elected officials on the potential harm to the local real estate industry.

Visit [texasrealestate.com/issuesmob](http://texasrealestate.com/issuesmob) to learn more about how the Issues Mobilization may be able to help your community.

# BUSINESS

## WHAT URBANITES WANT TO KNOW ABOUT RURAL AREAS



This spring, rural land brokers reported a surge in interest regarding less densely populated areas. Urbanites wanted to relocate to their city's suburbs, exurbs, and beyond. Here are some hot topics to be able to discuss with these prospects:

**How's the Wi-Fi?** Working remotely requires reliable high-speed internet. What are the local providers, and how fast are their services? Limited options or slow service may deter many prospects.

**How's the commute?** Your prospects' jobs may require them to drive back to the city from time to time. How long would it take to get to downtown from this property? What is the traffic like on the major roads?

**How are the schools?** Normally, the rural land market deals in second homes. Since these prospects want to move to rural areas, land brokers should brush up on the answers to the basic residential real estate questions such as "How are the schools?" and "What are the taxes?" Do not offer your own opinions on local schools; direct prospects to the district's website or txschools.gov for more information.

**What can I grow?** Urbanites and suburbanites may want to start hobby farms—small, non-commercial agricultural projects that are bigger than a backyard garden—to grow their own food or reduce expenses. Texas A&M University AgriLife Extension has many resources you can share. Tell prospects to check local ordinances regarding growing and livestock.

**Will it stay rural?** Are any major housing or business developments planned nearby? What are the most common land uses in the area? How established are the residents here? A sparsely populated area at risk of significant development may not appeal to some prospects.

**What is there to do around here?** Describe its advantages, pastimes, and local culture. Direct prospects to local chambers of commerce or civic groups. What are some popular places to socialize? Potential buyers will benefit from considering what real life will be like before committing to a move.



"A firm can't be all things to all people. You can't be Walmart and Nordstrom at the same time. Brokerage firms must pick a spot where you feel your resources, culture, and market permits you to build a strong position. This is truer today than ever before."

—STEVE MURRAY,  
president of REAL Trends

## PULL COMP DATA FROM RPR COMMERCIAL



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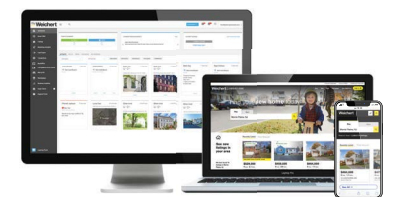


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## COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE DURING COVID: PROTECT YOUR ASSETS AND FIND OPPORTUNITIES



Before COVID-19, it may have taken six months for a disturbance in the residential real estate market to affect commercial practitioners.

“Now, whatever’s impacting the residential industry is impacting us as well,” says Michica “Mish” Guillory, a Houston-based REALTOR® with nearly 20 years of commercial and residential real estate experience. “The evictions, the tenants bailing out of suites just like people abandoning their homes—COVID-19 has leveled everyone’s playing field.”

Guillory, who owns The Guillory Group School of Real Estate, says change has been the only constant in this new business environment. Commercial real estate practitioners should protect themselves against short-term volatility and, if possible, take advantage of excellent opportunities.

### Grow Carefully

Should clients look for commercial space right now? That depends on the client, Guillory says.

“I don’t know if it is the time to open an ice cream shop right now ... people have to ask themselves, ‘Do I think my business can survive another shutdown?’ Is your business strong enough to weather another wave of COVID-19 if you personally guaranteed the loan?”

There are opportunities for those who know what they are doing and can safely expand or buy.

“Rental prices are much better than they used to be because landlords are fighting vacancy rates. The terms of some of the landlords’ loans require they keep a certain amount of occupancy,” she says.

Some commercial property owners may want to sell because they need the cash flow.

“Some people are saying, ‘Let me buy things up now because they’re cheap. We can fill them up later.’

It’s an amazing time for people to be buying or selling commercial property.”

### Expand Your Skillset

Reinforce your real estate practice, Guillory says. Perhaps earn new certifications or find new income streams. Diversify your business so that you can continue to operate if your primary services slow down or disappear.

### Ask for Lease Amendments

Guillory recommends tenants and landlords amend leases to:

- Require face masks for anyone entering a suite without a tenant’s permission
- Extend commercial leases by the amount of time the state government forced businesses to shut down
- Adjust rents to match the allowed capacity percentages of reopened businesses.

Landlords may not like or accept these terms, Guillory says, but they will likely weigh them against the risk of more vacancies.

### Hire Professionals

Many agents think commercial real estate can be learned as you go, according to Guillory.

Guillory suggests hiring trained professionals, like analysts and accountants, to protect your assets. Now is not the time to experiment.

“Commercial real estate is not for the faint of heart at any time, let alone during this moment in our history,” she says.

# Reach your peak.



**Joalice Ryan**  
REALTOR®

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### WHY BROKERS SHOULD CONSIDER HIRED AND NON-OWNED AUTO INSURANCE

by Barney Schwartz



Hired and non-owned automobile (HNOA) coverage is important insurance coverage that is usually not very expensive. A hired auto is a rented vehicle used for company business—not common for a real estate brokerage. The non-owned coverage, however, can apply to employees' and agents' vehicles when being used on behalf of the real estate brokerage. This coverage protects the firm if it is brought into a claim.

HNOA insurance can provide coverage over the limit carried by the employee and agent. A broker may want to require all employees and agents to carry minimum liability limits of \$100,000 per person and \$300,000 per accident as well as \$100,000 in property damage coverage. Some firms require the firm be added onto each agent's insurance policy. In most cases, a firm is being added as an additional interest, not an additional insured. This means the policy will not cover the firm or broker but will notify you if the policy is canceled.

Consider this case study of an agent on her way to a listing appointment who turned left in front of an oncoming vehicle, causing significant injuries. The person in the other car incurred medical bills in excess of \$1 million and filed a claim against the brokerage firm. The brokerage had HNOA coverage. The brokerage's insurance company argued that the agent was not an employee and not in the scope of working for the company at the time of the accident. The other party argued that the brokerage was negligent in allowing the agent to drive for work when she had two prior accidents.

The brokerage's insurance company paid \$150,000 to settle the claim. Without the non-owned coverage, the brokerage would have had to pay out-of-pocket. The real estate firm was paying \$200 per year for the coverage but now will have to pay a higher premium. It would have taken more money to settle the claim if the agent had been driving under the influence or with a prior DUI on her record.

This case also raises the question about whether a real estate firm is obligated to check the driving records of agents prior to engagement. The answer is cautiously yes. Firms should only run the driving record if they are willing to have a policy that states agents cannot join the firm if their driving is unacceptable.

Hired and non-owned auto coverage can often be added to a business owners or general liability policy for under \$200 a year. You should review your policy to confirm you have the coverage. If you have a business auto policy, it can be added there as well.

**BARNEY SCHWARTZ** is a licensed insurance agent and risk manager for Assured Partners of Texas, which is a Texas REALTORS® E&O risk management partner.

### CAN REAL ESTATE LICENSE HOLDERS USE THE TERM APPRAISED VALUE?



**NO**, unless they are referring to the value of a property as determined by an appraiser. Only an appraiser can determine a property's *value*, according to TREC. A real estate license holder cannot perform an appraisal of, or provide an opinion of value for, real property unless that person is a licensed appraiser. A license holder may not use the term *value* when referring to that license holder's own market analysis.

Real estate license holders can offer an *estimated sale price*, *listing price*, or *estimated worth*. Sales agents must do so in their sponsoring broker's name. Any price opinion, market analysis, or estimate must include this written statement verbatim and in at least 12-point font: "This represents an estimated sale price for this property. It is not the same as the opinion of value in an appraisal developed by a licensed appraiser under the Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practice."

### DOES THE PET AGREEMENT PERTAIN TO OUTSIDE PETS?



The *Pet Agreement* (TXR 2004) pertains to all pets that the tenant keeps on the property, including in the yard. This means that even a pet that mostly or always lives outside must be listed in the agreement. *Pet* refers to any animal, whether mammal, reptile, bird, fish, rodent, or insect (except that an assistance animal is *not* a pet).

#### Fact or Fiction?

*Buyers who don't want to accept a property as-is can ask their agent to check Paragraph 7D(2) in the One to Four Family Residential Contract (Resale) and write in "repairs to be listed following inspections."*

**FICTION.** Altering the contract terms by adding language in Paragraph 7D(2) that does not list specific repairs could result in the agent being charged with acting negligently or incompetently if a complaint were to be filed in connection with the transaction. Buyers should only choose Paragraph 7D(2) and direct their agent to add repairs if the buyers know of specific repairs that they want the seller to complete at the seller's expense.

#### Your Forms

Clients can use the *Authorization to Obtain Consumer Report* form (TXR 1929) to give written permission for a real estate professional to obtain a copy of the client's credit report from one or more consumer reporting agencies. By signing, the client acknowledges the credit report may be used to determine credit worthiness, character, general reputation, and mode of living, among other information authorized by the Fair Credit Reporting Act. The form authorizes any owner, landlord, lender, or broker involved in the real estate transaction to discuss the report's information among themselves. It also releases the owner or real estate professional from any claims, liabilities, or damages resulting from or furnishing information. This is just one of more than 130 forms exclusively for members of Texas REALTORS®.



### RECAP OF AUGUST TREC MEETING

The Texas Real Estate Commission met remotely on August 10. A video replay of the entire meeting along with the full agenda and materials are available at [trec.texas.gov](http://trec.texas.gov) > Agency Information > Meetings and Minutes. Below are some of the relevant highlights.

#### New Proposed Form Language

The commission voted to withdraw previously proposed amendments to the contracts and submit updated language for comment and review. Based on substantial community and industry input, the Broker-Lawyer Committee reworked the previously proposed changes to the termination option for clarity and simplicity. The new language maintains the previous proposal's payment of the earnest money and termination option fee to the escrow agent, moving the language in Paragraph 23, Termination Option, to Paragraph 5.

Some additional proposals include new language in Paragraph 4, Leases, to provide disclosure of the existence of leases on the property; changes to Paragraph 10 to provide information regarding smart-home devices; new language on the Broker Information page to disclose the existence of a separate commission agreement between the listing broker and the cooperating broker; and new language to the *Addendum for Property Subject to Mandatory Membership in a Property Owners Association* to add deposits and reserves to the list of payments the buyer will make in association with the transfer of the property. The previously proposed change for payment of prorated property tax has been withdrawn entirely.

The commission also proposed new residential and fixture lease forms. The proposed changes to existing forms and the newly proposed forms can be viewed at [trec.texas.gov](http://trec.texas.gov) > Agency Information > Meeting and Minutes. The earliest these changes can be adopted is TREC's November meeting.

#### Broker Responsibility for 2021

The commission approved new material for the 2021-2022 Broker Responsibility Course. As a reminder, any broker or designated broker of a business entity who sponsors sales agents and any license holder who is a delegated supervisor of one or more license holders must complete this 6-hour broker responsibility course to renew a license.

# Transparency Sells

## How Pre-Listing Inspections Can Lead to Faster Sales.

by Lance Dunahoe

If you have been a real estate professional for a while, you have probably experienced three common facts about home inspections: No house is perfect; nobody likes surprises; and the sales price of a home never goes up after a buyer's inspection.

Every property is unique, but whether it is a 100-year-old bungalow in an established neighborhood or a modern mansion in a new subdivision, they all have one thing in common: Every home is subjected to day-to-day wear and tear caused by people or natural conditions and almost always needs something serviced, repaired, or replaced. However, many homebuyers, sellers, and agents seem to still be surprised when they don't receive a 100% clean inspection report. Because of this unrealistic expectation, contracts get renegotiated, deals fall through, transactions go into legal disputes, and client-agent relationships fall apart. One way to avoid these situations is full disclosure by having a pre-listing (or seller's) inspection.

### It's Good Business

Transparency in business is simply a good idea, and a pre-listing inspection is one of the best ways to be totally transparent, reduce liability, and set realistic expectations for everyone involved. There are no secrets; issues are disclosed and addressed; it's honest, proactive, above-board, and puts you and your seller in control of the information. And since the first offer (and subsequent counteroffers) are based on better, more accurate information, transparency leads to faster, headache-free sales and fewer eleventh-hour negotiation shenanigans.

### It Smooths Out the Transaction

Most buyers make purchase decisions based on emotion. In a typical transaction where there is no pre-listing inspection, the buyer orders an inspection that reveals some major and minor issues that neither the buyer nor seller was expecting. That new information can derail the entire deal. The buyer wants the seller to fix everything, the seller doesn't want to fix anything, and you just want to help both parties get the deal done. At this

point, the buyer typically has three options: accept the property as is, negotiate repairs and/or a reduced price, or terminate the agreement.

Sometimes the ensuing negotiations go smoothly and the deal is made. Other times, there's a stalemate, the deal dies, and the house goes back onto the market with an ugly inspection report to disclose and a negative mark on its sales history.

### It Leads to Confident Buyers

A pre-listing inspection can make a buyer more comfortable, provide peace of mind, and take away much of the worry and fear that go into a major purchase decision. For example, let's say that your pre-listing inspection reveals that there is foundation settlement, a very common condition in many Texas markets that often becomes a deal-breaker. But with a pre-listing home inspection, the sellers are still in control of the deal and have time to get proper evaluations and estimates from foundation repair companies or engineers of their choice. If the professionals recommend installing piers to reinforce the foundation, the sellers now have the choice to have the work performed or make a price adjustment. Either way, the information is transparent. If the foundation is repaired, it becomes a non-issue and adds value due to a transferable warranty on the work performed. If the foundation is not repaired, the sellers now have realistic expectations for the sale. If your sellers decide not to make repairs or cannot afford to, they at least now know about the issues that will likely affect the sales price.

### It Reduces Liability

Bad news doesn't get better with time, and avoiding it doesn't mean it doesn't exist. Issues with a home will eventually be discovered by the buyer's inspector and have to be disclosed and addressed at either the seller's or buyer's expense.

Also, things can go wrong with the home after closing. When deficiencies with the home are not discovered before closing, however, surprise issues can become legal issues that your client—and possibly you—could be held liable for. By having a

third-party inspector document the condition of the home with a pre-listing inspection, the seller will be disclosing everything that is known and greatly reduce the potential liability from anything that might arise after closing.

### It Puts You in Control

When selling a home with a pre-listing inspection, you can work with the seller to decide what, when, and how to address any issues before the house goes on the market. That means no more reacting. You and your client are on *your* timeline to get estimates, make repairs, or consider price adjustments. And more information can help you justify the price point, reduce the buyers' fear, and decrease the number of negotiation problems or unpleasant surprises while increasing the speed of the sale and the level of satisfaction for all. ★

**LANCE DUNAHOE** is the owner of *Inspect360* ([inspectosell.com](http://inspectosell.com)) and has been inspecting homes for 15 years.



### WHO PAYS?

The seller typically pays for a pre-listing inspection; however, some agents offer to cover this expense as an added value instead of offering a commission discount. Other agents use the pre-listing inspection as a tool to set seller expectations and manage listings with obvious challenges. The agent can then gauge the seller's commitment to the sale. If big issues are discovered during the pre-listing inspection that a seller is unwilling to address or consider making concessions, the agent can choose whether to continue working with a reluctant seller or invest time and marketing dollars elsewhere.

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Share your article ideas, be a source, or write for us. Learn more about contributing to the magazine at [texasrealestate.com/writeforus](http://texasrealestate.com/writeforus).



# ASIAN REAL ESTATE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA



This is the second in a series of profiles of the multicultural allied real estate associations in Texas.



**Dawn Lin**  
Houston chapter  
founding president  
and chairwoman  
emeritus

Founded in 2003, the Asian Real Estate Association of America (AREAA) promotes sustainable homeownership for Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders by advocating for AAPI communities and real estate professionals.

The nonprofit trade organization has four Texas chapters and welcomes professionals who want to do business with Asian communities in the U.S. and abroad, says Dawn Lin, Houston chapter founding president and chairwoman emeritus.

“Asian Americans want to be heard, and AREAA provides a channel to voice our thoughts to elected officials. It is important to show up in the halls of government and to show that we care,” Lin says.

The Asian American and Pacific Islander population is composed of many different ethnicities. The community represents 5.8% of the U.S. population and has grown 25% since the 2010 census, according to AREAA’s 2019-20 *State of Asia America Report*. Texas is home to approximately 1.5 million AAPI residents; the community has a 59.1% homeownership rate, compared to the 66.3% homeownership rate for all Texans.

Advocacy is a critical focus for AREAA. Local chapters communicate with Texas lawmakers, and in years past, AREAA representatives traveled to Washington, D.C., in May to lobby Congress. AREAA advocates for using alternate ways to track creditworthiness, expanded government language and translation resources, and enacting laws that promote diversity and inclusivity. As a group, the AAPI community tends to avoid lots of debt, which means they have a limited credit history with

## ASIAN REAL ESTATE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

- **Founded:** 2003
- **Mission:** AREAA is dedicated to promoting sustainable homeownership opportunities in Asian American communities by creating a powerful national voice for housing and real estate professionals that serve this dynamic market.
- **Focus:** Advocacy to reduce barriers to AAPI homeownership, increasing business opportunities, networking, educational events, trade missions to build partnerships
- **Membership:** More than 17,000 in U.S. and Canada
- **Local chapters in Texas:** 4
- **Website:** areaa.org

which to prove creditworthiness.

A recent success story was asking the U.S. Census Bureau to break down the *All Other Races* category data to show Asian and Pacific Islander homeownership in its quarterly reporting.

“When we are lumped into the *Other* group, we cannot tell if we are doing well or need help. It’s difficult to tell without disaggregated data,” Lin says.

Census data for the second quarter of 2020 showed the AAPI housing rate in the U.S. was 61.4%, an increase of 2 percentage points from the previous year.

“I am so thrilled to see the improvement of AAPI homeownership rates in recent reports. Homeownership is an important part of the American Dream,” Lin says.

AREAA communicates with professional organizations abroad; in 2018, AREAA hosted a delegation of Chinese real estate professionals when they visited Houston. AREAA also has a charity that responds to natural disasters, such as Hurricane Harvey in 2017.

Lin says the most valuable service AREAA provides is its extensive network of contacts. Personal connections built today can lead to new business or a louder voice in government tomorrow.

“You never know who you are going to meet. Networking is never wasted time. When you build a relationship, it opens up opportunities. If a networker needs something in the future, they’re going to think of you,” she says. ★

## TEXAS REALTORS® DIVERSITY COMMITTEE

The Texas REALTORS® Diversity Committee supports activities that encourage diversity, equity, and inclusion in member involvement and leadership opportunities.

The committee works with local associations through education, sponsorship, and communication endeavors. Visit [texasrealestate.com/inclusion](http://texasrealestate.com/inclusion).

| CHAPTER           | YEAR FOUNDED | WEBSITE  | CHAPTER PRESIDENT | CONTACT INFORMATION  |
|-------------------|--------------|--|-------------------|--|
| Austin            | 2013         | <a href="http://areaa.org/austin">areaa.org/austin</a>         | Lezlie Le         | 512-917-8257<br><a href="mailto:lezlie@itcommercialgroup.com">lezlie@itcommercialgroup.com</a> |
| Dallas/Fort Worth | 2012         | <a href="http://areaa.org/dfw">areaa.org/dfw</a>               | Trang Dang-Le     | 214-563-2438<br><a href="mailto:trangdangle@yahoo.com">trangdangle@yahoo.com</a>               |
| Houston           | 2015         | <a href="http://areeahouston.org">areeahouston.org</a>         | Casey Kang        | 832-465-1477<br><a href="mailto:info@areeahouston.org">info@areeahouston.org</a>               |
| San Antonio       | 2017         | <a href="http://areaa.org/sanantonio">areaa.org/sanantonio</a> | Vy Le             | 210-421-9205<br><a href="mailto:vyle2005@gmail.com">vyle2005@gmail.com</a>                     |

Image: ©bombitea-stock.adobe.com

PULL OUT THIS NOVEMBER 2020 SPECIAL ELECTION GUIDE TO KEEP AS A HANDY REFERENCE



# Texas REALTORS® 2020 ELECTION GUIDE

The November 3 election is set to have significant impacts on federal, state, and local governments. The following information is intended to help members prepare to vote in this important election.

## DATES TO KNOW

Deadline to register to vote  
**OCTOBER 5**

Early voting  
**OCTOBER 13-30**

Election Day  
**NOVEMBER 3**

### SETTING THE STAGE

Republicans hold every statewide office in Texas and have majorities in the U.S. Senate and both chambers of the Texas Legislature.

However, legislative maps are nearly a decade old, and the state’s demographics and voting patterns have changed.

The Texas Legislature is expected to take up redistricting in 2021, but these discussions will be greatly informed by the U.S. Census Bureau’s population count in 2020.

### WHAT’S ON THE BALLOT?

Texas voters will have lengthy ballots that include the presidential and federal races, judicial contests, state legislative seats, and a wide range of local races, as nearly all May elections were moved to November 3.

Visit your county’s election website to see a sample ballot with all the races you’ll be voting on.

Note: You’re allowed to take a list of candidates with you to the polls. However, the law says you cannot use a recording device, including your smartphone, in the voting booth.

### END OF STRAIGHT-TICKET VOTING

The November 3, 2020, election will be the

first election without straight-ticket voting since the Texas Legislature ended this option.

This process had enabled voters to check one box and cast their ballot for all of the candidates on their ballot who were running in a particular political party.

For perspective, consider that, in 2018, 67% of ballots cast statewide were straight-ticket.

Note that many local elections are non-partisan and therefore don’t include political party on the ballot.

### WHAT’S AT STAKE?

Most seats in the Texas Legislature will be on the November ballot. The winners in these races will join the 87<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature, which is set to convene in January.

The Legislature will have its hands full with some complicated issues, including a likely budget shortfall due to depressed oil prices and decreased sales tax revenue during the pandemic.

It may also address other big issues, such as healthcare, criminal justice reform, and public school funding.

And it will be charged with drawing the next set of legislative and congressional

maps to determine Texas representation.

### VOTE SAFE

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a direct impact on elections through postponed dates, extended early voting, and health concerns about in-person voting leading to more interest in voting by mail.

In addition, many polling places have been closed due to a shortage of poll workers or inability to accommodate social distancing—be sure to check your county’s list of polling places to see which will be open.

Gov. Greg Abbott extended early voting by one week to begin October 13, so Texas voters will have more time to cast their ballots in the general election.

Voters should expect to comply with regulations regarding social distancing guidelines and face coverings.

### VOTER TURNOUT

The number of people who go to the polls is generally higher when the presidential race is on the ballot than in non-presidential elections. But it is unknown how the pandemic might affect turnout.

*continued on the next page...*



# BECOME AN ADVOCATE

For the first time ever, the annual, nationally recognized Texas REALTORS® TREPAC/Governmental Affairs Orientation program will be open to all members.

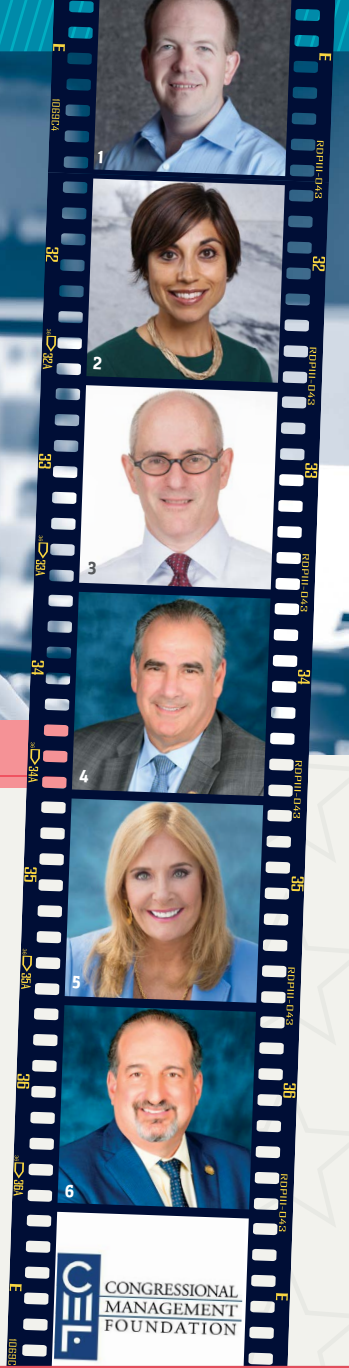
This virtual event will take place over two weeks (October 27-28 and November 4-5) and feature well-known speakers and political insiders—all to help you become a strong advocate for real estate consumers and the real estate industry.

Learn more at [texasrealestate.com/orientation](https://texasrealestate.com/orientation)



Official logo of the 2021 TREPAC/Governmental Affairs Orientation

- ★ **JEFF BLAYLOCK** [1], Texas Election Source
- ★ **MEHRSA BARADARAN** [2], author of *The Color of Money: Black Banks and the Racial Wealth Gap*
- ★ **RICH THAU** [3], The Swing Voter Project
- ★ Congressional Management Foundation
- ★ National Association of REALTORS® leaders:
  - ★ **CHARLIE OPPLER** [4], NAR 2020 President-Elect
  - ★ **LESLIE ROUDA SMITH** [5], NAR 2020 First Vice President
  - ★ **BOB GOLDBERG** [6], NAR Chief Executive Officer



# TEXAS REALTORS® 2020 CONFERENCE

The Texas REALTORS® #ShapingTexas Conference in September featured several sessions to inform members about the 2020 election and 2021 legislative session. (Read the full recap on pages 22-25.)

Watch recordings of the sessions with state and federal lawmakers, political reporters, and Texas REALTORS® leaders at [texasrealestate.com/gaevents](https://texasrealestate.com/gaevents).



[texasrealestate.com/gaevents](https://texasrealestate.com/gaevents)

# DID YOU MISS IT?

# STRENGTHEN YOUR SKILLS

Working on the Fundamentals Helps You Pump Up Your Success, Even if You're a Seasoned Pro.

by Joe Olivieri



**Y**ou're a professional. But even world-class athletes still practice the fundamentals, and for you to stay at the top of *your* game, you need to hone the techniques and habits that got you where you are today. *Texas REALTOR*® asked three real estate experts what basics you can improve to continue growing throughout your career.

### Never Stop Learning

TREC requires you to complete 18 hours of CE credits every two years to maintain your active sales agent license. Some

real estate professionals only complete the bare minimum—and wait until the last minute to do so—but all three experts interviewed for this article urge agents and brokers to pursue relevant learning opportunities on an ongoing basis.

Jim Parr, who has spent more than 35 years in commercial real estate, believes education is another form of dues you pay to stay a leading professional in this industry.

Education isn't restricted to formal classes. Trainer and educator Rhonda Hamilton suggests learning a little bit every day by reading industry publications, listening to pod-

*continued on the next page...*

casts, or hiring a coach. Attending marketing and networking events is also important.

### Stay Current in Your Community

Your local real estate market is constantly changing. You need to stay updated on what's happening in your community.

For Parr, that means studying new developments and zoning ordinances, and learning new technology as it relates to commercial real estate.

Ginger Unger, who has spent more than 30 years in commercial real estate and residential investments, recommends following the local business and community news, attending chamber of commerce meetings, knowing about upcoming developments, and being able to answer clients' questions about trends and zoning changes.

"I know agents who still think Smithson Valley has only one area, when in fact the Comal County area near Smithson Valley consists of several cities, such as Spring Branch, Bulverde, and Canyon Lake," she says.

You may lose business if prospects think you are behind the times or not knowledgeable. There may even be liability issues. Unger uses the example of not knowing that a rock quarry is being developed and then selling a nearby home to a client with asthma.

### Stay Up with New Rules

Unger suggests you should not wait until the last minute to take TREC's Legal Update courses. Otherwise, you will have practiced real estate for almost two years with outdated information.

"A lot of agents aren't looking at the changes TREC makes to the contracts," she says. "If you haven't written a certain type contract in a long time, you may not be aware of the changes. You also need to be knowledgeable about which addendums to use with the contracts.

"There is a Municipal Utility District (MUD) form and a Planned Unit Development (PUD) form. I find a lot of REALTORS® are not aware that builders and developers in the Hill Country are offsetting costs with MUDs and PUDs. If applicable, those two documents have to be delivered to the buyer at or before the contracts are signed or the buyer can terminate the contract at any time."

Many agents are not aware of where to locate these documents and that the seller must complete the forms, not the agent, she continues.

### Make a Schedule and Stick to It

Hamilton advises blocking off 30 minutes or an hour—ideally per day but two to three times per week is helpful—for activities that grow your business. That time should be as non-negotiable as a listing appointment. "REALTORS® who have been in business a long time tend to get overcome at the

beginning of the morning with phone calls and emails. The obligations tell the REALTOR® what his or her schedule's going to be rather than the REALTOR® dictating how the day is going to go," she says.

Unger states you need to put in the time and effort to get ahead. "This is a full-time job. If you want to be successful, you need to put in your 8-10 hours a day, and you need to start with a schedule. Make sure you have a checklist for yourself. Have I done my calls for the day? Have I door knocked? Have I done my social media? It's persistence, organization, scheduling yourself, and following through."

### Ask What is Working

Real estate agents should track every aspect of their business, according to Unger. "I ask, 'Where are you getting your business from?' ... and some agents say, 'I don't know.'"

You need to know where you're getting your business from," she says.

Take a look at the workflow systems you have in place to conduct business, Hamilton adds. "If you've been in business for a while, then you're busy. The only way that you can continue to grow is if you have systems and if you outsource in appropriate places in your business, so you are focusing on income-producing results."

### Update Your Marketing

You must stay current with the most effective marketing techniques. Brush up on your social media; the best ways to engage on the major platforms have changed over time. "If you're stuck in paper mailouts rather than doing video marketing, then you're stuck in the

past, and you're not really using the tools available today that help take your business to the next level," Hamilton says.

In today's market, you are selling a lifestyle, not a home, Unger adds. "People want to see stories. They want to see a house that was flipped from the ground up. They want to watch it be torn up and put back together. Don't show them a three-bedroom, two-bathroom house and say nothing else—nobody cares about that. They want to see something interesting," she says.

### Get Comfortable with Change

Parr has seen some seasoned practitioners resist change. "They aren't unaware of the new requirements and responsibilities—they actually resist them in their practice."

For example, Parr remembers meeting with a prospect after the *Information About Brokerage Services* (TXR 2501) form became required. Parr's competitors had already talked with the prospect, yet he was the first to share the form.

"I was dismayed to see that because it said that not only were those competitors of mine not keeping up with the latest requirements, but they also were refusing to adapt them

to their practice," he says.

The coronavirus pandemic has forced real estate professionals to learn how to do business online and develop business practices around those tools. Agents and brokers are getting creative online in order to grow their businesses, Hamilton says.

### Invest in Relationships

There is still value in developing personal relationships, Hamilton notes. "Agents miss out on the fact that one of the skills they need to develop is how to stay connected with people. Those soft skills—people skills, relationship marketing—are critical in today's market for agents to continue to be successful and build their referral and repeat business."

Hamilton has observed that some seasoned agents do not invest in the same depth of service as newer agents with more time on their hands. If you can offer things your competitors cannot or choose not to provide, you will shine, she says.

Parr believes the most critical skill for agents and brokers is listening. "Active listening means you are really focused on not just hearing but also understanding what the other party is saying. That's critically important because you want to understand clients' needs and be able to put their needs first as their representative. It's also critically important when you're listening to the other side of a transaction to understand what they're actually communicating."

Ultimately, you improve what you practice. An investment in the fundamentals is an investment in your entire real estate career. 📌

**JOE OLIVIERI** is assistant editor at Texas REALTOR®.



### Rhonda Hamilton

is a trainer and educator with more than 20 years of real estate experience.



### Jim Parr

spent over 35 years in commercial brokerage and teaches classes around Texas.



### Ginger Unger

has more than 30 years in commercial real estate and residential investments. She also teaches commercial and residential classes.

Those soft skills—  
people skills,  
relationship marketing  
—are critical in today's  
market to continue to  
be successful and build  
referral business.

## WHICH COURSES SHOULD I TAKE?

Texas REALTORS® offers many courses to keep your skills sharp.

Contracts are a great subject to revisit, especially since TREC requires three hours of CE for license renewals. Courses on social media, listings, and open houses are also good choices.

Texas REALTORS® offers the Texas Accredited Commercial Specialist designation, which teaches you about market analyses and property development and management, among other skills.

These courses are being offered in October and November:

- 1-4 Contract Boot Camp
- Avoiding Contract Pitfalls
- Broker Responsibility Course
- The Forms You Need to Know
- Listing 101: The Nuts & Bolts
- Real Estate and Facebook 101
- TREC Legal Update I and II
- Writing Listing Descriptions.

Learn more at [texasrealestate.com/findacourse](https://texasrealestate.com/findacourse).



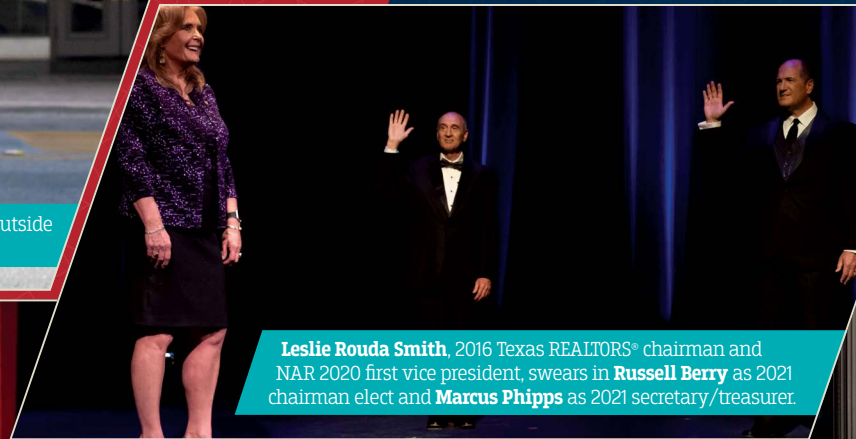
# #ShapingTexas Conference



Cindi Bulla, 2020 chairman, stands outside the Paramount Theatre in Austin.



1



2

Leslie Rouda Smith, 2016 Texas REALTORS<sup>®</sup> chairman and NAR 2020 first vice president, swears in **Russell Berry** as 2021 chairman elect and **Marcus Phipps** as 2021 secretary/treasurer.



3

4



7



Former U.S. Rep. **Trey Gowdy** talks with 2020 Chairman **Cindi Bulla** following his keynote address.



5



6

REP. JOE MOODY  
TEXAS HOUSE DISTRICT 78



Texas REALTORS<sup>®</sup> celebrated 100 years of progress and professionalism, engaged in forums on a variety of topics, heard from top-notch speakers in the industry and government, and attended continuing education courses—all in a format unlike any conference of the past. Members took part in lively and engaging festivities and meetings via computer screens across Texas and from six continents after the coronavirus pandemic shuttered a planned San Antonio event. A record-breaking 4,200-plus Texas REALTORS<sup>®</sup> participated in the 33-session conference. “We are the proud result of our founders’ vision of thousands of dedicated professionals working as one to protect Texas consumers and preserve real estate markets,” said 2020 Chairman Cindi Bulla.

### ASSOCIATION BUSINESS

2014 Texas REALTORS<sup>®</sup> Chairman **Dan Hatfield** [1, pictured left] swore in **Marvin Jolly** [1, pictured right with his wife, Jaymee] to be the association’s 2021 chairman. **Russell Berry** [2, pictured middle] will be 2021 chairman-elect and **Marcus Phipps** will be 2021 secretary/treasurer [2, pictured right]. New regional vice presidents were also sworn in. In his acceptance speech, **Jolly** [3] listed all the ways in which Texas REALTORS<sup>®</sup> are united around shared goals and values. “Texas REALTORS<sup>®</sup> are together even when at first we don’t agree,” Jolly said. “We are together even when we have opposing views of a situation. ... Texas REALTORS<sup>®</sup> are together not by default; we’re together by design and by choice.”

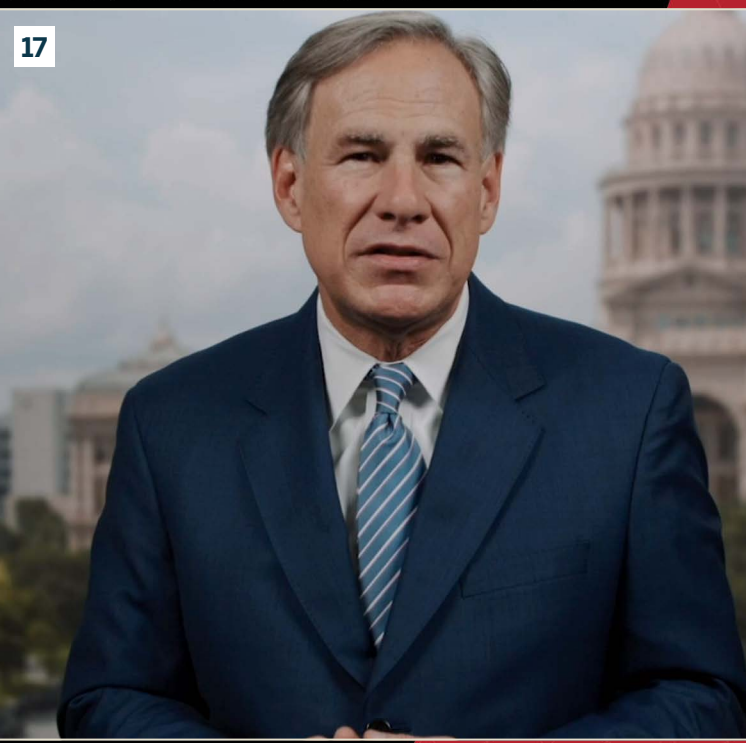
The Board of Directors approved the \$5 annual Legal Fund assessment and \$30 annual Issues Mobilization/Political Advocacy Fund assessment for the 2021 budget. The association’s annual member dues, not including assessments, stayed at \$117. Leslie Rouda Smith, 2016 Texas REALTORS<sup>®</sup> chairman and NAR 2020 first vice president, and **Charlie Oppler** [4], 2020 NAR president-elect, gave updates on NAR’s advocacy during the pandemic and new priorities, including nationwide remote notarization and liability protections for businesses. TREC Chairman Scott Kesner reported that TREC oversees 208,000 licenses, an all-time high number, and that 85% are members of the REALTOR<sup>®</sup> organization. Members met in caucuses to discuss policy updates and business for each of the association’s 16 regions.

### UNITY AND POLITICS

Unity was a major theme of the #ShapingTexas Conference. In his opening keynote, former **U.S. Rep. Trey Gowdy** [5] talked about how his friendship with U.S. Sen. Tim Scott led to them co-writing a book about unity. He and Scott were both Republicans from South Carolina but had different outlooks on life, experiences, and family backgrounds. Gowdy challenged REALTORS<sup>®</sup> to seek out friendships with people who have different beliefs or life experiences. Doing so introduces new points of view and helps foster healthy dialogue instead of conflict. The Politics, Policy, and a Pandemic session provided a deep-dive discussion into the state’s future. Political reporters from *The Texas Tribune* discussed complexities surrounding the November election. **Rep. Joe Moody** [6], who serves as speaker pro tem of the Texas House of Representatives, offered his insight into the 2021 legislative session. **U.S. Sen. John Cornyn** [7] shared an update on important federal legislation. “Thank you for fighting tooth and nail for the real estate industry in our state,” he said.

### HISTORY AND DIVERSITY

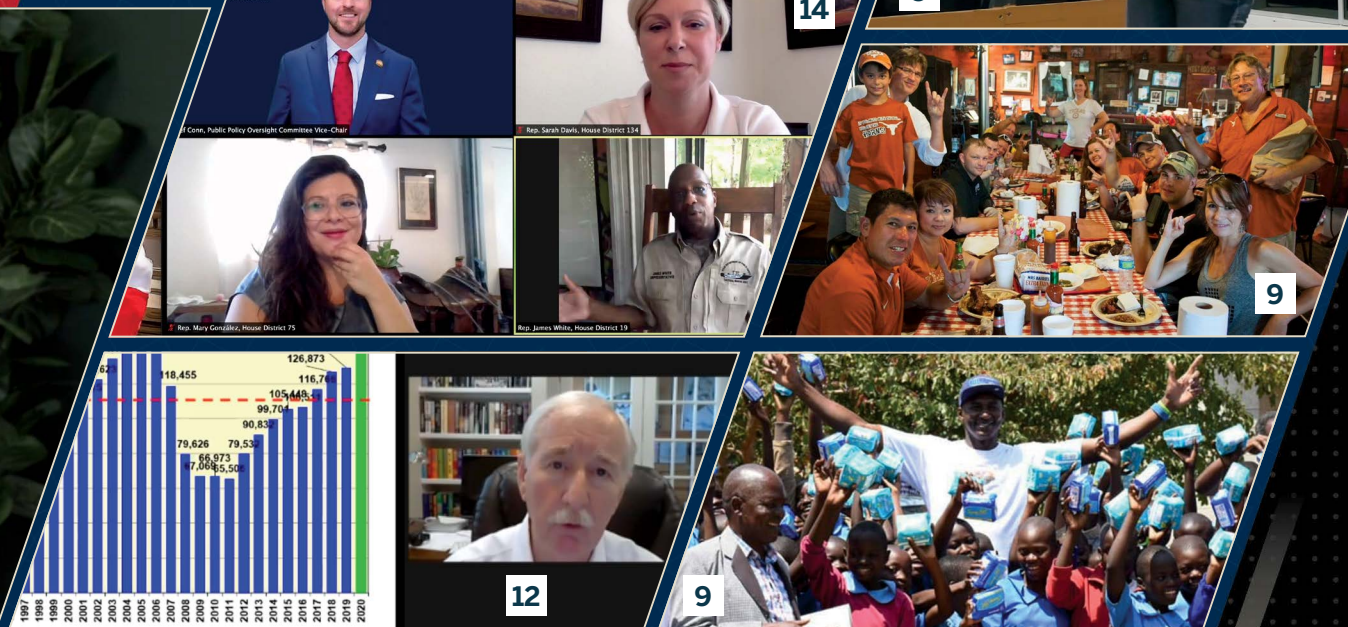
The centennial celebration featured **musical performances from REALTORS<sup>®</sup>** [8], a short film about the association’s history, and profiles of



**Dr. Leonard Moore**  
UT Vice President for Diversity and Community Engagement



**Stefan Swanepoel**  
Chairman & CEO, T3 Sixty



**Acts of Kindness award winners** [9], honored for making outstanding contributions in their communities.

Continuing Education credits were available for courses covering fair housing, diversity, the Code of Ethics, and contracts.

The association's Diversity Committee sponsored **Let's Talk About Race: How to Have Uncomfortable Conversations for Personal and Professional Development** [10]. Panel members discussed how historical discrimination has shaped cities and generational wealth, how prejudice continues to affect real estate, and what associations can do to foster diversity within their own ranks.

The association joined forces with AMPI, NAR's bilateral partner in Mexico, to present a **session entirely in Spanish** [11]. The session offered advice and tools to succeed in the American and Mexican real estate markets.

The Board of Directors heard an update on translating contracts, contract addenda, and legal notices into Vietnamese, the third most spoken language in Texas behind English and Spanish.

**COMMUNITY AND THE FUTURE**

The conference was a chance for the REALTOR® community to connect and network virtually. The Diversity and Young Professionals Network committees hosted a REALTORS® Night In networking event that featured a mixologist, live music, and magic. The 2020 REALTORS® to Watch Honorees were also announced at the event.

During the TREPAC Lone Starry Night event, REALTORS® enjoyed a night of laughs with comedian Sinbad while raising funds through the largest-ever online auction benefiting TREPAC.

**Jim Gaines** [12], chief economist at the Real Estate Center at Texas A&M University, offered a detailed overview of the Texas economy in the first half of 2020 and predictions through the first quarter of 2021.

The sessions **Walking the Tightrope in Turbulent Times** and **Real Estate Success in a Virtual Environment** [13] spoke to today's pressing issues. Panel members discussed updating social media policies, strategies for producing better video tours, and coronavirus safety protocols.

The Texas REALTORS® Public Policy Oversight Committee hosted state lawmakers **Rep. Sarah Davis, Rep. Mary González, and Rep. James White** [14, top right, bottom left, bottom right] to discuss priority issues for the 87<sup>th</sup> legislative session in 2021.

REALTOR® **Pat Strong** [15] was honored with the 2020 Distinguished Service Award. Texas REALTORS® President and CEO Travis Kessler recognized Jason Sanchez, CEO of the El Paso Board of REALTORS®, for earning the REALTOR® Association Certified Executive designation.

Closing keynote speaker **Stefan Swanepoel** [16] listed seven trends that will shape the real estate market in the months and years to come. He said the digitization of the homebuying process, video conferencing, and technology itself will continue to affect the industry and that these trends that were already in place are just being sped up by the pandemic.

In the closing message of the conference, **Gov. Greg Abbott** [17] congratulated Texas REALTORS® on its centennial anniversary and for advocating for private property rights in the state.

"Your industry will be vital as Texas recovers from this pandemic and revitalizes our tremendous economy," he said.

Chairman Bulla also wrapped up the conference with a message for a strong future: "For the last 100 years, despite our countless differences, we have managed to build a Texas REALTORS® legacy by speaking with one voice," Bulla said. "One day, another generation will celebrate the Texas REALTORS® bicentennial. Can you imagine all they will have to talk about from 2020?"

You can watch many of this year's sessions on demand at [texasrealestate.com/conference](https://texasrealestate.com/conference). ★

# Honoring Acts of Kindness

During its centennial festivities, Texas REALTORS® celebrated members who have gone the extra mile in their communities. The Acts of Kindness Award honors individuals, brokerages, and associations that are helping others and leading by example.

"These stories are inspiring, and they serve as a good reminder to all of us that REALTORS® make a difference," 2020 Chairman Cindi Bulla said. "Many thanks to all of those who shared their stories with us through this year's Acts of Kindness recognition initiative."



## INDIVIDUALS

1. **Ace Tejada**, Houston
2. **Amanda Lehman**, Houston
3. **Andra Beatty**, Greater Fort Worth
4. **Andrea Wollenzin**, San Antonio
5. **Angela Casiano**, Laredo
6. **Ann Jones**, San Antonio
7. **Annie Chen**, Houston
8. **Ashley M. Collier**, Uvalde
9. **Audra Smolinski**, Greater Lewisville
10. **Bahman F. Davani**, Collin County
11. **Bailey Funke**, Collin County
12. **Becky Vardeman-Murphy**, Waco
13. **Bet Jennings**, Houston
14. **Beth Lovell**, Houston
15. **Bob McCranie**, Collin County
16. **Cameron Mai**, North Texas Commercial
17. **Candace Cooke**, Williamson County
18. **Cathy Heshmat**, San Antonio
19. **Celine Crestin**, Austin
20. **Chrissy Mallouf**, Greater Denton/Wise County
21. **Christie Rhine**, Greater Denton/Wise County
22. **Christina Boston**, Houston
23. **Christine Morse**, San Antonio
24. **Christopher Jacobs**, San Antonio
25. **Christy Gessler**, Williamson County
26. **Coco Fontao**, MetroTex
27. **Cord Shiflet**, Austin
28. **Corey Guerrero**, Houston
29. **Cyndi Cummings**, Austin
30. **Cyndi De Palermo**, Houston
31. **Cynthia Lott**, Collin County
32. **Dan Goon**, Houston
33. **David Alan Cox**, Collin County
34. **David Atkins**, Houston
35. **David Cruz**, San Antonio
36. **David L. Cook**, Williamson County
37. **Dianne Field**, Austin
38. **Diane Seal**, Longview Area
39. **Douglas Van Nortwick**, Greater El Paso
40. **Eddie Elaine Sacks**, MetroTex
41. **Elaine Byrne**, Williamson County
42. **Elizabeth O'Connor**, Laredo
43. **Emily Dieckmann**, Austin
44. **Emily Huynh**, Collin County
45. **Felipe Cobarruvias**, San Antonio
46. **Frances Frost**, Amarillo
47. **Greg Jones**, San Antonio
48. **Heather Lange**, Beaumont
49. **Inga Gonzalez**, Greater Lewisville
50. **Ishmael Omondi**, MetroTex
51. **Jamar Johnson**, Collin County
52. **Jami Mumley**, Collin County
53. **Jamuna Thill**, Collin County
54. **Jan Poscovsky**, Houston
55. **Jean Shine**, Fort Hood Area
56. **Jeannette Spinelli**, Austin
57. **Jennifer Knott**, Greater Texoma
58. **Jenny Mangrum**, Four Rivers
59. **Jerry Winnett**, Austin
60. **Johnny Mowad**, MetroTex
61. **Jonathan Coffey**, MetroTex
62. **Juan Zane Crawford**, Houston
63. **Judith Rivers**, San Antonio
64. **Julie Alexander**, San Antonio
65. **Julie Yau Tam**, Houston
66. **Karen Cuskey-Hartman**, MetroTex
67. **Karen Lairsen Jones**, San Antonio
68. **Kathleen Wheeler**, Greater Fort Worth
69. **Kavitha Baratakke**, Austin
70. **Kevin Phelps**, Austin
71. **Kimberly Johnson**, South Central
72. **Kimberly Vo**, Arlington
73. **Kristi Fox Satsky**, Bryan College Station
74. **Kyla Dieterich**, Waco
75. **LaConda Davies McDonald**, MetroTex
76. **Larry W. Brooks**, Houston
77. **Laura Hayes**, Collin County
78. **Laura Lyons Sales**, Permian Basin
79. **Laurie Lujan**, Houston
80. **Leonard Seiple**, Greater Lewisville
81. **Lillian Garcia**, MetroTex
82. **Linda Niehuus**, South Central
83. **Linda Sykes**, Austin
84. **Lisa Elbjorn**, Greater El Paso
85. **Liz Carla**, Collin County
86. **Lorrie Westberry Kennedy**, Williamson County
87. **Mary Leidy**, Collin County
88. **Megan Jarrard Bradshaw**, Austin
89. **Michael DeLuna**, Beaumont
90. **Michael Wong**, Houston
91. **Missy Barry**, MetroTex
92. **Mysie Cardenas Barajas**, Greater McAllen
93. **Nancy Highers**, Collin County
94. **Neera Truong**, MetroTex
95. **Nicole Lopez**, Houston
96. **Nika Arastoupour**, MetroTex
97. **Nikki Watson**, MetroTex
98. **Patricia Meadows**, Waco
99. **Patrick Abell**, MetroTex
100. **Rahul Luthra**, MetroTex
101. **Rebecca Byers**, San Antonio
102. **Ro Williams**, Houston
103. **Robert Blaase**, Henderson County
104. **Ryan Jockers**, Houston
105. **Sarah Faynan**, Abilene
106. **Scott Vann**, Houston
107. **Shannon Gladen**, Greater Texoma
108. **Shelby Kimball**, Greater Fort Worth
109. **Soozi Finkelstein**, Collin County
110. **Stephen Lester**, Collin County
111. **Susanne Marco**, San Antonio
112. **Tammy Regian**, Waco
113. **Terry Cox**, Corpus Christi
114. **Tia Brooks**, Houston
115. **Tiffany Russell**, Austin
116. **Tom Schwenk**, Galveston
117. **Troy Giles**, South Padre Island
118. **Veronica Alonzo**, Greater McAllen
119. **Veronica Barefield**, Houston
120. **Vivian Vance**, MetroTex
121. **Zac Barger**, Austin

## BROKERAGES

122. **CB&A, REALTORS®**, Houston
123. **CENTURY 21 Judge Fite Company**, Greater Denton/Wise County
124. **City Group Properties**, Houston
125. **Coldwell Banker D'Ann Harper REALTORS®**, San Antonio
126. **Damron Group REALTORS®**, Four Rivers
127. **Dave Perry-Miller InTown Office**, MetroTex
128. **Engel & Völkers Dallas and Fort Worth**, MetroTex and Fort Worth
129. **Fox Realty**, Austin
130. **Golden Real Estate**, Greater El Paso
131. **House Hunters NB Realty**, Four Rivers
132. **Insight Realty Network**, MetroTex
133. **Keller Williams Advantage**, Waco
134. **Keller Williams Realty Midland**, Permian Basin
135. **Loves Realty**, Greater Lewisville
136. **Motif Boutique Brokerage**, San Antonio
137. **Murphy Team, Coldwell Banker D'Ann Harper, REALTORS®**, San Antonio
138. **Real Property Management One Source**, Collin County
139. **Realty Austin**, Austin
140. **RE/MAX Trinity**, Greater Fort Worth
141. **Sage Street Realty**, Collin County
142. **Schmitz and Smith Group, KW - Austin Portfolio Real Estate**, Austin
143. **Team Ensinia**, Arlington
144. **Texas Best Properties**, MetroTex
145. **The Real Estate Gals**, Dumas
146. **ThisIsLivin Properties**, Houston
147. **Todd Tramonte Home Selling Team, Market Experts Realty**, MetroTex
148. **Vivian Real Estate Group**, MetroTex

## ASSOCIATIONS

149. **Amarillo**
150. **Austin**
151. **Collin County**
152. **Granbury**
153. **Greater Lewisville**
154. **Greater McAllen**
155. **Laredo**
156. **MetroTex**
157. **Odessa**

The recipient list and several videos can be found at [texasrealestate.com/100](https://texasrealestate.com/100)

# MEET THE 2020 TEXAS REALTORS® TO WATCH

The Texas REALTORS® Young Professionals Network (YPN) named seven REALTORS® to Watch award recipients for 2020. “These young REALTORS® are making a difference in the industry and in their communities despite the new challenges of COVID-19,” says Texas REALTORS® Chairman Cindi Bulla. “The honorees this year are a strong group of leaders who’ve demonstrated a level of professionalism and experience that makes me proud to call them the next generation of Texas REALTORS® leaders.” The Texas REALTORS® to Watch award recognizes Texas REALTORS® under the age of 40 for excellence in leadership, community involvement, and everything else that makes a well-rounded young professional.



## ASHLEY GENTRY MetroTex

Ashley Gentry gained early insight into the industry through her mother. “I saw the effect she had on people’s lives, helping them achieve homeownership and financial freedom,” she says. That insight had a lasting effect.

Ashley is serving as director of her local board and vice chair of TREPAC and is a Texas REALTORS® Leadership Program graduate. She is also involved outside of the real estate sphere. She was recently awarded Newcomer of the Year by Collin County’s Women of Influence for her volunteerism. She has been a member of her local Junior League for four years, helping the organization establish a community garden for the Brain Injury Network of Dallas and hosting one of the largest local resale events for underserved members of the community.

“We are not just helping to facilitate a transaction, but in most instances are holding the fate and future of people’s lives in our hands.”

The driving force in Ashley’s career is not sales. “I am the loving mother of a nearly 7-year-old daughter who drives me to create a different world for her. My mom created a lane for my success, and my goal is to create a lane for my daughter to become a game changer in this world. I hope that she can be proud of the legacy I have left for her fueled by hope, hard work, and resiliency.”



## NICK KLINE Collin County

Nick is a seasoned agent with over 15 years of experience and an enthusiasm for the industry that is nearly unmatched.

“What I love about our Texas REALTORS® community is we are family,” he says.

“Frequently at our events, it is so fun to meet someone

and moments later you’re already hugging. The REALTOR® family is strong. The Texas REALTORS® family is even stronger.”

“Every day you will learn something new in this industry. And that keeps it so interesting and alive and fresh and exciting each day to see what’s in store.”

He has been actively involved in local, state, and national REALTOR® communities. He is a Texas REALTORS® Leadership Program graduate and put that knowledge to good use as president of the Collin County Association of REALTORS® in 2017—the youngest president in the association’s nearly 75-year history. He was co-founder of the Texas REALTORS® Young Professionals Network and several other local networks. He has also been on the Texas REALTORS® Executive Board and Board of Directors in addition to numerous other committees at the state and local level.

Nick continues to serve as a mentor to others, hoping to inspire them to do great things in their careers and make connections within their communities.

“Now I tell new agents what it truly means to be a REALTOR®,” he says. “That it is so much more than helping people buy or sell homes. That you are making a true difference in everything that you touch and participate in. And the key is to participate ... to be involved, to vote, to invest, to learn, to teach, and to bring joy to others.

“That is the REALTOR® way.”



## NICOLE LOPEZ Houston

Nicole Lopez is a third generation professional in the real estate industry, operating and managing an all-female team of 11 at True Houston Real Estate. She has nearly 10 years of experience under her belt, has graduated from the Texas REALTORS®

Leadership Program in 2018, and holds an NAR Commitment to Excellence certification.

“As I close my first decade in the industry, it is clear that this is my passion. This is my future. This is my legacy.”

Nicole’s commitment to her community—both the local and broader state community—is what she says sets her apart. She is an active member of her local and state associations and recently

Continued on page 30



## KYLEE GARZA Bryan-College Station

Kylee Garza has always had a knack for sales. She began her career at 16, selling everything from cowboy boots to squeeze chutes. After a sales career that would make any Texan proud, she moved to a desk job before realizing her true calling.

“I had always had a fascination with real estate and learned very quickly that I truly loved helping people purchase the biggest and most expensive dream we all strive for,” she says.

Kylee has been actively involved in her community, especially at her state and local Women’s Councils, where she was 2019 and 2020 president. She has volunteered at her local association on several committees and was co-facilitator for the 2018 Texas REALTORS® Leadership Program, of which she is a graduate.

She has also been involved at the state level as 2019-2020 appointee to the Political Involvement Committee and in the state Young Professionals Network, where she sits as committee liaison.

“I am constantly asking questions of the people I surround myself with, striving to be a better REALTOR® for my clients, but also to be better for the industry as a whole.”

Kylee’s commitment to the industry is what she says sets her apart from other REALTORS®. “I will never strive to be the number one agent in my area, because giving back to the real estate industry is just as important to me as selling real estate.”

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earned the 2020 Inman Innovator Award for her work helping local vendors of the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo stay afloat despite the event's closure due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"I believe that the largest challenges currently will be navigating our industry successfully through and after COVID-19," says Nicole. "No doubt we will see long-lasting effects to our residential and commercial sphere, but working together with our membership and truly listening and leveraging our talent as a whole will ensure we come through this together successfully."



## ROMAN NOVIAN

Waco

Roman Novian took a decisive step into real estate in 2012, eager to advance to the top, and has not looked back since. He established himself early on with an impressive production volume in his first three years of practice. He graduated from the Texas REALTORS®

Leadership Program and has put that knowledge to use at his local and state associations, having sat on his local Board of Directors and chaired several other volunteer committees.

Roman is also actively involved outside of the real estate community. He serves on the Board of Directors for the Waco ISD Education Foundation and contributes to a personal scholarship that supports high school students who have demonstrated community involvement, volunteerism, and character.

"I am a true testament to hard work and determination," he says. "When I got into the business eight years ago, I started from scratch. I didn't have a college degree to fall back on, and I didn't have a second source of income, but what I did have was a strong desire to succeed."

**"For anyone who ever asks me how I did it, I tell them you just have to want it more than you want anything else."**



## SAMANTHA PLOMER

Houston

Samantha Plomer began her career in real estate interning for an apartment locating company in college. She quickly came to realize that this industry was her calling.

"I love to be out in the field and working with people hands-on," she says.

Over the past several years, Samantha has been an active member at her local and state associations. Her dedication is demonstrated by her consistent involvement on several committees, including the Political Affairs Advisory Leadership Committee and the Katy Planning Committee. She has been a Young Professionals Network Committee member at the local and state level and has been involved with her local Women's Council for years, making her way to acting president in 2019.

**"I would give any agent some of the best advice I was given, which is: Don't be afraid of change or you'll never grow!"**

One of the things Samantha says makes her stand out from other REALTORS® is her background in interior design. She works with sellers to stage their properties and helps them on any necessary redesigns. She also works with buyers to help turn the house they purchased into the home they always dreamed of.

"This is my favorite part about working with buyers or sellers. I love how creative I can be in this industry!"



## VIRGINIA ANN PRAZAK

Texarkana

Virginia is a third-generation REALTOR® with a family history that has been strongly entwined with real estate for decades.

**"My family has helped me learn the values of our**

**profession and to uphold them to the highest standard."**

Virginia lives in Texarkana, so her community involvement stretches across state lines. She is an active member of her local and state associations and was installed as one of the nine Texarkana directors in 2019 in addition to her membership on various other committees. She also has numerous designations and certifications, including the NAR Commitment to Excellence certification.

In addition to actively engaging in the real estate community, Virginia also finds time to help make the broader community a better place through volunteer work and mentorship. During a peak of the COVID-19 pandemic and a shortage in personal protective equipment, she made hundreds of masks for local health workers.

"Operating under new standards due to COVID-19 has been a hurdle to overcome. However, I am committed to continuing to get outside of my comfort zone to succeed."

**Read more about the 2020 Texas REALTORS® to Watch at [texasrealestate.com/about-us/awards/realtors-to-watch-award](https://texasrealestate.com/about-us/awards/realtors-to-watch-award).**



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## DID YOU KNOW?

### REALTORS® WORK TO PROTECT YOU FROM FRAUD

With such large amounts of money involved, real estate transactions are prime targets for scammers. One fraud involves criminals who trick homebuyers into wiring their down payment money to the criminals' bank account. Once the money is deposited into the wrong account, it's quickly lost in a labyrinth of bank transfers. The buyers' funds are difficult to recover.

#### PROFESSIONALS LOOKING OUT FOR YOUR INTERESTS

REALTORS®—those real estate agents who join the national, state, and local associations of REALTORS®—work together to make real estate transactions as safe as they can be. Your REALTOR® may talk with you about steps you can take to avoid scams. Texas REALTORS® even provides a flier its members can share with clients to help you learn how to prevent real estate wire fraud.

#### A CENTURY OF PROTECTING REAL ESTATE BUYERS AND SELLERS

REALTORS® in Texas have been setting the highest standards for professionalism for 100 years. In fact, one reason the association was formed in 1920 was in response to unscrupulous businesspeople. These "curbstoners," as they were called, were cheating honest Texans in real estate scams, so ethical real estate brokers came together to do something about it. These professionals formed an association that worked tirelessly to require real estate licenses in Texas. REALTORS® also were the driving force to create the Texas Real Estate Commission, the state entity that regulates real estate license holders and safeguards consumers in matters of real property transactions. You can count on Texas REALTORS® to continue to fight on behalf of high standards and consumer protection in the future.



## WORKING WITH A REALTOR® GIVES YOU PEACE OF MIND.

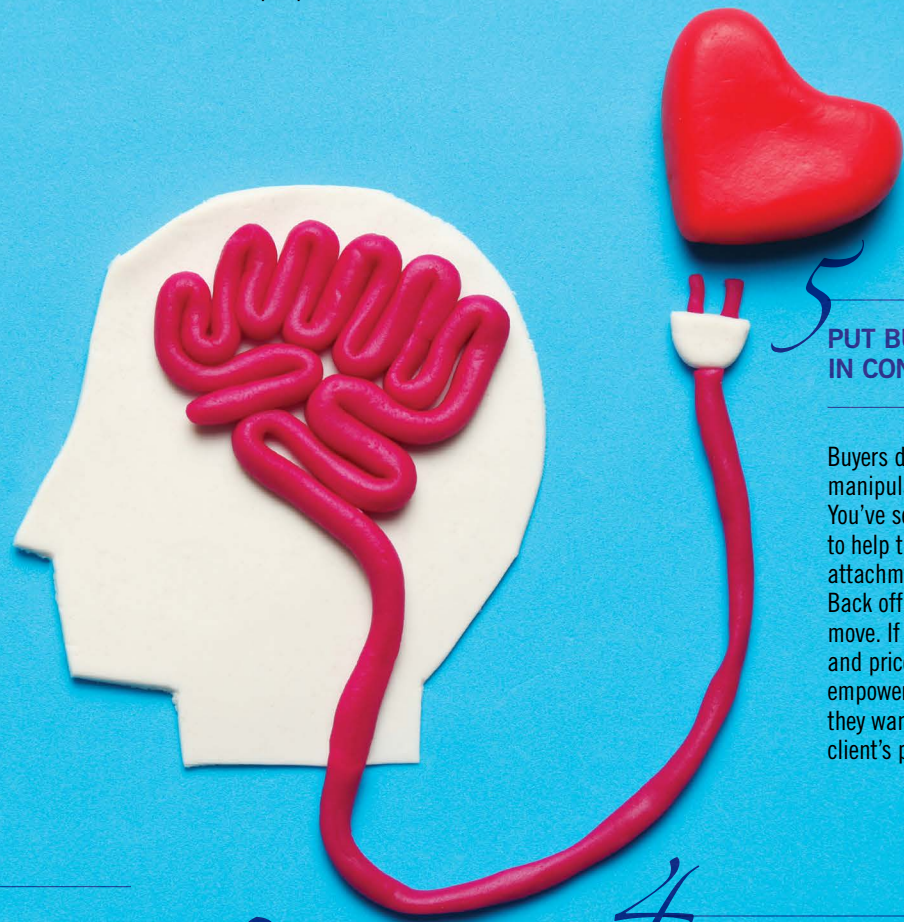
A real estate transaction can be a complex and big financial decision. It's nice to know that someone is on your side, looking out for your best interests. Your REALTOR® puts your interests first, and REALTORS® in Texas work collectively to make real estate transactions and ownership better for everyone.

# TAKE 5

## MARKET PROPERTIES WITH EMOTION

People are supposed to put aside emotions in real estate transactions. They are told to focus on whether the property meets their needs and fits their budget.

But that's not the real world. When a buyer falls in love with a house, emotion takes over. Here's how to appeal to those emotions when you market properties.



### 1 FOCUS ON ENJOYMENT

Describe ways potential buyers can enjoy aspects of the property: A home theater provides the household a comfortable gathering place to watch movies and TV. A large patio enables homeowners to extend their living area outdoors for relaxing, grilling, and socializing. A nearby greenbelt makes a great place to hike or walk the dog.

### 2 SHARE THE OWNERS' INSIGHTS

Ask the sellers what they most love about the property and pass it along via your marketing. It could be something simple like how they love being so close to a coffee shop. Maybe the house's orientation results in a shaded yard and common areas, which make them comfortable in the summer heat. Leverage the current owners' fond memories and knowledge to help buyers see the property's best features.

### 3 MAKE IT CONVENIENT

Stress how you or the sellers can make the transaction easy. Maybe the sellers are flexible on a closing date or are willing to leave appliances or furniture. Emphasize that the buyers can save time and effort with this property.

### 5 PUT BUYERS IN CONTROL

Buyers don't want to feel manipulated or pressured. You've set up your marketing to help them form an emotional attachment to the property. Back off and let them make a move. If the house is marketed and priced well, they will feel empowered and realize that they want to purchase your client's property.

### 4 EXPLAIN WHY IT'S GREAT

People want reassurance when making big decisions like buying a house. Mention any upgrades or repairs done by the owners. For example, if the sellers replaced the upstairs HVAC and put on a new roof, those are items the buyer can feel good about.



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