

REVIEW

Omaha Area Board of REALTORS®



A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

NEW YEAR, NEW POSSIBILITIES

The confetti descended! The ball dropped at midnight, and the world celebrated the start of a new year as it bid farewell to the wild and unconventional year that was 2024.

With the chaotic holiday season now behind us, we can draw our attention to the coming months and set new intentions and goals. We can consider what we would like to accomplish in the coming year, as we reflect on the past year.

REALTOR® Ring Day 2024 was again a huge success! REALTORS® and Affiliates rang bells for the Salvation Army Red Kettle campaign on the First Friday of December to help those in need. Thank you to everyone who participated. We REALTORS® and members of Omaha Area Board of REALTORS® really worked together for the greater good and it's always heartwarming to feel the impact we have by helping our community on this day.

Thank you to all who contributed to RPAC; we met our goal in 2024. Each year we work hard to reach our goal, wondering if it's possible. The truth is it's hard work, but it's important work. RPAC protects the real estate industry on so many levels. The fact is that there is no shortage of bad ideas or new ways to tax people. We have real estate champions all around us defending our private lives, our real estate careers, and our families and clients. With that, I invite you to attend the Nebraska **REALTORS® Association at Political Action Days** coming up at the end of the month at the Innovation Campus in Lincoln, NE. It presents a perfect opportunity to educate yourself about the latest about bills that would impact your home and business.

There will be many great educational opportunities in 2025. Please check out the **OABR calendar online** to get the latest info. Back by popular demand: **Brent and Brad's Excellent VA and FHA Adventure** on January 30th. This class provides a great overview of VA and FHA loans, whether you're new to the industry or just want a refresher course. In the words of Benjamin Franklin, "An investment in knowledge pays the best interest."

Mark February 5th on your calendar! **REcharge 2025** is right around the corner! Get your tickets now and bring a friend to the LaVista Convention Center for the real estate event of the year. With sessions including a Broker panel, top-notch speakers, including NAR's Deputy Chief Economist, Jessica Lautz, and other incredible breakout sessions coupled with networking opportunities!

I look forward to all that the year will hold, I hope you took time to reflect on 2024, set goals for 2025, and live each day with the best of intentions. "To accomplish great things we must not only act, but also dream; not only plan, but also believe."-Antole France

Happy New Year!

May you always walk in the sunshine, my friend!

Jessica Sawyer,
2025 OABR President



REVIEW

OMAHA AREA BOARD OF REALTORS® 2025 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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THUR
30
JAN.

Brent & Brad's Excellent VA & FHA Adventure (#1447)

📍 OABR EDUCATION CENTER

🕒 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Register at omaharealtors.com/excellent_adventure

WED
5
FEB.

2025 RECHARGE

📍 EMBASSY SUITES, LA VISTA, NE

🕒 7:30 AM – 5:00 PM

Register at rechargenebraska.com

WED
12
MAR.

PRICING STRATEGIES

MASTERING THE CMA (PSA) CERTIFICATION

📍 EMBASSY SUITES, LA VISTA, NE

🕒 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM

Register at omaharealtors.com/pricing_strategies

2024 OABR Turkey Bowl Puts 'Fun' in Fundraiser

Written by
Melissa McElroy

The Marines had a critical mission on November 20. A few good men descended upon the Maplewood Lanes to collect unwrapped toys at the Omaha Area Board of REALTORS® Turkey Bowl, an annual fundraiser hosted by the OABR Affiliate Committee to benefit the U.S. Marines' Toys for Tots charity.

Every year for the past 77 years, Marines have collected unwrapped toys and delivered them to disadvantaged children at Christmastime. Toys for Tots, initially created in 1947 by Marine Bill Hendricks, eventually became a charitable non-profit in 1991.

OABR Affiliate Laura Singleton, who chaired the fundraiser, said, "As Affiliates and agents, we're coming together for a greater cause—meeting new faces, building connections, and having fun while raising money for the Marines' Toys for Tots. It's a chance to enjoy great company, strike up some fun, and make a real difference in our community."





The Belle of the Butterball, Cody Bousema, purchased the winning ticket for the split-the-pot fundraiser. He won half the \$6,250 pot but walked away with less after giving back to the charity. Bravo, Cody!

The Toys for Tots charity collected eleven large boxes filled with toys valued at \$11,000, over \$2,000 in cash donations collected at the door, plus proceeds from the event, making the grand total over \$34,000 raised from the 2024 OABR Turkey Bowl.

The Affiliate Committee and the Toys for Tots program were genuinely thankful and bowl-ed over by everyone's generosity! Shout out to all who came out to support this worthy cause, especially the Turkey Bowl Committee, sponsors, and volunteers!



Turkey Bowl Committee

Laura Singleton Nebraska Title Company

Debbie Williams Farm Bureau Financial Services

Kristina Boehmer Nebraska Title Company

Katie Lieffers Veterans United Home Loans

King Pin Sponsor | \$2,500

Veterans United Home Loans
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Split the Pot | \$1,000

RE/MAX Central Inc

Strike Zone | \$500

Flat Branch Home Loans
Nebraska Title Company
Thrasher

Spare Zone | \$400

Mortgage Specialists, LLC
Centris Federal Credit Union
Gersman Mortgage

Happy Hour | \$250

Service One

Lane Sponsor | \$100

Paul Davis Restoration
NR Insurance
Northwest Bank
Gateway Mortgage
Guild Mortgage
Ambassador Title Services

Turkey Sponsor

Farm Bureau Financial
Services- Debbie Williams



ELECTRICAL CODES SPARK DEBATE

Written by
Melissa McElroy

Electrical Code Ordinances don't typically generate electrifying debates, unless the proposed ordinance would unnecessarily drive up the cost of a new home. Local home builders estimated the proposal would cost \$1,300. This extra cost sparked pushback from leaders in the real estate community who are concerned with the housing affordability crisis.

According to a study conducted by UNO and commissioned by the Welcome Home Coalition, government regulations now make up roughly one-third of new housing costs. Every time the cost of a new home construction increases, more individuals are priced out of the market.

The Omaha City Council initially passed the electrical code ordinance, which included updated national and state codes, in November by a 4-3 vote; Mayor Stothert later vetoed it.

Stothert stated in a letter sent to the City Council that the state found a reasonable balance of safety and affordability for electrical work in a single-family home. She advocated for the city to adopt ordinances comparable to the state's, adding that unnecessary, mandatory regulations would add unjustified costs that wouldn't make homes safer. She believes that preventing unnecessary regulatory costs keeps housing affordable and creates a more enticing environment for builders and developers to build in Omaha. The Council tried to override the Mayor's veto but fell short with only three votes from Council members Danny Begley, Pete Festersen, and Ron Hug.

The Omaha Area Board of REALTORS® has supported the Welcome Home Coalition since its inception. OABR representative Joe Gehrki said that one of the main objectives of the nonprofit coalition is to help voice concerns about how unnecessary regulation substantially increases housing costs. The Welcome Home Coalition consists of individuals, businesses, and organizations that advocate proactively to make meaningful changes to public policy to spur housing affordability in Nebraska. One key component of that objective is educating policymakers and local citizens about how seemingly small costs add up.

Gehrki said, "Any time you hear an elected official say, 'It'll only cost an additional \$1,000,' the hair on the back of your neck should stand up." He explained that every time an additional governmental cost is tacked onto a new home, the increasingly elusive American dream of homeownership becomes even more elusive. According to the National Association of Homebuilders, for every \$1,000 price increase of a home in the Omaha metro, 435 households are priced out of the market.

Gehrki has also worked on behalf of the National Association of REALTORS® as a Federal Political Coordinator with former Congressman Lee Terry, former Senator Ben Sasse, and current Senator Pete Ricketts. He is a firm believer in sharing the real estate industry's viewpoints with the elected officials who determine policies and voice any concerns about any legislation that could be detrimental to the housing market.

OABR Governmental Affairs Director and Welcome Home Coalition advocate Perre Neilan spoke out against this ordinance before the city council and will continue to speak out against unnecessary regulations that needlessly spike housing costs, in part of an ongoing battle to keep housing more affordable.



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ABOUT YOUR NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS

— Written by **Melissa McElroy** —

People around the world make grand proclamations each New Year's. Their resolutions run the gamut. Some vow to become kale-eating, gym rats. Many declare that they'll quit a bad habit. Others might resolve to achieve something big, like going to grad school. Millions will make resolutions, only to later falter in their resolve.

How do people make their goals stick? People are creatures of habit. Breaking out of old habits to adopt newer ones is a process. According to psychologists, making any lasting behavioral change starts with reprogramming your brain.

According to Psychology Today, goals must be formulated in a S.M.A.R.T. way. They have to be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Related. Overcoming the impulsive part of the brain comes down to breaking it down into goals with specific steps. Instead of saying you want to lose weight, you set a specific intention, such as "I will work out on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays," or "I will eat a salad for dinner on Fridays."

Much like reprogramming a computer, you want to reprogram your brain with new prompts or "action triggers." Psychology Today referred to a simple but powerful technique developed by German psychologists Peter Gollwitzer and Anja Achtziger, called "implementation intentions." It works by using "if-then" programming that you send to the impulsive part of your brain. If you do one specific behavior, then you'll do another behavior. If you order a burger, you will order a salad instead of fries. If you sit on the couch, you will read a book rather than watching tv or scrolling social media.

Two psychologists associated with The British Psychological Society, Dr. Audrey Tang and Dr. Tamara Russell shared tips in an article posted on the British Psychological Society's website (bps.org.uk) on how to better achieve resolutions. Dr. Tang's tip? Don't make resolutions, make goals, but know what you specifically need to do to achieve them. You need to ask yourself, "Is this behavior leading me to my

outcome, or is it reinforcing what I already do and want to change?" She recommended asking ourselves this question often and then making a conscious choice about the behavior we want to change to create new pathways in our brain that will help form new habits.

Dr. Tang also recommended "stacking your goals." If, for example, you want to get fitter, eat healthier, and spend more time with family, you stack your goals by cooking healthy meals together or going for a family walk. She also suggested forming an attitude of gratitude, which creates healthy connections in the brain, making it easier to notice life's positives. It also creates a blueprint of how we've achieved things in the past.

Dr. Tamara Russell, a psychologist who is a leading expert in mindfulness, said you need to be really clear about why the change in behavior is important to you. Being mindful supports the behavior changes you are trying to enact. According to Russell, repeatedly focusing on the attentional training aspect of mindfulness strengthens the brain's neural networks that are involved in keeping you on track with your New Year's resolutions.

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**JANUARY
17, 2025**



EMPOWER HOURS

OABR EDUCATION CENTER + 9:00AM - 11:00AM + COFFEE AND DONUTS PROVIDED

Empower Hours is a quarterly event hosted by the Young Professionals Network, designed to energize and equip real estate professionals with valuable insights and connections. Alternating between morning and afternoon sessions, this two-hour gathering fosters confidence, collaboration, and professional growth, empowering attendees to thrive in the ever-evolving real estate industry.

ALL MEMBERS ARE WELCOME

WCR 2025 INSTALLATION & AWARDS

Written by **Melissa McElroy**

It was a night of splendor and celebration at Champions Run on December 12, as the WCR Queens made their way onto the scene for the 2025 Women's Council of REALTORS® Installation.

Better Homes & Gardens' Broker, Tom Simmons graced the stage and gave a moving speech about leadership. Leaders are service-minded people who serve each other, the industry, and the community. They have integrity and lead by example. WCR empowers members to grow personally and professionally, while bolstering great leadership skills.

2024 Omaha Chapter WCR President, Sarina McNeel reflected on the past year. She shared her experiences from when she worked as a critical care nurse. As the lead of the code team, she had to make split-second, life or death decisions. It was a high-stress, high-stakes world, but she knew her role well and thrived in that chaotic environment.

After years of working in chaos, she returned to real estate in 2018 and embraced a new kind of chaos. Immediately she was shocked by how much the industry changed since the first time she worked as a REALTOR® from 1997 to 2001.



Technology changed the business. It all felt so out of her comfort zone.

Originally, she wasn't really interested in WCR, and thought it was like a sorority for REALTORS®. Her colleague Angel Starks pushed her to attend a WCR meeting. Finally, Sarina relented. It was in that first meeting that her mind was changed. From there she soon became involved in projects and committees, which opened doors she didn't know existed. It enriched her life and career.

When she was a leader in healthcare, she had to control outcomes. WCR taught her a new style of leadership, built on trusting the other members of the team and working together towards a common goal.

As the evening progressed, leaders within the WCR community were recognized, and Tom Simmons performed the Officer Installation. Then the woman of the hour, 2025 WCR President, Trac Burkhardt took the stage shared her gratitude, as well as her hopes for the coming year under her leadership. She has great events in the works for the coming year to spur more member engagement. As a leader in her industry, Trac understands that encouraging WCR members today, empowers them to become the leaders of tomorrow.

WCR OMAHA CHAPTER

2025 Leadership

2025 PRESIDENT | Trac Burkhardt

2025 PRESIDENT ELECT | Angie Thiel

TREASURER | Holly Lombardo

MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR | Amy Dritley

EVENTS DIRECTOR | Cali Rethwisch

FIRST VICE PRESIDENT | Angela Hunter

2024 Awards

OUTSTANDING SERVICE | Outstanding Service – Strategic Partner Lauren Nissen, Veridian Credit Union

OUTSTANDING SERVICE | REALTOR® Chelsea Hansen, BHHS

STRATEGIC PARTNER-OF-THE-YEAR |

Holly Lombardo, Guild Mortgage

ENTREPRENEUR-OF-THE-YEAR |

Sue Laubert, KW Elite Virtue Group

REALTOR®-OF-THE-YEAR | Jen Pagel, Nebraska Realty



* JINGLE BELLS ROCK: * REALTOR® RING DAY *

Written by **Melissa McElroy**

A symphony of bells chimed across the Omaha metro on December 6th. Every first Friday in December, REALTORS® across the nation team up with the Salvation Army to ring bells for the Red Kettle Drive, which provides food and clothing to millions of people in need during the holidays and beyond. Omaha Area Board of REALTORS® volunteers embraced the spirit of the season ringing bells for REALTOR® Ring Day 2024, bringing holiday cheer to revelers throughout the city.

"The Omaha Area Board of REALTORS® has once again gone above and beyond in supporting us via the REALTOR® Ring event," said Major Scott Shelbourn, divisional commander of The Salvation Army Western Division. "Donations brought in through the event will make a huge difference in putting food on the table, keeping the lights and heat on, and putting presents under the tree for local families in need. We salute all the REALTOR® Ring participants -- and their respective companies -- for their efforts to serve and impact the community in this wonderfully unique way."

The Red Kettles flowed over with generous donations. OABR volunteer bellringers raised \$10,727.46 this year and over \$140,000 since 2010. Thank you to all the OABR members who volunteered and helped raise money for a worthy cause, proving once again that the people in the real estate community have the biggest hearts!





2025 RECHARGE

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

NAR ECONOMIST JESSICA LAUTZ: Q&A

Written by **Melissa McElroy**

Dr. Jessica Lautz is a highly respected economist who has researched trends for REALTORS® and housing consumers since NAR hired her in 2007. She is known for her ability to communicate current real estate market trends clearly, and she is the first keynote speaker at REcharge 2025.

Major media outlets have sought her expert insights into the real estate market, and she has testified before Congress on behalf of REALTORS®. Her resume boasts an impressive educational background: undergraduate degrees in Political Science and Law and Justice from Central Washington University, a Master's in Public Policy from American University, and a Doctorate of Real Estate from Nottingham Trent University in the United Kingdom.

OABR secured an exclusive Q&A session to highlight her insights:

Q What are some of your predictions for the economy and housing market in the coming year?

A Next year, home sales volume is forecasted to increase by about 10 percent in 2025. Homebuyers are encouraged by lower and consistent mortgage interest rates in the 6 percent range. Homeowners continue to earn housing equity through home price gains. If current homeowners are in a scenario where moving makes sense, they likely have the equity to offset the higher mortgage rate.



One-third of recent primary-residence, repeat buyers are actually making all-cash purchases and not financing their next home.

Q Do you think that geopolitical factors will impact the housing market?

A In our research, international homebuyers have decreased to the lowest level recorded in a decade. The strong U.S. dollar has made purchasing in the U.S. expensive for international homebuyers.

Q Could tariffs or a worker shortage negatively impact costs?

A At this point, we do not know precisely what the incoming Administration could change. It is possible that changes could make homebuilding more expensive; however, there is a clear understanding that the U.S. needs more housing inventory.

Q What can be done to make housing more affordable?

A Building more housing inventory and a diversity of housing inventory is critical to having a more affordable supply of homes. Ideas of adaptive reuse and remodeling existing structures, such as vacant hotels/motels, vacant schools, and even vacant residential malls, into residential units could help housing inventory and affordability.

Q Do you think interest rates will stay steady?

A Yes. The expectation for mortgage interest rates into 2025 is relative stability. While there will be weekly movement in mortgage interest rates, there is no expectation that mortgage rates will move substantially and should stay in the 6% range for home buyers.

Q I read in your bio that you bake cakes for underserved youth. That's fantastic! How did you get involved with the Cake4Kids organization? What is your favorite type of cake to make? As someone who graduated from Nottingham Trent University in the UK, are you also obsessed with The Great British Bake off?

A I love the Bake Off! How the nonprofit works is that a social worker enters a cake into an online portal and requests the kiddo's favorite flavor and theme. Chocolate is my favorite to make, and I have fun with any theme



KYLE SCHEELE: CHAMPION OF CRAZY IDEAS

When you lack the time, the budget, and the team, you are forced to be creative to get things done. Being creative in business is all about embracing your constraints.

Kyle Scheele is the “Patron Saint of Crazy Ideas.” He is an artist, author, inventor, speaker, welder, animator, storyteller, and a true modern Renaissance man. He has mastered the art of sparking creative ideas and believes in the power of one person. One person can make a difference!

The self-proclaimed “professional internet goofball” has an impressive body of work centered around professional internet goofball shenanigans, which include organizing a fake marathon with 34,477 internet strangers and having a Viking funeral for the regrets of 21,000 people.

You might think that's crazy; however, he has caught the attention of The Washington Post, BuzzFeed, and WIRED.

One recent example of a crazy idea involved smuggling snacks into a theater inside of a fake prosthetic arm. Kyle was on a mission to pull off - in his words - the dumbest heist of all time. But as he found out, it wasn't

about sneaking candy into a movie, but about the friends made along the way.

He has embraced one specific radical idea: creativity is good for business. He expounded on this philosophy in a Premiere Speakers Bureau podcast, where he described himself as the guy who comes up with some crazy idea and then does everything in his power to make that crazy idea happen. It has led to some spectacular outcomes.

He believes that the reason why someone like Jim Henson, creator of The Muppets, was so interesting was because he was interested in a bit of everything. Jim Henson would watch interesting documentaries and take in creativity in all its forms, which inspired his art.

The professional speaker and influencer also mused that creativity thrives within constraints. He used two examples to demonstrate that: prison and war. People are forced to think outside the box when they lack resources. The same goes for your business.

If you take anything away from Kyle, it should be this: chase those crazy ideas; they'll lead you on a journey worth exploring. Or, to borrow a quote from someone who inspired him, Bill Bernbach, the father of creative advertising – the real-life Don Draper – who said, "It may well be that creativity is the last unfair advantage we're legally allowed to take over our competitors." Your unique, creative edge is your superpower.

Dr. Jessica Lautz and Kyle Scheele are featured speakers at REcharge 2025 on February 5 at the La Vista Convention Center. Tickets are still available at REchargenebraska.com.



Register
Here



2025 RECHARGE

RECHARGENEBRASKA.COM



JESSICA LAUTZ, PH.D.

NAR DEPUTY CHIEF ECONOMIST
AND VICE PRESIDENT OF RESEARCH

What should we expect for the 2025 real estate market? NAR's Deputy Chief Economist and Vice President of Research, Dr. Jessica Lautz, will make important predictions about the economy and the housing market in the coming year. Knowledge is power. Knowing what to expect in the coming months will give your business a competitive edge.



OMAHA'S TOP BROKERS

ANDY ALLOWAY, JILL ANDERSON,
VINCE LEISEY, TOM SIMMONS

Brokers from the top brokerages will share their industry expertise in an enlightening power panel. Andy Alloway, Jill Anderson, Vince Leisey, and Tom Simmons have well over a century of combined real estate experience, which will be showcased in a thought-provoking Q &A session, followed by questions taken from the audience.



KYLE SCHEELE

THE PATRON SAINT OF CRAZY IDEAS

Motivational speaker, author, and artist, Kyle Scheele, has made a career out of championing crazy ideas. He has inspired thousands across the country to pursue their own crazy ideas and become masters of their own fates. End the day on a high note. Leave RECHARGE feeling recharged.

02.05.25
EMBASSY SUITES LAVISTA

THE TRENCHES

Written by **Melissa McElroy**

Winter is, in some ways, like a career in real estate. It starts out mild until unforeseen hazards quickly arise that might test your survival skills.

WHAT LIES BENEATH

REALTOR® Camilla Knapp recalls the showing vividly. It was a beautiful old house with magnificent architecture.

She and her clients made their way around the entire sprawling estate until they finally made their way to the basement. It was dark and dingy in the bowels of the home. The first thing Camilla noticed when her eyes adjusted to the dim lighting was hundreds of toilet paper roll tubes scattered everywhere.

"Well, that's odd," she thought.

They made their way to a large wooden door. She tried to open it. It wouldn't budge at first. She managed to jar it open with a little elbow grease, only to be shocked by what she found on the other side of the door.

A large, disheveled woman was sitting on a dirty mattress, chain-smoking cigarettes in her underwear. The nearly naked woman barely noticed them as she took another drag off her cigarette and petted her two cats. The scent of stale cigarette smoke and cat urine permeated the air.

Camilla swiftly escorted her clients out of the home, which was supposed to be unoccupied. The surprised, seasoned REALTOR® believed the mysterious, chain-smoking woman in the basement was a squatter who had broken into the vacant house. She contacted the listing agent to alert them and moved on with her clients.

VETERAN AFFAIRS

REALTOR® Maggie Kohles specializes in helping veterans and active military members with their real estate needs. As a retired veteran herself, she prides herself on doing everything in her power to help her clients. One client in particular stands out to her – the one she had to bail out of jail.

Her client was a referral, relocating to the area. She got to know the kindhearted, grandfatherly gentleman who was disabled and needed a walker to get around. There was just one problem: his irrational ex-girlfriend, who had a history of problems with the law.

The ex-girlfriend had a scheme to scam him out of his home. She began having her mail delivered to his address and then claimed to live there, using the mail as evidence. The ex-girlfriend physically assaulted and injured the older man. She accused him of domestic violence and filed a protection order against him. He was arrested and was unable to live in his own home because of her claim it was her residence, even though she never paid a dime for it. He ended up losing his job, and the disabled veteran couldn't afford a lawyer or bail.

Maggie posted bail, and she and her husband decided to let him live with them until he could get back on his feet. They helped him navigate the treacherous terrain of the legal system. She even called her congressman to get additional help.

It serves as a cautionary tale. Be careful who you allow into your life, your home, and even your mailbox.

2025

Happy New Year

Warmest Wishes from the Celebrity Homes Team



Ericka Heidvogel



Shelley Hourigan



Don Igo



Brooke Johnson



Monica Lang



David Lee



Luke Lofgren



Seth Mielke



Kurt Pfeffer



Gary Price



Karen Stansberry



Tiffany Stanton



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MEMBERSHIP REPORT

November Activity	MO	YTD
New REALTOR® Members	13	250
Resignations	10	416
Membership (As of December 1)	2024	2023
Designated REALTORS®	197	210
REALTOR®	2996	3068
REALTOR® Emeritus	94	87
TOTAL REALTORS®	3287	3365
Institute Affiliate	78	74
Affiliate Members	130	137
Key-Only Affiliates	119	125

Full membership report at OmahaREALTORS.com/membership-report

DESIGNATIONS

Accredited Buyer Representative (ABR®)

- Sherry Dixon, NP Dodge R.E
- Ashley Nicole Fowler, Nebraska Realty
- Charis McCain, NP Dodge R.E
- Morgan Putnam, Keller Williams Greater Omaha
- Angel Starks, Nebraska Realty

CERTIFICATIONS

e-PRO®

- Janelle Tierney, Nebraska Realty

Military Relocation Professional (MRP)

- Christina Lerma, kwELITE Real Estate

PERSONALS

Our Condolences

- To the family and friends of Logan Hoyt, Hoyt Real Estate LLC, who passed away
- To Carolyn Kesick, BHHS Ambassador R.E, on the passing of her son
- To Connie Betz, BHHS Ambassador R.E, on the passing of her husband
- To the family and friends of Tony Roth, BHHS Ambassador R.E, who passed away

Congratulations

- To Christy Leesly, Nebraska Realty, on being a finalist for the Inspire Women's Leadership Award



CONGRATULATIONS, JOE GEHRKI

Congratulations to REALTOR Joe Gehrki, appointed as Director of the Nebraska Real Estate Commission, replacing retiring Greg Lemon on January 1.



OABR CHECK PRESENTATION TO TOYS FOR TOTS

The Affiliate Committee presented a check to the Toys for Tots charity; the funds were raised from the Turkey Bowl 2024 Fundraiser. A grand total of \$34,019.89 was raised. Thank you to all sponsors, volunteers, and attendees. You helped to make a big difference for kids in need.

NEW YEAR, NEW JOURNEY

As we embark upon the New Year, I am filled with optimism and excitement for the adventures that lie ahead in the months to come.

The Women's Council of REALTORS® Omaha Chapter Installation in December was an inspiring event. I want to thank 2024 WCR President Sarina McNeel, and the 2024 WCR Board of Directors for all that they have done for our organization. It takes a village to keep everything running and we have an amazing village. WCR just gets better and better every year.

I'm truly grateful for all the WCR members and hope to see even more of them in the next year. One of my biggest goals will be to provide VALUE with events, and recognition to all of our affiliates and members for their support. Planning is in the works to organize meaningful events, with top-notch speakers that will be educational and inspirational. Stay tuned for details; check out wcromaha.com for more information.

My personal journey has led me to where I am today. After working in the corporate world for years, I embarked upon my real estate career. I was fortunate to discover WCR on my career path. I've met so many amazing people through WCR and throughout my career who have taught me so much. These

connections are beautiful reminders of why WCR is vital to our real estate community and why I'll show up every day, ready to serve alongside people who are not just amazing people, but champions of real estate.

Our next event is January 16th, a Membership Mixer, 5 PM at Social West. We would like non-members, and of course our members, to join us to learn more about WCR. WCR welcomes new members. If you are a REALTOR® or an Affiliate and would like to network with leaders in the real estate community, please consider joining WCR today. If you are already a WCR member, I hope to see you at upcoming events. We are a welcoming bunch who want everyone to feel welcomed and share new ideas and perspectives.

Another big event on the horizon is the RPAC Breakfast, which will be from 9 to 11, on February 27th, at Champions Run. Three of our past WCR presidents: Darla Bengston, Sarina McNeel, and Liz Otto, will talk about all of the important work RPAC does for us. I hope you'll consider attending and investing in RPAC. Looking forward to seeing you all in the coming year. I sincerely hope that each and every one of you have a happy, healthy, and fruitful 2025.

TRAC BURKHARDT
2025 President

OMAHA CHAPTER WCR

2025 Board of Directors



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REALTORS® Make the Market

Omaha Area Residential Snapshot

NOVEMBER 30	2024	2023	%
NUMBER ON MARKET	2,458	2,110	16.5% ▲
NUMBER UNDER CONTRACT (MONTHS)	753	759	-0.8% ▼
NUMBER OF SALES CLOSED (YEAR TO DATE)	10,969	10,894	+0.7% ▲
EXISTING SALE PRICE (MEDIAN YEAR TO DATE)	\$293,000	\$280,000	4.6% ▲
NEW SALES PRICE (MEDIAN YEAR TO DATE)	\$424,000	\$435,000	-2.5% ▼

AFFILIATES Add Value!



Tim Krof
Certified Inspector

Weather & Roofs

When it comes to the shingles on your roof, weather plays a huge role in the lifespan of that shingle. Of course, hail is the most common weather condition that can bring about the need for shingle replacement. But wind and sun can also play a big part in wearing down a shingle.

Yes, every composition shingle gets exposed to the sun and is manufactured to resist the heat damage from that exposure for a certain period.

However, if the shingles have a manufactured defect, sun exposure can reduce that expected lifespan and can show evidence of possible defects when the shingles are just a few years old. I was on an inspection recently with a 4-8 yr old roof that had severe stair-step and horizontal cracks through the entire shingle on most of the south side and some of the north. This was a 20-year shingle that was already experiencing failure less than ½ its expected life span. The owner tried to caulk these cracks, but many more appeared shortly after! (The sun shows no mercy)

We all know the straight-line winds that occasionally blow through the Midwest can blow composition shingles off roofs, but it can also cause damage to the vinyl/composite (DaVinci) shingles as well. The wind can get underneath these types of shingles and lift them up off the roof. One eyewitness on a recent storm stated it was like the 'shingles were floating on air, waving up & down'. During a recent home inspection, one of our inspectors noticed a crack along the locking clip at the bottom corner of many of the shingles on this type of roof. This damage was located on both sides of the house. These roofs are very expensive, and marketed as lifetime



shingles, but Mother Nature somehow always finds a way to change the rules. So, after a big storm, and you see downed tree branches lining the streets across town, you should always be thankful everyone is OK.. then you can start to wonder if my house is OK? Your home can't speak for itself, you have to speak for it!



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PAST PRESIDENT'S CORNER

LARRY SAXTON 1990 PRESIDENT

Larry Saxton majored in Real Estate at UNO and was a member of Rho Epsilon. Seniors were regularly invited to OABR luncheons by the head of the department, Dr. C. Glenn Lewis. Larry knew he couldn't do anything in real estate without a license. He took the exam cold and failed twice. Then, he took Arlene Geschwender's prep class and passed in the spring of 1972. His first sale was to an Air Force Major who sat across from him in his Statistics class.

When he started, he recalls strong leaders such as Arlene Geschwender, who served as President of the National Women's Council of REALTORS®, and Bob Shreve, who served as President of

the National CCIM group (Certified Commercial Investment Member.)

He recalls the sky-high interest rates of the early 1980s, which peaked at 18 percent about the time he became a director. When he was OABR Treasurer, he signed the papers to buy the lot where the OABR office is now located.

Larry took advantage of all the NAR programs and earned his GRI, CRS, CRB, and CRP designations. He later transitioned into real estate appraisal, earning the SRA and AI-RRS designations (Appraisal Institute – Residential Review Specialist – one of only two in the state). Nebraska was among the first to enact appraiser license laws in 1974, years before other states followed suit. Larry served on the NAR Appraisal Committee to help other states enact their license laws. After serving on the NAR Appraisal Committee for a few years, he was Outstanding Service Award to the Nebraska REALTORS® Association.

"I would advise new agents to get on a committee, attend, and not be afraid to speak up, but also respect others' opinions. Take advantage of all educational opportunities that pertain to your real estate interests. Serve the industry that serves you. But know when to step back and make way for newcomers. Now, after 52 years, I am slowing and will soon retire. I am honored to have served a term as OABR President."



**JOIN A NUTURING COMMUNITY DEDICATED
TO HELPING YOUNG, AMBITIOUS PROFESSIONALS
GROW PERSONALLY AND PROFESSIONALLY.**

ALL OABR MEMBERS ARE ENCOURAGED TO ATTEND YPN EVENTS!

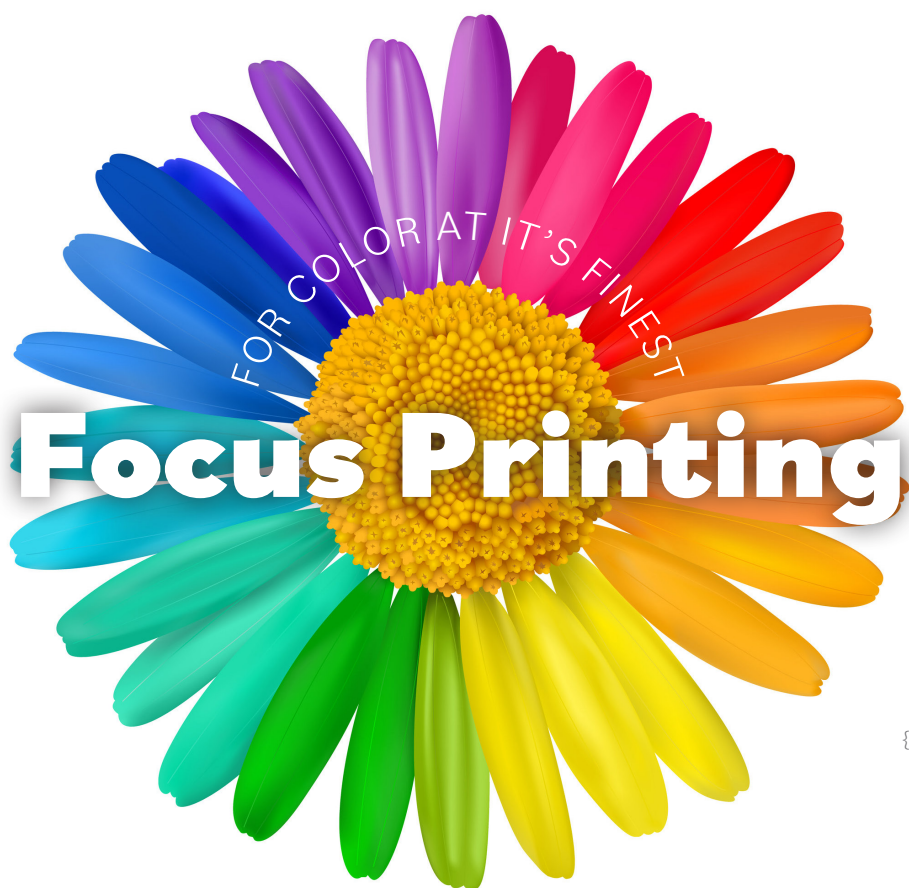
Find the next YPN Committee meeting on the OABR calendar!



REVIEW

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