

# REVIEW

Omaha Area Board of REALTORS®



## A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

# FLAGS, FIREWORKS, & FREEDOM

It's official. Summer is in full force. The scent of freshly cut grass wafts through the air as we enjoy cooking out and lounging by the water. The 4th of July sets the month ablaze with fireworks and festivities. It is a great time to revel in the spirit of America and celebrate being the land of the free because of the brave.

Members of OABR leadership just returned from **NAR Legislative Meetings**. Each time we are in the Nation's Capital, it renews our memories, while we create new memories and are a part of living history. The monuments and memorials in D.C. are powerful displays that always inspire me to reflect on our country's history.

When in D.C., we always meet with Nebraska's elected officials and receive updates on any real estate-related legislation. We show up with talking points. It's a two-way conversation, so they know what's important to our industry and who they can call to obtain additional information to have adequate knowledge of potential impact when they vote. Building these relationships has proven impactful. It reinforces why we do what we do through RPAC.

Without RPAC, our industry would have faltered during the pandemic. Because of RPAC advocacy, we were deemed essential workers and were able to continue working. Even a small investment of \$25 from you can be impactful. There's plenty of opportunities to invest and participate. RPAC is the reason we have such a strong voice for our industry. It's one of the strongest political forces out there.

Locally, there are some important events coming up, starting with a fun-filled, air conditioned outing at Prehistoric Putt on **July 24**, from noon to 3 p.m. We also have a free Membership Breakfast on **August 7**, from 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM at Alamo Drafthouse, which will feature a "Pathway to Homeownership" panel with industry experts who will share their collective wisdom. **August 21** we will install Brad Fricke at A View West Shores, as the 2026 OABR President. Visit [omaharealtors.com/calendar](https://omaharealtors.com/calendar) for more details.

As we venture into sweltering summer months, I hope you enjoy all the great things that the season offers and get some fun in the sun in between working hard on your business. Attending an OABR event is a great way to network and be part of this local real estate community. The calendar year is half over. Don't wait to engage in your industry. You'll find it's quite a broad playing field.

Wishing you all a happy Independence Day!

**May you always walk in the sunshine, my friend!**

Jessica Sawyer,  
2025 OABR President



# REVIEW

## OMAHA AREA BOARD OF REALTORS® 2025 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**PRESIDENT**  
Jessica Sawyer

**PRESIDENT-ELECT**  
Brad Fricke

**SECRETARY/TREASURER**  
Jill Anderson

**DIRECTORS**  
Darla Bengtson  
Charles Chadwick  
Mike McGlynn  
Sarina McNeel  
Kyle Schulze  
Angel Starks  
Ervin Youmans

**IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT**  
Denise Poppen

**2025 WCR OMAHA CHAPTER PRESIDENT**  
Trac Burkhardt

**2025 AFFILIATE COMMITTEE CHAIR**  
Brent Rasmussen

**2025 GPRMLS, INC. CHAIR**  
Henry Kammandel

## GPRMLS, INC 2025 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**CHAIR**  
Henry Kammandel

**VICE CHAIR**  
Susan Clark

**SECRETARY/TREASURER**  
Tom Simmons

**DIRECTORS**  
Andy Alloway  
Jill Anderson  
Jay Brown  
Susan Clark  
Henry Kammandel  
Tammy Moos  
Lisa Ritter  
Tom Simmons

## OABR ASSOCIATION STAFF

**CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**  
Doug Rotthaus

**PROGRAMS DIRECTOR**  
Donna Shipley

**MEMBERSHIP & ACCOUNTS**  
Patty Colombe  
Aimee Jensen

**MEMBER SERVICE**  
Jenny Coons

**MARKETING & EVENTS**  
Jordan Forbes

**GRAPHIC DESIGN**  
Tyler Miller

**WRITER**  
Melissa McElroy

**GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS DIRECTOR**  
Perre Neilan

## GREAT PLAINS REGIONAL MLS STAFF

**MLS OPERATIONS MANAGER**  
Denise Mecseji

**MLS COMPLIANCE ADMINISTRATOR**  
Beth Powers

**MLS DATA & CUSTOMER  
SUPPORT ADMINISTRATOR**  
Renee Westphal

**MLS CUSTOMER TRAINING  
& SUPPORT ADMINISTRATOR**  
Jaycee Miller

THURS  
24  
JULY

## RPAC RAPTOR ROUNDS



📍 PREHISTORIC PUTT | 2500 S. 120TH ST. ⌚ 12:00 PM - 5:00 PM

Register at [omaharealtors.com/raptor\\_rounds](https://omaharealtors.com/raptor_rounds)

TUES  
07  
AUG

## MEMBER BREAKFAST



📍 ALAMO DRAFTHOUSE | 12750 WESTPORT PKWY ⌚ 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM

Register at [omaharealtors.com/pathway\\_to\\_homeownership](https://omaharealtors.com/pathway_to_homeownership)

THURS  
04  
SEPT

## AT HOME WITH DIVERSITY (AHWD)

CULTIVATING MULTICULTURAL RELATIONSHIPS  
IS GOOD FOR BUSINESS ( #0415)

📍 OABR EDUCATION CENTER ⌚ 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Learn More: [omaharealtors.com/multicultural\\_relationships](https://omaharealtors.com/multicultural_relationships)

# REALTOR® ADVOCACY IN PERSON

Written by **Melissa McElroy**

**T**housands of REALTORS® from across the country descended upon Washington, D.C., the first week of June for NAR's Legislative Meetings, an annual legislative conference brimming with committee meetings and forums. Over eight thousand NAR members trekked to our nation's capital for an opportunity to champion pro-real estate policies through in-person discussions with legislators.

OABR Governmental Affairs Committee Chair Charles Chadwick, a member of the OABR Board of

Directors and the NAR Federal Political Coordinator for Senator Pete Ricketts, said that cultivating relationships with elected officials and staff members is critically important. "Meeting face-to-face is extremely impactful, not just in D.C., but on their stomping grounds throughout the year."

Real estate is a relationship-based business. Developing strong working relationships with the policymakers whose decisions directly impact our day-to-day business is essential.



He said, “It is important to stay informed, regardless of political beliefs.” This is why Chadwick is such a strong advocate for RPAC, a pro-real estate political action committee that not only tracks any real estate-related legislation but also fights to protect property rights and real estate interests. He said, “Members’ RPAC investments allow us to have doors open and the lines of communication open to advocate for the best interest of the industry.”

This year, he felt it was especially imperative to be in D.C. while the “Big, Beautiful Bill” was in the process of being discussed, which he called “history in the making.” The real estate community was able to communicate its priorities, such as the desire to cut regulatory costs and update legislation regarding capital gains taxes to incentivize sellers to sell their homes to increase housing inventory.

OABR Leadership met with “The Nebraska Five,” as they have been nicknamed, which includes Senators Pete Ricketts and Deb Fischer and Congressional Representatives Don Bacon, Mike Flood, and Adrian Smith.

Chadwick was able to share real-life stories with real-life economic impact with the five lawmakers. His strong working relationships with elected officials helped salvage a deal when a USDA direct loan stalled when federal funds were suddenly frozen. Contacting an elected official kept the deal together rather than waiting weeks for the Department of Agriculture to restart funding for the loan program.

He said, “We are very blessed to have the five representatives that we do. They are there to get stuff done and often don’t get enough credit.”

Congressman Don Bacon and Congressman Mike Flood were selected in 2024 for The National Association of REALTORS® President’s Circle, a program that identifies candidates who support REALTOR® legislative initiatives. Candidates chosen for inclusion in the President’s Circle program must meet requirements set by the NAR’s RPAC Disbursement

Trustees.

OABR Governmental Affairs Director Perre Neilan explained why in-person advocacy is much more effective. A phone call or an email can be easily ignored; it’s impossible to ignore someone standing right in front of you.

Thousands of real estate professionals travel to D.C. every year to promote property rights. It demonstrates to elected officials the real estate industry’s commitment to advocacy.

He said that it’s an ongoing process and our responsibility to educate them consistently. They can’t be expected to know our needs on all issues. This year, the leadership witnessed the inner workings of the “Big, Beautiful Bill” up close and were able to let their voices be heard.

Neilan said, “It may be a ‘Big, Beautiful Bill,’ but watching our volunteer grassroots make the time to impact the entire REALTOR® community was beautiful for me to witness firsthand. These volunteers spend a lot of time prepping in advance to know the issues, and it shows. The REALTORS® are a force.”





Perre Neilan, Megan Bengtson & Charles Chadwick

### CODE OF ETHICS UPDATE

In other business, the NAR Code of Ethics was ratified at the recent REALTORS® Legislative Meetings and took effect on June 5; it clarified the interpretation and implementation of Standard of Practice 10-5 and Professional Standards Policy Statement 29, falling under Article 10.

Article 10 prohibits REALTORS® from denying equal professional services and employment opportunities based on protected characteristics. SOP 10-5, adopted in 2020 to clarify the application of Article 10, prohibits REALTORS® from using harassing speech, hate speech, epithets, or slurs. The new language provides a more specific definition of harassment.

NAR Member Code of Conduct focuses on Article 10's application when REALTORS® are operating in a professional capacity. State and local associations are empowered to enforce The Code of Ethics. The changes reduce the risk to state and local associations and the volunteer leadership that administers and enforces Article 10.

### NAR'S 2025 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

- Support the More Homes on the Market Act (**H.R. 1340**) to decrease the equity penalty and incentivize more long-term owners to sell their homes. Many empty nesters, who would otherwise sell, are frozen in their family home due to the low limits for capital gains exemption.
- Support the Housing Supply Framework Act (**H.R.2840/ S.1299**) to create a national strategy for boosting housing production and affordability by reducing barriers to new housing development.
- Support the Revitalizing Downtowns and Main Streets Act (**H.R. 2410**) to convert underused commercial properties into residential and mixed-use housing.
- Support the Uplifting First-Time Homebuyers Act (**H.R. 3526**) to increase the amount that can be withdrawn penalty-free from IRAs for a down payment on a first home.
- Support the Fair and Equal Housing Act to add sexual orientation and gender identity as protected classes under the Fair Housing Act, codifying the application of the Supreme Court's Bostock v. Clayton County decision to the Fair Housing Act, to help ensure equal housing protections for all Americans.
- Support Association Health Plans Act (**H.R. 2528**) to provide REALTORS® with access to quality, affordable health care.
- Support the Direct Seller and Real Estate Agent Harmonization Act to ensure real estate agents maintain their independent contractor status under the Fair Labor Standards Act.
- Support the Main Street Tax Certainty Act (**H.R. 703/S.213**) to preserve the 20 percent deduction for pass-through business income.

Source: National Association of REALTORS®  
[www.nar.realtor](http://www.nar.realtor)

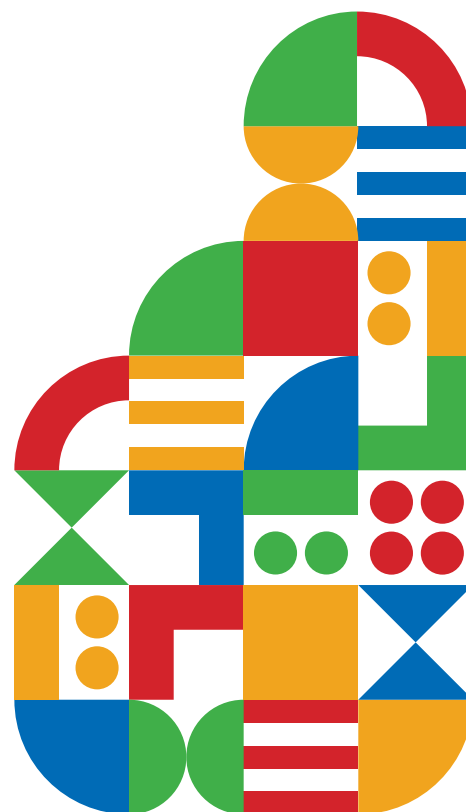


# MEMBERSHIP ANNUAL DUES

## DUE NOW

Dues statements for the 2026 fiscal year are now being mailed. Member dues must be paid by August 15, 2025 or a 10% late payment fee will be assessed. Payments can be made online at [OmahaREALTORS.com/login](https://OmahaREALTORS.com/login) by using your MLS login ID and password. Specific instructions are located on the back side of the dues statement. REALTOR® dues are collected for all three levels of the REALTOR® organization.

[OMAHAREALTORS.COM](https://OmahaREALTORS.com)



OMAHA AREA BOARD OF REALTORS®

**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!

RENDERING OF CROSSROADS  
REDEVELOPMENT


# Crossroads PROJECT REBORN

Written by **Melissa McElroy**

**A**fter many years in the making, the Crossroads project officially broke ground on June 16. It marks a milestone for the massive, \$850 million multi-use development project on the northwest corner of 72nd and Dodge.

The project encountered many setbacks, including a worldwide pandemic and the death of the previous owner, real estate developer Frank Krejci of Century Development. Most of the old Crossroads Mall was demolished, necessary infrastructure was installed, and interior roads were built, paving a path for the new developer, the Woodbury Corporation, to hit the ground running. The Woodbury Corporation took ownership of the Crossroads on December 18, 2024, paying over \$100 million.

Jeff Woodbury, senior vice president of development and acquisitions of the Woodbury Corporation, a company based out of Salt Lake, Utah, said this was an exciting time and called Crossroads “the best piece of real estate,” right in the center of things, one that will be built with a public-private

partnership, that “will be more like a small city than a shopping center.”

The developer’s first tenant, Gamescape by Cinemark, signed the first lease. It will take two years to complete the Crossroads’ Gamescape. One year to build the parking garage; another year to construct the building that will house a movie theater with eight screens, a bowling alley with eighteen lanes, a large game room, an arcade, laser tag, a ropes course, and a restaurant and bar.

Cinemark’s executive vice president of real estate and construction, Jay Jostrand, said this will be the company’s only location in Nebraska, and it will be an all-in-one immersive entertainment destination geared towards all ages and will span 90,000 square feet.

The Crossroads project will also include many stores, a hotel, and apartments. Construction will start near Cass Street this summer.

The city of Omaha will build, own, and operate multiple public parking facilities within the Crossroads

development, initially about 1,500 parking stalls. Garage parking will be free for the first two hours.

According to the City of Omaha website, the City Council has approved Tax Increment Financing (TIF) and the establishment of an Enhanced Entertainment Area, which allows an increase in local sales tax within the development. The first phase of the TIF will make the construction of public parking facilities and additional public infrastructure improvements possible. Plans include demolishing the existing garage on the northeast corner of the property later.

Omaha City Councilman Pete Festersen was excited to see the project progress after years of setbacks. The redevelopment agreement has guidelines for accountability, and the entire project must be completed by 2032.

Festeren recalled an illustrious time in the 1990s when both Crossroads and the Huskers were both thriving. People would line the 72nd and Dodge intersection to cheer for Nebraska football championships. Festeren said that Crossroads was important not only as a commercial property but to the psyche of the community. After the groundbreaking ceremony, he said there could

potentially be affordable housing for seniors.

Newly elected Mayor John Ewing recalled working at the Crossroads Sears many years ago. He remembers all stages of Crossroads, including its decline. Once completed, Gamescape will welcome over half a million visitors a year. The Crossroads Development, combined with the new Central Library directly across the street, slated to open next year, will create job opportunities and bring in millions in new revenue. Ewing said this was a promising big step forward for the city.



Photo Credit to Holland Basham; Omaha World Herald

# TALLGRASS & OAK LEAF HOUSING

Written by **Melissa McElroy**

**G**ray skies blanketed lush green hills near 72nd and Capehart on a drizzly May afternoon. Inclement weather couldn't stop the groundbreaking ceremony for Tallgrass, a 600-unit, affordable housing development in Papillion. Leaders from the community came together, shovels in hand, ready to dig in. Throngs of yellow Cat® equipment littered the muddy mounds of earth.

The mixed-income housing will offer rental and ownership opportunities enmeshed in the same neighborhood. It will include 198 rental units affordable to families at or below 60 percent of Area Median Income (AMI). Habitat for Humanity will build 30 single-family homes for the project, which will be the Oak Leaf subdivision; they teamed up with Hoppe Development and many project partners.

The ceremonial groundbreaking was followed by an event about a mile down the street at Cobalt Credit Union in Papillion, where community leaders took the podium. Habitat for Humanity CEO Amanda Brewer said that the project shines a light on the need for and the shortage of affordable housing options. "The part Habitat is doing is, as always, homeownership, and we're proud to bring that element to this project," Brewer said.

Mayor David Black of Papillion praised Papillion for the high quality of life, low crime, and excellent schools, which translates to higher housing costs. Black said the project makes it possible for "a lot of people who want to live here to live here; this opens up a whole new market."

There is a growing need for diverse housing, especially affordable housing and affordable housing options for seniors. The organizations

behind the project recognized a need in the community and worked together to manifest their vision. By pooling resources, they can build a lot more doors. In the words of Amanda Brewer, “We can do a lot more when we do it together.”

Before this project, Brewer said she had a vision of a mixed-use project that would provide homeownership that embraced the community. She would often say to her team, “No one is ever going to invite us to our project.” Eventually, the stars aligned. She met Jake Hoppe of Hoppe Development and was able to amass a strong partnership with other integral partners, including: Habitat for Humanity, Nebraska Investment Finance Authority (NIFA), Nebraska Department of Economic Development, Front Porch Investments, The City of Papillion, Cedar Rapids Bank and Trust, Midwest Housing Equity Group, Pinnacle Bank, First National Bank of Omaha, Sugar Creek Capital, US Bank, Housing Foundation of Sarpy County, Omaha Public Power District, DeOld Andersen Architecture, Foley Shald, IE Design, Vireo, and Cobalt Bank.



According to Hoppe, solar and high-efficiency heat pump mechanical systems will be installed in the first phases of affordable housing to lower the tenants' utility costs. The project will feature a mixed-use town center with 13,300 square feet of small-scale commercial space to support retail businesses to help reinforce a sense of community and placemaking.



Photo Credit: City of Papillion

# REIGNITE2UNITE

Written by **Melissa McElroy**

**T**he Reignite2Unite Symposium ignited like a fireball of innovation in June, as industry thought leaders shared ideas and discussed solutions to today's most pressing housing challenges. The two-day conference, which was hosted by the Omaha Municipal Land Bank, Front Porch Investments, and Spark CDI, welcomed over 250 attendees to Omaha's Capitol District Marriott.

## KEYNOTE

Activist, writer, and opening day keynote speaker, Leah Rothstein, captivated attendees with her insights on how past segregation policies and historical inequities still impact housing policies today. She delved into "Just Action: How To Challenge Segregation Enacted Under The Color Of Law," a book she coauthored with Richard Rothstein, which outlines redressing the impacts of segregation.

Rothstein said philanthropy alone is not enough to address housing inequity. Housing inequity is the result of choices and policies and is a violation of the 5th and 14th Amendments of the U.S. Constitution. She believed local policy is a necessary first step, as well as adding more units to improve affordability, including accessory dwelling units, or ADUs, and implementing a preference policy to address displaced people of color in former redlined areas who have been pushed out of gentrified areas. The housing policy expert said there needs to be increased investment in formerly redlined areas and public services, access to down payment assistance,

as well as anti-displacement measures, protections for renters, and a right to counsel.

Day two of the conference welcomed keynote speaker Ali Solis, a Washington, D.C.-based governmental affairs executive and affordable housing advocate. She shared her expert opinions on how government policy can impact housing, such as using tax credits. Today, rental assistance programs, workforce programs, and the USDA face uncertain budget limitations.

Newly appointed U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Great Plains Regional Administrator, Joe Mitchell took the podium. The Great Plains Region includes Nebraska, Iowa, Kansas, and Missouri. Despite budget issues, there are no plans to close the Omaha HUD office. HUD plays a significant role in delegating money to nonprofit organizations to address housing needs. They offer grant programs that fund affordable housing initiatives and community development projects. Mitchell said he wanted developers to have more access to necessary funding.

Newly elected, Omaha Mayor John Ewing, made a special guest appearance where he shared his vision for Omaha's future. He said he cared about the people in the community and wanted to promote homeownership, which helps people build wealth and creates generational wealth.

Ewing described the feeling of pride his family felt when his parents bought their first home. He said it was "one of the most inspirational things that happened in his life," one that instilled a sense of

hope. He wants today's young people to be inspired by that same feeling of hope. He said that to a young person without hope, consequences mean nothing. It's something that former Omaha City Councilwoman Brenda Council, who was sitting in the audience at the event, once said to him.

Residents need decent, affordable housing to attain the American Dream and to keep hope alive. He encouraged everyone to let their opinions be known; he's very interested in what residents have to say. "I'm not afraid of challenges. I embrace them."

Ewing praised fellow guest speakers, Anthony and Anton Downing, aka the Downing Brothers, Chicago firefighter twins, turned real estate investors, turned HGTV superstars. The newly elected mayor helped convince the dynamic duo to return to Omaha to collaborate with the Omaha Municipal Land Bank for a future project; the details of which are yet to be determined. The impromptu

announcement was met with cheers from the audience.

## DOWNING BROTHERS' FIRESIDE CHAT

The firefighting Downing brothers set the stage ablaze, metaphorically speaking, for a closing fireside chat, which was moderated by Wells Fargo Senior Vice President, Cristina Castro-Matukewicz. The real estate moguls, "Double Down" TV stars, and authors of *The Downing Brothers: A Visual Strategy Guide for Real Estate: Multi-Family Unit Special Edition*, who hail from the South Side of the Windy City, talked about their journey on the path to their dreams. It all started with words of wisdom from their "mamma," from the Bahamas. She explained the importance of saving and being strategic with money. Those words of wisdom remain deeply ingrained in her sons, who started doing small housing development projects.



**JODY HOLSTON, LESLIE SMITH,  
CESAR GARCIA, JOANIE BALK,  
KELLIE JOHNSTON-DORSEY, BUEY RAY TUT**

## SOME SAGE ADVICE FROM THE DOWNING BROTHERS:

- Don't do it alone. Build a team the way you'd build a fantasy football team.
- Confidence comes from completing the first project.
- You don't need to hit a home run. You can do singles. Start small.
- Know what programs to help you on your real estate journey, like Omaha Municipal Land Bank and Spark.
- We did it. You can too.

## OMAHA'S COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The event featured a plethora of breakout sessions, including a session focused on Omaha's 20-year plan for growth; the plan is required by state law. It gave a brief summary about the urban sprawl and vehicle-based development of the Twentieth Century. The city cannot grow outside county boundaries and will run out of developable land as soon as 2045. This conundrum presents an opportunity to redevelop land with higher density that is more sustainable and accessible. The organization We Make Omaha is actively seeking community involvement and feedback. Visit [Wemakeomaha.org](http://Wemakeomaha.org) for more information.

## MISSING MIDDLE

This impactful breakout session explored "missing middle" housing: duplexes, triplexes, quadplexes, townhomes, cottage courts, and any housing that is more than one unit, but not a large apartment complex. More housing density creates more affordable housing options. Well-designed housing includes privacy considerations and desirable amenities such as laundry in the unit. The parking versus housing geometry problem is carefully considered when developers are trying to

build as many units as possible but also have sufficient parking and alley access.

## AWARDS

The REIGNITE2UNITE Symposium also recognized the following individuals and organizations for their contributions to Omaha:

- Outstanding Emerging Developer Award: Ernesto and Penny Marquez of The Marquez Company, Project Highlight: Pinkney Street Duplex, financed through a Spark Capital rehab loan.
- Community Impact Award: Omaha Economic Development Corp., The Larimore, Omaha Economic Development Corp., Historic restoration and adaptive reuse, 45 apartments for low-income seniors (30-60% AMI), financed by LIHTC, TIF, CDBG, Front Porch Investments, Historic Tax Credits.
- Community Advocate Award: Jeff Spiehs, urban planner, advocate, real estate investor and developer focused on equity and community engagement. Faculty member, Spark's Developer Academy and ChangeMaker programs, Committee member of Omaha Community Foundation's Neighborhood Grant, Ambassador of We Make Omaha.
- Public-Private Partnership Award: Canopy South, Omaha Housing Authority, City of Omaha, mixed-income residential, 92 units, 68 affordable (40%-80% AMI), 24 market-rate (4 with rental subsidies). Financed by LIHTC, CDBG, HOME, HUD Choice Neighborhoods Implementation Grant (CNI). Key partners: Canopy South, Omaha Housing Authority, City of Omaha, Brinshore Development LLC, Front Porch Investments.

# YOUR MEMBERSHIP TRIFECTA

THE

THREE-WAY

AGREEMENT

*The value of partnership  
at every level.*

## LOCAL Making Connections

Frontline resource for support,  
guidance and local market  
expertise tailored to your business

Access to Multiple  
Listing Service

Local networking and  
educational opportunities

Grassroots advocacy  
shaping local policies

Education opportunities  
specific to your state

Legislative advocacy on  
issues affecting your state

Statewide community of  
real estate practitioners

State-level legal and  
compliance resources

## STATE Expanding Your Reach

Nationwide, unified  
advocacy platform

Unmatched real estate  
research, information,  
expertise and education,  
including accreditations  
and designations

Cutting-edge  
tech, legal and risk  
management resources

National and global  
network of professionals

## NATIONAL Securing Your Future

### YOUR DYNAMIC THREE-TIERED STRUCTURE:

-  Ecosystem of support,  
resources and advocacy
-  The right to use the  
REALTOR® brand
-  Shared Code of Ethics
-  Amplified influence  
and political impact
-  Unmatched benefits  
at every level
-  Access to NAR insurance  
for associations, affiliates  
and MLSs

**TAP INTO YOUR POWER**  
**@nar.realtor**



REALTORS® are members of the National Association of REALTORS®

# THE TRENCHES

Written by **Melissa McElroy**

Being a REALTOR® is kinda like being a bounty hunter. It takes a keen mind, knowledge of the law, and strong survival skills to thrive. Your call if you want to rock the “Dog the Bounty Hunter” mullet.

## **BAD DREAM HOUSE**

REALTOR® Laura Friesell takes pride in helping her clients find the right house for them. She recalls a time when she helped some clients find their dream home. That dream home soon turned into a bad dream.

Scam artists were occupying the home that her buyers wanted to purchase. They had acquired access to the property by using a fraudulent check. The check had a series of numbers on the bottom that were not attached to an actual bank account. The shysters would need to be evicted.

The REALTOR® wasn't sure if her clients would even still want to proceed, given the ordeal they'd have to endure and the time it would take to vacate the property. They were certain this was the right home for them. Evicting the occupants was an arduous process that took nine months and resulted in the scammers going to prison.

Laura's clients moved into their dream home, eventually, after months of dealing with a nightmare.

## **CONTRIVED CLOSING**

One particular transaction stands out in REALTOR® Bill Swanson's mind many years later. He

took on an acquaintance as a new client. He knew the man in passing; it was someone whom he had met out and about numerous times before at different social gatherings. The gentleman had a wife with long, blonde hair, though Bill never saw her up close. She was always in the crowd somewhere off in the distance when he'd run into this client, so he never got a very good look at her.

His client put an offer on an investment property and later showed up to the closing table with a woman in tow whom he introduced as his wife. She had the trademark long blonde hair. The closing was pretty typical until the woman was asked for identification. She suddenly acted nervous and claimed she forgot her ID. They were told that the meeting could be rescheduled, but they would need to produce her ID to proceed.

The man had to sheepishly admit that the woman wasn't actually his wife. She was his girlfriend. His actual wife didn't feel like going to the closing table to sign documents and told him to take his girlfriend instead, since they looked so much alike.

Bill can honestly say that was the only time in his lengthy career that someone brought a fake wife to a closing.

Scammers with fake checks and clients with fake wives: It's never a dull moment when you're a REALTOR® battling every day in the trenches of real estate.

# Join Us for this **FREE** Continuing Education Event

Join us for our upcoming continuing education course **New Home Building Process – Close Up!** Tour job sites and model homes while receiving **3 Hours of Continuing Education credit!** Lunch provided at **Champions Run** after the tour.

## Thursday, July 24 Champions Run

13800 Eagle Run Dr., Omaha, NE, 68164



**Check-in starts at 9am, Bus Leaves at 9:30**

- Touring of Construction Sites:  
10am - Noon
- Lunch after tour at *Champions Run*



Matthew Cookson



Kara Guinto



Ericka Heidvogel



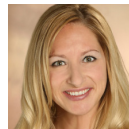
Shelley Hourigan



Don Igo



Brooke Moody



Monica Lang



David Lee



Luke Lofgren



Seth Mielke



Gary Price



Karen Stansberry



Tiffany Stanton

Event Sponsored By:



(402) 291-3080. 11507 S 42nd St., Ste. 107, Bellevue, NE 68123. OffuttPCS.com. VA approved lender; Not endorsed or sponsored by the Dept. of Veterans Affairs or any government agency. NMLS #1907 (www.nmlsconsumeraccess.org). Equal Housing Opportunity.

**CelebrityHomesOmaha.com**

**new beginnings**  
A GREAT PLACE TO START

**advantage**  
YOUR NEXT MOVE

**designer**  
INSPIRED LIVING

**lifestyle**  
VILLAS & TOWNHOMES

# THE RED, WHITE, & BLUE: A CELEBRATION OF FREEDOM

July bursts onto the scene like the rocket's red glare. It's a time to celebrate everything that makes this country great: baseball, apple pie, and the Fourth of July. It's a time for fun in the sun, fireworks shows and enjoying the freedom that comes with being American.

There's a feeling of freedom being a REALTOR®. Being able to make your own hours, be your own boss, and fulfill your dreams is at the very core of the American spirit. We also get the privilege of helping people achieve the American Dream of homeownership.

We recently returned from Washington, D.C. for the annual Legislative Meetings and the WCR Midyear Conference. We were fortunate to meet with elected officials and learn the latest about upcoming legislation that would impact our business. It really highlights the important work that RPAC does to forge strong working relationships with elected officials. After all, real estate is a relationship-based business.

WCR is all about providing great events that help real estate professionals fulfill their potential. This summer we are providing amazing educational opportunities with the Business Powerhouse Series. In June we had a Business Strategies lunch & learn. Mark August 21 on your calendar for the next great

WCR event on leadership and motivation, featuring Husker legend Coach John Cook. It's sure to be inspirational!

Our annual Golf Tournament is right around the corner. We will host this year's event at Tiburon on September 16. Our charity partner is 50 Mile March, an organization dedicated to helping veterans. Check out [wcromaha.com](http://wcromaha.com) for more details about any event you would like to attend.

I encourage WCR members to take full advantage of their membership and attend events. There really isn't anything quite like being face-to-face with other professionals. No email or Zoom call will ever match the energy of in-person gatherings. Take your networking to the next level. The first step to success is showing up.

As we venture into summer, I hope you get a chance to savor all the amazing things the season offers. I hope you are able to get some green while celebrating the red, white, and blue! Watch a baseball game, enjoy the BBQs and fireworks. Summer will be over before we know it.

**Happy Fourth, everyone!**

**TRAC BURKHARDT**

2025 President

Women's Council of REALTORS® - Omaha

OABR ANNUAL MEETING

# FREE BREAKFAST



9:00 AM - 11:00 AM

*Space is limited, members only*

## PATHWAY TO HOMEOWNERSHIP

**OPPORTUNITIES FOR FIRST TIME  
HOMEOWNER AND CLIENTS WITH  
FUNDING CHALLENGES**

Buyer education is essential! Learn about different ways buyers can find assistance in the process. Understand how qualifications from various lenders differ and the limitations new buyers may experience. (#9999T) **ONE HOUR CAT CREDIT**

### PANEL INCLUDES

**AUTUMN DILLON**

*U.S. Bank*

**PK KOPUN**

*Centris Federal Credit Union*

**DENISE PARKER**

*Family Housing Advisory Services*

**LACEY STUDNICKA**

*Habitat for Humanity*

**STACY FOTINOS**

*NIFA*

THURSDAY

# AUGUST 07



**ALAMO DRAFTHOUSE**

*12750 Westport Parkway, LaVista*

**REGISTRATION REQUIRED**

[omaharealtors.com/pathway\\_to\\_homeownership](http://omaharealtors.com/pathway_to_homeownership)

**FREE MEMBER EVENT**

*No-Shows will be billed \$25*

## MEMBERSHIP REPORT

May Activity	MO	YTD
New REALTOR® Members	18	107
Resignations	13	139
Membership (As of June 1)	2025	2024
Designated REALTORS®	191	212
REALTOR®	3014	3118
REALTOR® Emeritus	104	93
TOTAL REALTORS®	3309	3423
Institute Affiliate	82	74
Affiliate Members	144	149
Key-Only Affiliates	122	133

Full membership report at [OmahaREALTORS.com/membership-report](https://OmahaREALTORS.com/membership-report)

## DESIGNATIONS

### Accredited Buyer Representative® (ABR®)

- Julie Hayes, NP Dodge RE Sales
- Dawn Stock, PJ Morgan Real Estate
- Stacey Watson, Nebraska Realty

## CERTIFICATIONS

### Military Relocation Professional (MRP)

- Makena Marker, BHHS Ambassador Real Estate

### Pricing Strategy Advisor (PSA)

- Jennifer Weikel, Nebraska Realty

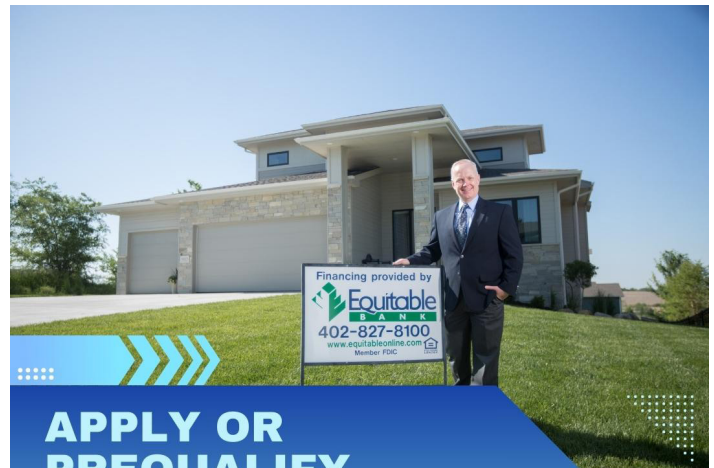
## PERSONALS

### Congratulations

- To Nico Marasco, BHHS Ambassador Real Estate, on the birth of his baby girl, Quinn Blaire

### Our Condolences

- To the family and friends of Christie Bevington, former Education Director for NRA, on her passing
- To Sandra Woodlee, Better Homes and Gardens Real Estate, on the passing of her son



**APPLY OR  
PREQUALIFY  
ONLINE 24/7**

**Joe Dobrovolsky**  
V.P. Mortgage Lender  
NMLS #445889  
Equitable Bank  
20112 Pierce Street  
Omaha, NE 68130  
[equitableonline.com/jdobrovolsky](https://equitableonline.com/jdobrovolsky)

**SECURE YOUR  
DREAM HOME**



**Call Us : 402-827-8100**

# Simplifying REALTOR® Lives Since 2001



**MORTGAGE  
SPECIALISTS**

8420 W Dodge Rd  
Suite 113, Omaha

**402-991-5153**

[mtg-specialists.com](https://mtg-specialists.com)

**Brent Rasmussen**  
Owner | NMLS #5918  
CMC, CRMS, CDLP, CVLS, CMA



**Driven. Trusted. Reliable.**

IT'S NEVER TOO EARLY FOR

# Essential Training



## Code of Ethics - Required

All REALTOR® members must complete at least 2.5 hours of ethics training in 3-year cycles. The current cycle will end on **December 31, 2027**, and future training cycles will be every three years. If you completed the OABR New Member Orientation after January 1, 2025, you have satisfied the requirement.  
*Appraisers: If you have completed your USPAP, this will fulfill this requirement.*



## Fair Housing - Required

All OABR REALTOR® members must complete at least 2 hours of fair housing / anti-bias instruction in 3-year cycles (concurrent with the NAR ethics training cycle). The current cycle will end on **December 31, 2027**, and future training cycles will be every three years. If you completed the OABR New Member Orientation after January 1, 2025, you have satisfied the requirement.  
*Appraisers: If you have completed your USPAP, this will fulfill this requirement.*



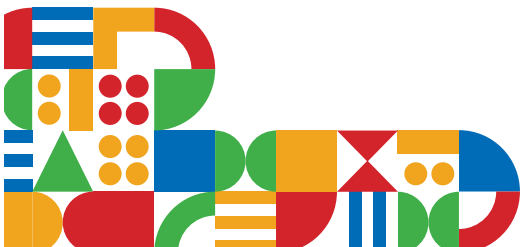
## Finance Orientation

The Finance portion of the OABR New Member Orientation is now offered five times per year as a 3-hour CE class (#1365) and is open to all OABR members. The course is held in February, April, June, September, and November – daytime and evening hours, so consult the OABR calendar for start times and registration information.



## Contracts Orientation

The Contract portion of the OABR New Member Orientation is now offered five times per year as a 3-hour CE class (#1357R) and is open to all OABR members. The course is held in January, March, May, August, and October – daytime and evening hours, so consult the OABR calendar for start times and registration information.



# REALTORS® Make the Market

## Omaha Area Residential Snapshot

MAY 31	2025	2024	%
NUMBER ON MARKET	2,369	2,171	+9.1% ▲
NUMBER UNDER CONTRACT (MONTHS)	1,222	1,122	+8.9% ▲
NUMBER OF SALES CLOSED (YEAR TO DATE)	1,166	1,291	-9.7% ▼
EXISTING SALE PRICE (MEDIAN YEAR TO DATE)	\$309,000	\$300,000	+3.0% ▲
NEW SALES PRICE (MEDIAN YEAR TO DATE)	\$497,855	\$425,000	+17.1% ▲

## AFFILIATES Add Value!



IN HONOR OF INCOMING PRESIDENT

*140<sup>th</sup> Installation & Awards*

**BRAD FRICKE**

ENJOY A CASUAL EVENT AT  
A VIEW WEST SHORES

**20**  
*August*

For More Information: [Omaharealtors.com/installation](https://www.omaharealtors.com/installation)

# PAST PRESIDENT'S CORNER

## KAREN GRAY 1997 PRESIDENT

If it weren't for a persistent neighbor who worked as a REALTOR®, Karen Gray may have never ventured into real estate. Her neighbor kept telling her she should be in real estate. Karen was a stay-at-home mom and a military spouse with a husband in the Air Force. She finally relented and signed up for a real estate class. It set her on a new path that would span over 20 years.

She specialized in military relocation and often had to work on a very narrow timeline to find a

home for a family moving from out of state, sometimes even from out of the country, well before there was technology like video tours and DocuSign. She also loved working with first-time home buyers and relished the excitement of someone getting keys to their first home.

Being a good professional meant you knew a little bit about everything: the area, the right professionals, and you always kept learning. She said, "The more you learn, the better you'll be. When you take care of your clients, they refer you to anyone searching for a REALTOR®."

When she first started in the business, interest rates were around 17 percent. She had a part-time retail job at the time. "Everyone thought I was out of my mind to leave that job

for real estate."

Her words of wisdom? Whatever the circumstances are, high interest rates or limited inventory, "Just deal with it with enthusiasm and take it one day at a time."



## Differences Between Residential & Commercial Property Inspections

### What Sets Commercial Inspections Apart?

Commercial property inspections differ significantly from residential ones and require specialized expertise. Inspectors must understand complex systems, regulations, and structural requirements.

### Capital Expenses & Maintenance Planning

Buyers need details about HVAC systems, water heaters, and roofing components to budget for future expenses. Commercial properties often require advanced assessments to determine potential repair or replacement costs.

### Safety & Compliance Standards

Commercial buildings must meet stricter safety codes. Features like emergency exit lighting, smoke detectors, exit signs, and fire ex-

tinguishers should be serviced annually. Electrical systems over 400 amps should be inspected by licensed electricians, who use specialized safety equipment.

### Roofing & Structural Concerns

Flat roofs, such as EPDM or rolled asphalt, are common in commercial properties. Inspections focus on drainage issues, structural support, and signs of material wear or deterioration. Addressing these issues early can prevent costly repairs.

### Plumbing & ADA Compliance

In Omaha, PEX plumbing is prohibited in commercial properties. Inspections also evaluate compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), including marked parking spaces, foam protection on pipes, and grab bars in restrooms.

### Parking Lot & Exterior Checks

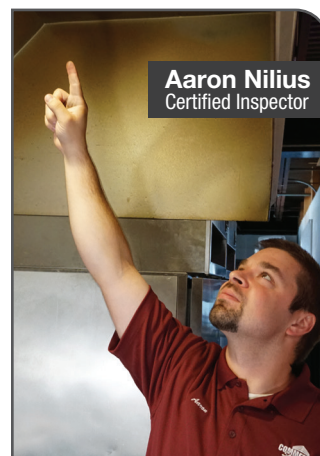
Parking lot striping, curb stops, and signage are assessed for visibility and wear. Gas meters in areas prone to vehicle impact should have protective concrete bollards.

### HVAC Systems

Package HVAC units are common in commercial buildings. These combined heating and cooling systems are installed outdoors, eliminating the need for metal flues. Inspectors assess the age, efficiency, and condition of these units.

### Commercial Kitchens & Grease Management

Cooking appliances in commercial kitchens, such as ovens, gas cooktops, and fryers, often require fire suppression systems and exhaust hoods. Fire suppression uses chemical agents to control flames. Grease traps are inspected to prevent drain blockages, as regular cleaning is essential.



Aaron Nilius  
Certified Inspector

### Why It Matters

Understanding these differences helps buyers and agents evaluate inspector qualifications and make informed decisions. To learn more about the commercial property inspection process or its impact on buying and selling commercial properties, contact us today!



Call today! 402-392-2020 | [HomeStandards.com](http://HomeStandards.com)

Nebraska & Western Iowa's #1 Most Trusted Name  
in Residential & Commercial Property Inspections

LOCALLY OWNED & OPERATED • SATURDAY INSPECTIONS AVAILABLE



# REVIEW

Omaha Area Board of REALTORS®  
11830 Nicholas Street  
Omaha, Nebraska 68154

PRSRT STD  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
OMAHA, NE.  
PERMIT # 196

*Order Now and Beat the Rush!*

## 2025 FOOTBALL MAGNETS!



**Your Clients will Love Them!**

Business Card Size!



**FOCUS PRINTING**  
OABR PRINTING & MAILING

3.5x9"

PEEL & STICK YOUR  
BUSINESS CARD HERE

PERSONALIZE WITH YOUR BUSINESS CARD HERE

**FOOTBALL SCHEDULE**

**NEBRASKA**

DATE	OPPONENT	LOCATION
Aug. 31	SOUTH ALABAMA	Lincoln, NE
Sep. 7	at Colorado	Boulder, CO
Sep. 14	NORTHERN ILLINOIS	Lincoln, NE
Sep. 21	at Illinois	Champaign, IL
Sep. 28	OHIO STATE	Lincoln, NE
Oct. 5	NORTHWESTERN	Lincoln, NE
Oct. 12	at Minnesota	Minneapolis, MN
Oct. 26	INDIANA	Lincoln, NE
Nov. 2	at Purdue	West Lafayette, IN
Nov. 16	WISCONSIN	Lincoln, NE
Nov. 23	at Maryland	College Park, MD
Nov. 29	IOWA	Lincoln, NE

Program © ABC Sports. Schedule subject to change. All rights reserved.

More Styles to  
Choose From on  
Our Website!

Call: 402-619-5570 | Email: [Jim@FocusPrintingOmaha.com](mailto:Jim@FocusPrintingOmaha.com) | Order Online: [FocusPrintingOmaha.com](http://FocusPrintingOmaha.com)