

# NR NAPLES REALTOR®

Q2 2020

# TO BUILD OR TO RENOVATE?

## *THAT IS THE QUESTION*

Local experts weigh in on what's hotter:  
new construction or property renovation



Taking steps to tackle  
a tough issue

Where's the new home  
construction?

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Taking steps to tackle  
a tough issue  
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*THAT IS THE QUESTION*

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a tough issue

Where's the new home  
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**FEATURES**

**30 To build or to renovate? That is the question**  
 Local experts weigh in on what's hotter: new construction or property renovation.

BY ARTIS HENDERSON

**36 Taking steps to tackle a tough issue**  
 Naples REALTORS® share strategies for hosting a successful open house.

BY BETH LUBERCKI

**40 Where's the new home construction?**  
 We show you where new homes are being built throughout Collier County.

BY DICK HOGAN

**DEPARTMENTS**

**8 Message from the President**

**11 For Openers**  
 Meet REALTORS® Budge Huskey and PJ Smith in a pair of Q&A's. Learn about beach renourishment. Find out how the state legislature voted on issues important to REALTORS®. Get the latest on the CamScanner app. Pick up the 411 on behavioral authority Jan Hargrave, NABOR®'s next national speaker.

**51 Get Smart**  
 Ways to stay safe on the job and keep children safe around pools. Meet the Global Business Committee. Dear Corie figures out whether someone is as sneaky he or she sounds. How to avoid contract pitfalls. The latest MLS info.

**66 NABORhood**  
 Event photos, news and more.

**74 The Close**  
 Nothing could be finer than a meal at Lake Park Diner. Etiquette and professionalism go hand in hand. Get out and about. Finally, an egress with egrets.



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## Helping members weather the pandemic



**N** O ONE KNOWS how bad the impact of the COVID-19 virus will be, which is why NABOR® is taking steps to slow the spread of the virus and protect our members and the public.

We have implemented the following procedures to help keep you, your family and your business healthy and safe.

In accordance with the recommendations and directives from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, along with local, state and federal regulators, and in order to minimize the spread of the Coronavirus (COVID-19), we have augmented our in-house cleaning procedures, increased frequency of cleanings and either canceled or postponed upcoming member events. While the decision to postpone some of our highly anticipated annual events was difficult to make, we are looking forward to rescheduling them in the future and anticipate your participation.

We also understand that working environments have been dramatically impacted and many of you are now working from home. It is important for each of you to reach out to your Broker for guidance on office policies. It may be recommended that you speak to your customers in advance of any showings and to explain that there may be challenges when scheduling showings. It is imperative we follow the Code of Ethics in not only how we treat our fellow members but how we treat the public as well.

The Naples real estate market has shown resilience over the past few weeks. The number of interested buyers submitting contracts for homes was up 16.9 percent from Feb. 24 through midday Tuesday, March 10, as compared to the same dates last year. Pending sales in 2020 during this date range totaled 824. In 2019, it was only 705. In addition, closed sales were up during that same time by 20 percent. Comparing February 2020 to the same month a year ago, average showings per listing were also better than last year despite the stock market's wild ride in February and March, this year. The 5 showings per listing increased by 35 percent over February 2019's statistic of 3.7.

NABOR® realizes that the MLS is the lifeblood of your business. To be supportive through these trying times, your Board of Directors has voted to extend the deadline for MLS subscriber fees beyond April 1 to provide all members with uninterrupted service to their most important business tool, the MLS. Details to follow.

NABOR® will help our members weather this crisis as safely as possible. We ask that all members show kindness and support to one another. Together, we will survive this crisis and so will our industry.

I thank you for your membership and I am honored to be your 2020 President.

Sincerely,

Lauren Melo  
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## BUDGE HUSKEY

# Coming home to take the reins at Premier Sotheby's

| BY MIKAYLA CONNOR

On New Year's Eve, Florida native Budge Huskey took over as CEO of Naples-based Premiere Sotheby's International Realty, bringing with him 35 years of experience in the real estate industry.

Huskey, who watched his father succeed in real estate over a 60-year career, grew up to understand that the business is about more than sales and technical knowledge. It's really about understanding people and creating genuine, personal relationships—a priority among Premiere Sotheby's 1,160 agents. With these high standards, comes success—the brokerage ended 2019 with a record-breaking \$5.2 billion in sales.

Huskey is optimistic about the future of the market, and why shouldn't he be? After all, the Naples Area Board of REALTORS® recently released sale figures showing that 2019 was the strongest year in local sales that the association ever recorded. The local market was up 5.6 percent in sales and Premiere Sotheby's in Naples was up 11 percent—almost doubling the pace of the market.

"It is a testament to the quality of our people," Huskey says. "It is all about the talent of our agents and how professional they are and how committed they are to this business."

Before coming to Southwest Florida, Huskey spent about six years working as the global CEO of Coldwell Banker Real Estate, in New Jersey. We sat down with him to discuss his life and career. Here are the highlights of that conversation.



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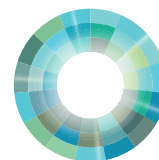


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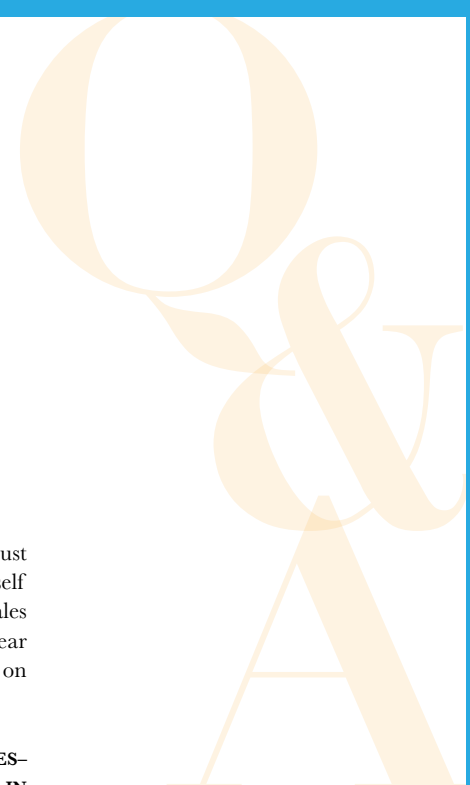


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**WHAT DID YOUR FATHER TEACH YOU ABOUT THE REAL ESTATE BUSINESS THAT YOU CARRY WITH YOU TODAY?**

He was a true entrepreneur in every sense of the word. He had never worked for anyone else, would never work for anyone else, a huge risk taker, eternal optimist. But I've never seen anyone in my entire career of 35 years in real estate who could compare with him in terms of his ability to build trust and relate to people and make them feel special.

**YOU'RE ORIGINALLY FROM EUSTIS, FLORIDA. HOW DID IT FEEL TO MOVE BACK TO FLORIDA FROM NEW JERSEY?**

It was a no-brainer for me in a sense that it was exactly what I wanted to happen. I wanted to get back in the brokerage business, which is fundamentally different from the franchise business which I had been in the last six years. And I wanted to be back in Florida. It is our home. It is where we wanted to be.

**WHAT DO YOU LOVE ABOUT THE NAPLES AREA?**

Just the ability to walk to the beach, jump on our cocktail boat, go out and watch the sunset. We just could not be happier where we are. There's nothing like it.

**HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE COLLIER COUNTY MARKET?**

The market itself is in very good condition. Last year, the whole market started off the year very slowly. The first quarter of 2019 was challenging, and there was some concern about what was on the horizon. The year continued to build strength as we went through the final quarter and this market

was incredibly strong. In fact, NABOR just released its sale figures and the market itself ended the year almost 6 percent up in sales from the prior year. It was the strongest year in sales for Naples that the association has on record.

**WHAT ARE THE GREATEST ADVANTAGES-AND BIGGEST CHALLENGES-OF SELLING IN THIS MARKET?**

One of the advantages I believe is the consistent quality of life. Naples is only getting more and more attractive and well known—not only nationally, but also around the world. We have this built-in demand that only seems to be increasing. Naples has a pretty balanced inventory so buyers coming here have options.

One of the greatest challenges we have as a market is that we have somewhat of a stand-off between people who have owned their homes for 10, 20 or 30 years and have done very little to them and they expect the top dollar because it's Naples, and then you have buyers looking at this saying, "I'm going to have to invest a fortune, hire contractors," and they don't want to deal with it.

**WHAT'S THE PRICE RANGE OF HOMES SOLD THROUGH SOTHEBY'S?**

Our average sale price in this market is \$1.1 million this past year, which is about three times the average for the market.

**IF YOU COULD GIVE ONE PIECE OF ADVICE TO REALTORS® WHAT WOULD IT BE?**

Reputation is your greatest asset. It is always guarding your reputation and always doing the right thing.

**PJ SMITH**

## Scoring with golf properties

| BY MIKAYLA CONNOR



**P**J Smith, managing broker at Golf Life Navigators, loves her job. Not just because she loves helping buyers find the perfect house, and not just because she loves the game of golf, but because she is passionate about helping clients fuse their love of the sport with finding their ideal home, club and course, all in one search.

Smith describes the Golf Life Navigators platform as an eHarmony-like questionnaire that allows the buyer to share what matters most to them while searching for property in a golf community. What kind of amenities are they interested in? What kind of golfer are they? What's their handicap preferences for golf layout? The company's services are expanding across the state and around the country with affiliates in areas that have a passion for golf properties, including Georgia, Arizona and the Carolinas.

With a variety of popular golf communities in Naples—such as Mediterra, Bonita Bay, Grey Oaks and The Moorings—there's a property for every type of buyer. Smith, who also sits on the board of directors of the Naples Area Board of REALTORS®, covered a lot of ground during a recent conversation. Here's are some highlights.



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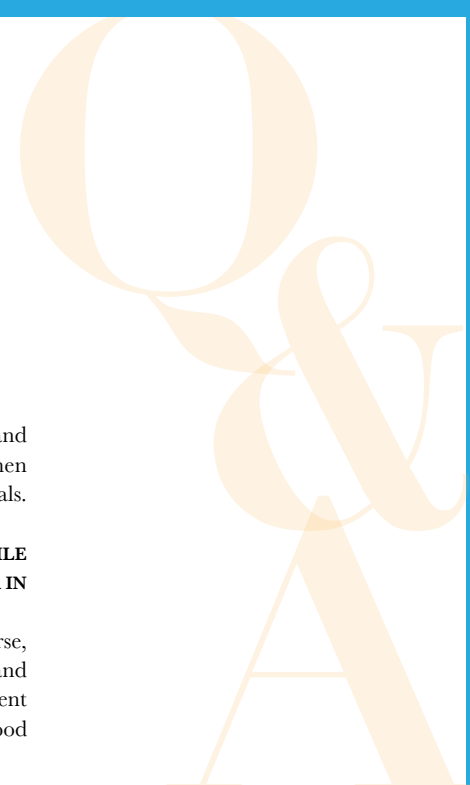
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**WHAT'S YOUR EXPERIENCE IN REAL ESTATE?**

I have a background in urban planning—so very different. I worked for the State of Minnesota as a state planner, and I led an international architectural competition. That was my first entree into building, construction and architecture.

**HOW LONG HAVE YOU PLAYED GOLF?**

I hired an LPGA player and went to Bayhill for two weeks and learned everything. That was about 20 years ago. It was the best thing I could have ever done because I didn't learn any bad habits. I went and got fitted for my clubs. I learned the rules, had private club memberships in Minnesota (that's where I am from) and won club championships. I'm very competitive. I played in the CME Pro-Am, which was super fun.

**WHAT ARE SOME OF THE CHALLENGES YOU FACE IN YOUR JOB?**

Our platform works phenomenally well, but it requires you to nurture online connections. So my challenge, and my goal, is to develop relationships by building trust. I do that through a lot of different ways such as, video marketing to get to know me, showing myself with a pro on the course that they're anticipating buying from, which shows that I know the course. I've played all the courses in Southwest Florida, some of the best courses in the world, so it helps tremendously that I can speak their language.

**HOW IS THE DEMAND FOR YOUR BUSINESS?**

My demand is high. I have probably 75 active customers in golf right now and now they come from all over—the Midwest, New York, New Jersey, California, Arizona. It's unbelievable.

Because I have an investor background, I also spend a lot of time with investors who want

to buy for Airbnb. I know that side inside and out. That's why I am such a proponent when it comes to advocacy and short-term rentals.

**WHAT IS YOUR PRIMARY CONCERN WHILE FINDING THE RIGHT HOME FOR A BUYER IN A GOLF COMMUNITY?**

My No. 1 concern is that they love the course, because if they don't love the course, and they have to go outside of the development to play golf at a course they enjoy, not a good job on my part.

**WHAT ARE SOME FACTORS THAT AFFECT THE VALUE OF GOLF PROPERTIES?**

Nowadays, having the home updated with the clean, coastal look is important. The layout also influences the pricing. The location within the development is also significant. I'm seeing that updated clubhouses with amenities like dog parks and wine tastings. Social venues are really driving the value.

**WHAT'S YOUR VISION FOR NABOR® AS A BOARD MEMBER?**

My vision is to really represent our membership in a manner that helps them succeed and to balance that with advocacy. I am also a REALTORS® Political Action Committee chair, and my balance there is to help our community, environment and people in our community: water quality, affordable housing and short-term rentals.

**ARE THERE ANY POLITICAL CHALLENGES THE INDUSTRY IS CURRENTLY FACING?**

Water quality is important from the city, county, state and federal levels. I sit on a panel that screens candidates for the next election. And by far, No. 1 is water quality, and this is the first time they all talk about it, and they're all at the same table talking and going the same direction. I mean, who doesn't want water quality?



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## Keepin' it sandy Collier County renourishes the shores of three standout beaches

| BY JAYNIE TICE

**P**icturesque views of the area's soft, cascading white beaches, sapphire skies and gently rolling jade waves captivate people from across the country and around the world. And beachfront properties in Southwest Florida are coveted by locals and visitors alike. That's why protecting and pampering the shoreline is a must. This January, Collier County completed a project to renourish the shores of Clam Pass, Park Shore and North Park Shore beaches in Naples.

Beach nourishment—or renourishment, in this case—consists of bringing new sand onto the shores either by truck or pipelines to replace any that was lost to erosion or drift. This not only makes the beaches wider and more appealing, but also provides safety benefits come hurricane season.

Pristine beaches are a major selling point in Southwest Florida real estate and sales of the properties that dot the coast make up a large portion of local REALTOR® transactions. According to the Naples Area Board of REALTORS® 2019 Annual Report on the Naples Area Housing Market, zip code 34103, which is home to Clam Pass, Park Shore

and North Park Shore beaches had more than 500 sales in 2019. What's more, the Naples Beach area yielded more than 1,700 sales in 2019 and in December saw a 59 percent increase in closed sales from the same month in 2018.

“Our beaches are special for their soft, sugary sand, which the residents love just as much as the visitors,” says REALTOR® Mari Vesce of The Vesce Real Estate Team on Gulfshore Drive. Vesce has specialized in beachfront property in the area for more than three decades and says she has seen firsthand the positive impact of these renourishment projects.

Collier County Coastal Zone Manager Gary McAlpin says the renourishment of the three beaches helps not only raise property values, but also protects against storm surge and helps maintain the structural integrity of buildings on the shoreline. “This particular project will have a positive effect on real estate values along Gulfshore Drive,” McAlpin explains.

This most recent renourishment project cost a total of \$5 million and took about four months to complete. The

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**“It’s paramount that Collier County stays on top of our beaches. The beaches draw people to our area, and whether they come to visit or to live here, it’s a huge part of our economy.” REALTOR® Mari Vesce**

county’s team of project managers and inspectors worked sunup to sundown with Earth Tech Enterprises hauling 165,000 tons of sand to split between the three beaches. This took about 70 trucks making three to four trips a day from Stewart Mining in Immokalee, which provided the sand. McAlpin says they waited until the close of sea turtle nesting season to begin the project.

Vesce made the move to Naples from her own coastal community in Delaware when she discovered the gorgeous beaches, watercolor sunsets and balmy temperatures of Southwest Florida. Thanks to county efforts like this one, she can assure her real estate clients that the area’s beaches are consistently clean and well-maintained.

“It needs to be an ongoing project to keep our beaches beautiful,” she says.

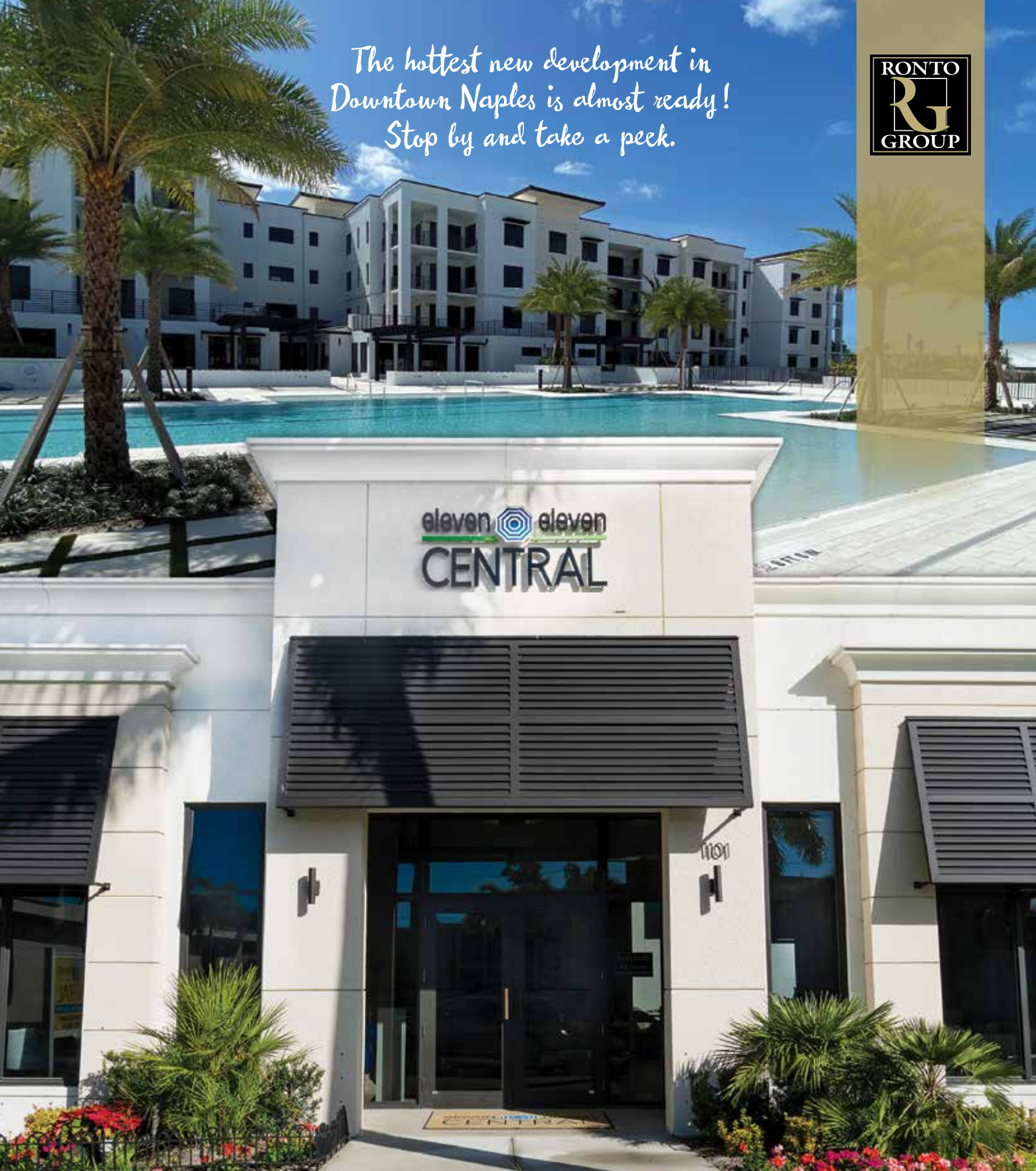
McAlpin says the county intends to renourish the beaches every five years, depending on the water conditions and any erosion damage. These particular beaches were previously renourished between 2013 and 2016. The county monitors the beaches each year, checking for erosion and displaced dunes. “If we have enough sand on the beach, all the dunes will be in the right places, which protects the structure of buildings along the shore,” he explains.

With the support from REALTORS®, county officials and organizations like Earth Tech and Stewart Mining, coastal real estate is in good hands. “This is one of many projects we do to enhance our environment, tourism and safety in the community,” McAlpin says. With the beaches attracting more and more tourists, REALTORS® have more opportunities to turn a one-time visitor into an full-time member of the community.

“The beaches are important to everyone,” Vesce says. “They’re like the cherry on top of the sundae that is Naples.”



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# Florida’s legislative session was a mixed bag when it came to real estate issues

Some bills impacting REALTORS® passed both houses, while others were postponed indefinitely.

| BY TIM ATEN



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**THE 2020 FLORIDA LEGISLATURE** proved to be a mixed bag when it came to legislation impacting the state’s REALTORS®. Some bills of direct interest to the profession and property owners cleared both houses, while others were indefinitely postponed.

Florida Realtors® and its political action committee honed in on legislative priorities intended to protect the rights of homeowners, promote business and community growth, safeguard Florida’s natural resources and provide Floridians with more affordable housing options.

Here are some of the highs and lows from the Florida House and Senate’s 60-day session, extended into mid-March to deliver a balanced budget amidst a dramatic ending affected by the coronavirus pandemic.

**AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

Senate Bill 998 and House Bill 1339 passed both houses, creating community development and housing legislation that have been converted into an act for presentation to Gov. Ron DeSantis that would be effective as of July 1.

The act allows local governments to approve affordable housing developments on any property zoned residential, commercial or industrial. It also provides additional accountability and training for Affordable Housing Advisory Committees and Local Housing Assistance Plans.

In addition to authorizing boards of county commissioners to approve development of affordable housing on any parcel, the legislation revises the information that the county budget officer must submit to the Office of Economic and Demographic Research regarding the final budget and the county’s economic status. It also amends the Florida Interlocal Cooperation Act

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of 1969 to authorize private entities to enter into specified loan agreements.

**ENVIRONMENT**

Senate Bill 712 and House Bill 1343, known as the Clean Waterways Act, also jointly passed both houses and will become effective July 1. Florida Realtors® promoted this effort because they recognized that pristine water is an integral part of the environment for residents and tourists of the Sunshine State.

Considered the main environmental bill of the 2020 session, the legislation considers findings from the Blue-Green Algae Task Force, a panel of scientists tapped by DeSantis to propose policies for tackling toxic outbreaks that closed beaches and harmed tourism during recent summers.

The bill transfers oversight and regulation for the permitting of septic tanks—formally known as “Onsite Treatment and Disposal Systems”—from the Florida Department of Health to the Department of Environmental Protection and includes the ban on untreated sewage discharge. This environmental resource management act requires the Department of Health to provide a specific report to the governor and the Legislature and directs water management districts to submit consolidated annual reports to the Office of Economic and Demographic Research.

**REAL ESTATE CONVEYANCES**

House Bill 469 and Senate Bill 1224 were unanimously approved and also become

effective July 1. The legislation simply eliminates the two-witness requirement for real estate leases longer than a year. The real estate conveyances provision provides that subscribing witnesses are not required to validate certain instruments conveying leasehold interest in real property.

**RESTRICTIVE COVENANTS**

House Bill 733 unanimously passed the House earlier this month after its third reading, but its companion legislation, Senate Bill 802, was indefinitely postponed and withdrawn from consideration in the Senate on the last day of the regular session.

Designed to extinguish discriminatory restrictive covenants, the Marketable Record Title Act would have revised what types of interests are extinguished by a marketable record title and would have made discrimina-

tory restrictions unlawful and unenforceable.

**VACATION RENTALS**

Both heavily amended, Senate Bill 1128 and House Bill 1011 looked as if they would successfully preempt the regulation of short-term vacation rentals from local governments to the state. On the final day of the session, however, the bills were indefinitely postponed and withdrawn from consideration.

The proposed legislation was a vehicle to more uniformly enforce issues and collect bed taxes by requiring that short-term rental property owners obtain licenses issued by the Division of Hotels and Restaurants of the Department of Business and Professional Regulation. It was designed to strike a balance between addressing community concerns while preserving private property rights.



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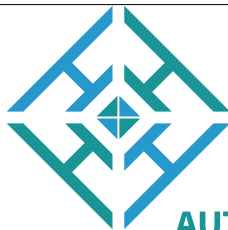
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# A look at the true economic impact of vacation rentals in Florida

Florida Realtors partnered on a study that found that in 25 counties surveyed, the rental-home business accounted for \$27.4 billion in sales in 2018.



Florida's tourism industry is a top economic driver to the state's GDP and is growing faster than the U.S. Economy, consumer spending,

health care spending, and spending on recreation (Rockport Analytics Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2017).

According to Visit Florida (2018), the state has experienced eight consecutive years of record-breaking visitation. In 2018, the state received 127 million visitors, making Florida one of the most popular tourist destinations in the world. In 2017, out-of-state visitors added \$85.9 billion to Florida's economy resulting in every 81 visitors supporting one Florida job (Visit Florida, 2018). It is clear that the Florida tourism industry is vital to the economic welfare of the state.

Florida's vacation rental home industry is an important component of the lodging industry that contributes to the overall tourist experience as well as the economic contribution that the tourism industry is able to make to the state of Florida. However, to date, the economic impact of the vacation rental home industry on Florida's overall economy is largely undetermined, due, in part, to the lack of a statewide analysis.

To determine the true extent of the economic impact of vacation rental homes to the state, Florida Realtors® partnered with the University of Central Florida and the Florida Vacation Rental Managers Association to produce a comprehensive report of the phenomenon.

The report focuses on the economic impact of the vacation rental home industry in 25 Florida counties: Escambia, Santa Rosa, Okaloosa, Walton, Bay, Gulf, Frank-



lin, Nassau, Duval, Pinellas, Hillsborough, Manatee, Sarasota, Charlotte, Lee, Collier, Monroe, Miami-Dade, Broward, Palm Beach, Orange, Osceola, Brevard, Volusia, and Flagler. When combined, these 25 counties include 89.3 percent of the total amount of registered vacation rental homes in the state of Florida.

**Here are highlights of the report's findings that will be noteworthy to vacation rental stakeholders and others interested in this rapidly growing industry.**

- In total, the 2018 economic impact of Florida's vacation rental home industry in the 25 targeted counties was roughly \$27.4 billion in sales.
- This represents approximately \$16.6 billion in direct spending and \$10.8 billion in indirect spending.
- The \$16.6 billion in direct spending represents 18.7 percent of the total direct spending of the Florida tourism industry in 2017 and translates to 1.6

percent of the total gross domestic product for Florida in 2018.

- The direct spending amounts to nearly \$46 million a day and approximately \$1.9 million every hour reverberating through the state's economy.
- The direct spending supports roughly 115,000 jobs with one job being created for every \$144,181 spent.
- Overall, the industry generates 312 jobs statewide every day, 13 jobs every hour and one job every 5 minutes.
- In 2018, the total amount of tourists staying in vacation rental homes in Florida was 14,233,274, which equates to 11.2 percent of the total 127 million tourists that came to Florida in 2018.
- On average, visitors staying in vacation rental homes spent nearly \$46 million per day in Florida, which is an economically significant number.

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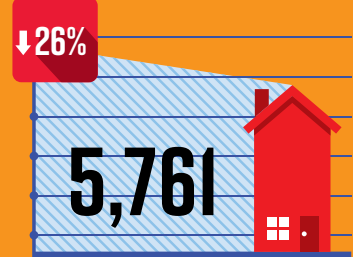
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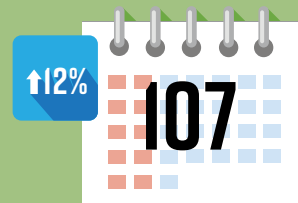
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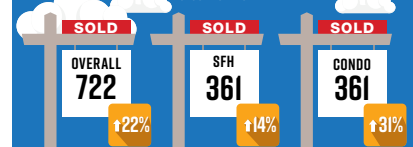
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**MAY 21**—Member Business Meeting, NABOR® office, 1455 Pine Ridge Road, Naples

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# TO BUILD OR TO RENOVATE?

*THAT IS THE QUESTION*

Local experts weigh in on what's hotter:  
new construction or property renovation

BY ARTIS HENDERSON



N

aples real estate has been dropping jaws for decades. From its beauty, to its location, to its over-the-top price tags, the Naples area has some of the most talked-about properties in the nation. Last June, that talk was on hyperdrive with the sale of 2500 Gordon Drive in Port Royal. People were floored by the sales price, an astonishing \$48.8 million that made it the most expensive house in Southwest Florida.

That buzz only got louder when, a few short months later, the 10,825-square-foot mansion, built in 1994, was demolished. The reason? Its undisclosed owners plan to build a new house on the site.

The dramatic purchase, demolition and soon-to-be rebuild has industry leaders asking: Is new construction the only way to go? Or is there still a place for renovation in the Southwest Florida real estate market?

Despite what's happening on Gordon Drive, the national obsession over home-renovation shows seems to point to a preference for renovation over new construction. From *Fixer Upper* to *Property Brothers* to *Flip or Flop*, viewers—and home owners—are transfixed by the possibility of a stunning update to an older property. If TV-watching habits are any indication of the consumer mindset, then renovation is hot right now. And sales of existing homes in Naples are booming. According to the 2019 Year End Market Report released by Naples Area Board of REALTORS® in January, existing home sales through December 2019 were the highest in a decade. But with fresh developments spreading east across Collier County, and buyers eager to get into those sparkling homes, new construction looks equally viable.

Thomas Lykos, president of the Lykos Group—a firm that specializes in design, remodeling and new construction in Naples—says both options are popular across Collier County. “Pelican Bay is a hot neighborhood for both renovations and new home construction,” he says, “and the City of Naples remains a hot area for both renovations and new home construction.”

When it comes to popular spots for renovations, Lykos points to the golf communities across the area. “Many of the gated golf communities are becoming more popular for renovations as the housing stock ages,” he notes. Another option? Beachfront condominiums. “A buyer purchases a condo unit in a building based on the location of the building and the amenities then they renovate the condo unit to their specifications,” Lykos adds.

When it comes to the recent trend in sustainability and environmentally conscious design, Lykos says new construction is often a better fit. “Typically, new construction incorporates more energy-efficient and environmentally friendly construction materials and procedures into the construction of new homes,” he says. “As new technology and materials are developed, they are more easily incorporated into a new home than trying to retrofit into an existing structure.”

At the Lykos Group, renovations outnumber new construction on the group's current list of projects. But, Lykos says, historically he sees more money spent on new construction than home renovations and repairs. HomeAdvisor has compiled a list of average costs for typical home improvement projects. According to the

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—THOMAS LYKOS, PRESIDENT OF  
THE LYKOS GROUP

”



“  
BUILDING A  
CUSTOM HOME  
IS A VERY TIME-  
INTENSIVE  
PROCESS.

WHEN PEOPLE WANT SOMETHING SPECIFIC AND UNIQUE, A PROJECT CAN TAKE UP TO TWO YEARS. SOMETIMES GOING THROUGH THE PROCESS OF BUILDING A NEW HOME ISN'T WORTH IT, SO THEY STAY IN THEIR EXISTING HOME.

—SCOTT KISH,  
PRINCIPAL AT KTS  
HOMES

”

site, the national average for a kitchen remodel is roughly \$22,000. The national average for a bathroom remodel is around \$9,700. Flooring updates average \$2,800.

When it comes to sales, Lykos believes new construction has a leg up. “New homes sell better when the buyer is new to the city or neighborhood,” he says, “and new homes sell better when the buyer can afford the new home compared to a comparable older, renovated home.”

Still, he points to important benefits of renovating an older home, like time and money. “A whole-house remodel costs less than building a new home,” Lykos says, “and a whole house remodel usually takes less time than building a new home.” Plus, if owners love their current neighborhood or school district, there’s the added upside of not having to relocate.

The benefit of staying put is not insignificant, says Scott Kish, principal at KTS Homes in Naples. “If you love your house and don’t want to move, sometimes you’re not willing to go through the long process of building a new custom home.”

Kish’s portfolio includes designs for renovations to existing homes as well as new

construction sites. His clients make their building decisions for a variety of reasons.

Kish remembers one customer he met after she’d seen one of the model homes designed by his firm. She loved the model, and invited Kish to see her current home in Fiddler’s Creek. It was a one-in-a-million lot. The pair discussed her options, and after considering all the possibilities, including new construction, the client decided on a whole-house remodel. When the project was completed, she was thrilled with her decision. Not only did she have an updated, modern house, but she got to keep the location she loved.

This scenario, Kish says, is often the case he encounters when he’s speaking to potential clients about their primary residence. “Unless someone is trying to get out of the home from an equity standpoint, or if they’re tired of living there, I don’t see many clients up and leaving for the fun of it.”

But for clients who are looking to buy a second home, new construction is often their first choice. Kish explains: “Down here, this is a vacation market. People are looking to buy a second or third home—sometimes

a fourth. When they come to the market, they're looking for the specific features they want already in the house. Those clients are better for new home construction versus a remodel. With a remodel, they'd have to go through the hassle of finding a place then doing the remodel versus just finding a location and going into a build."

Whichever choice a client makes, Kish says cost is an important factor. If it's a rehab, a good portion of the budget goes toward taking everything out. With new construction, every dollar the client spends goes toward something brand new. "Their dollar goes a little farther, to some extent," he says. But with new construction, the design and engineering costs might be heavier and new homes call for higher impact fees than a renovation project.

Still, the remodel versus new construction decision is often governed less by a client's desires and more by supply and demand. "Take the condo market," Kish explains. "There are only so many condos on the market. If they like the floorplan but don't like the finishes, then they're going to buy it and do a remodel." At the end of the day, he says, there are only so many lots and homesites available.

Jacquie Walter, owner of Homes by Jacquie Walter, is a real estate agent and designer who shows her clients both homes that would benefit from a renovation project and new construction. With her background in design, she brings unique insight to the home-buying or selling process. "I can look at a space and see what the possibilities are. I pride myself on being able to take people

into a home and saying, 'This is what you can do with this,' or 'This is an easy fix.'"

Recently, she's found that her clients are less interested in big renovation projects. "In this market, everybody is looking for move-in ready." In the last year, her contracts have all been for new construction homes, for a variety of reasons. "There's always something in a house that people don't like," she says. "If they can start from square one instead, then they can build the house of their dreams."

This is especially true for neighborhoods where new construction is still happening. Reselling in those areas is particularly tough, Walter says. "No matter how beautiful an existing house is," he adds, "people will always find something they would rather do themselves."





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Timing is also a factor in the decision whether to build a new home or renovate an existing one. Because many of the properties Walter shows are for clients who plan to use the house as a retirement home, her clients are often willing to take their time. “They’re not opposed to waiting the time it takes for new construction,” she says. “People are willing to wait for the right thing in this market.”

When her clients do take on renovation projects, she often sees kitchens and bathroom at the top of their lists. Flooring is another big investment that her clients often undertake. “It’s the best return on

investment that you can make,” she says. Garage doors, updated driveways and impact glass in doors and windows are also big spots for renovation dollars.

And dollars are always key. In the renovate-versus-build-new decision, the amount of money at a client’s disposal will ultimately shape the final decision. With enough funds, clients can take on whatever projects they choose, whether it’s a full-home rehab in a neighborhood they love or from-the-ground-up new construction in a just-debuted community. Either way, they’re sure to get the home of their dreams. **NR**

# TAKING STEPS TO TACKLE A TOUGH ISSUE

Housing affordability remains a hot topic in Collier County, but there are positive developments on the horizon.

BY BETH LUBERECKI

**H**ousing-affordability advocates are finally starting to see progress in Collier County when it comes to addressing this well-documented need.

“I think we are making moves in terms of housing affordability that previously wouldn’t have been heard of,” says Cormac Giblin, housing, grant development and operations manager for Collier County’s Community and Human Services Division. “We’re trying to address this issue head on now.”

That issue was first clearly spelled out in a 2017 Urban Land Institute study, which found that in 2015, 40 percent of Collier County households were cost-burdened and spending more than 30 percent of their gross incomes on housing. And nearly half of those 58,685 households were severely cost-burdened and spending more than 50 percent of their gross incomes on housing.

The Collier County Community Housing Plan was released in October 2017 with the goal of adding more affordable housing units in Collier County, where about 40,000 people commute daily from Lee and Charlotte Counties or other areas outside of Collier County. “We have so many people

who work here who do not live here,” says Mary Waller, a REALTOR® with Better Homes and Gardens Real Estate Pristine in Naples, as well as a member of both the Collier County Affordable Housing Advisory Committee and the Naples Area Board of REALTORS®. “They get paid and take their money back to where they live.”

Giblin says a key piece in that housing plan is using county-owned land to partner with the private sector. That’s the model being used for what’s called the Bembridge project, which is taking some major steps forward. The 82-unit apartment complex will be located on about five acres along Santa Barbara Boulevard in Naples owned by Collier County. That land will then be leased for 99 years to McDowell Housing Partners, the developer of the project and an affiliate of McDowell Properties, a national developer of affordable and workforce housing that has more than 40,000 units in operation.

The complex’s one-, two- and three-bedroom apartments will serve Collier County residents earning between 30 percent and 80 percent of the county’s area median household income, which is

\$65,675 according to data from Florida’s Office of Economic and Demographic Research. That would include essential services personnel like teachers, firefighters and police officers.

In December 2019, the project received \$7.8 million in Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery funding from the Florida Housing Finance Corporation made available for the construction of affordable and workforce housing in Florida counties impacted by Hurricanes Irma and Michael. Currently in the design phase, the project will likely submit for permits in late spring, with the aim of breaking ground in the first quarter of 2021.

In looking at Collier County—where the median closed price of a home was \$332,514 in 2019—McDowell Housing Partners saw a community that was underserved in terms of housing affordability. “The population growth has been dramatic, yet the housing that is there to service the working class has been lagging far behind,” says Christopher Shear, managing director of McDowell Housing Partners.

He says the cost and limited availability of land, as well as the general costs of





“IT WILL BE THE SAME MODEL OF USING COUNTY-OWNED LAND TO PARTNER WITH A PRIVATE-SECTOR DEVELOPER TO PRODUCE HOUSING THAT IS AFFORDABLE.

WE HOPE TO REPLICATE THE SUCCESS OF THE BEMBRIDGE PROJECT WITH THE GOLDEN GATE SITE.”  
—CORMAC GIBLIN, HOUSING, GRANT DEVELOPMENT AND OPERATIONS MANAGER FOR COLLIER COUNTY'S COMMUNITY AND HUMAN SERVICES DIVISION

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construction in Collier County have all contributed to a lack of affordable housing. “There hasn’t been the market dynamics to make the economics work without some assistance,” he says. “There’s a lot of demand, but it’s very hard given the current market conditions to be able to build and support these developments without the subsidy that is provided through a tax-credit program or in partnerships with local communities who provide things like free or discounted land.”

### **BUILDING ON SUCCESS**

Collier County is now evaluating proposals for a larger affordable housing development on 30 acres at the Golden Gate golf course property in Naples. “It will be the same model of using county-owned land to partner with a private-sector developer to produce housing that is affordable,” says Giblin. “We hope to replicate the success of the Bembridge project with the Golden Gate site.”

The county is reviewing six proposals made in response to the RFP, which included goals to provide housing for essential services personnel as well as senior citizens and veterans. Giblin expects the selection

committee to present their top picks to the Board of County Commissioners in late March.

One of the proposals being reviewed was coordinated by the Community Foundation of Collier County and includes the possibility of about \$10 million of funding from the Richard M. Schulze Family Foundation and the nonprofit foundation at Naples retirement community Moorings Park. It calls for a minimum of 350 affordable housing units, 100 of which would be earmarked for seniors and veterans and the rest aimed at essential employees.

The need to support those vital county workers was made clear in the 2017 Collier County Community Needs and Assets Assessment done by the Richard M. Schulze Family Foundation, says Eileen Connolly-Keesler, president and CEO of the Community Foundation of Collier County. “Sometimes people get the attitude of, ‘What should we care if they’re living in Lee County or Collier County?’” she says. “But they should be a part of the community. When a government employee can’t afford to live here and have kids in our school system, I think that is a problem.”

If their proposal is chosen, it would

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WE'RE PRIORITIZING  
FARM-WORKER  
FAMILIES WHO WORK  
YEAR-ROUND IN  
IMMOKALEE, AS WELL  
AS OTHER LOW- AND  
MODERATE-INCOME  
FAMILIES.

AND FROM ALL THE EARLY  
INDICATIONS, IF WE WERE  
BUILDING 10 TIMES AS MANY  
UNITS, THEY WOULD BE FULL.

—DR. AROL I. BUNTZMAN,  
CHAIRMAN/CEO OF THE  
IMMOKALEE FAIR HOUSING  
ALLIANCE

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require finding a nonprofit developer to handle the construction and management of the housing project. The community foundation would continue acting as a coordinator and could end up kicking in some funding as well.

“We’re looking at launching a \$5 million campaign around housing issues, so it’s very possible some of those dollars could be shifted over to this project, particularly around seniors and veterans,” says Connolly-Keesler. “So we’re keeping that in mind as we’re talking with donors and raising money for issues affecting this community.”

If their proposal isn’t chosen for this project, it’s possible the parties would explore doing something similar elsewhere. “The problem is that land is so expensive in Collier County,” says Connolly-Keesler. “When you start throwing in millions to purchase land, it jacks those rents up. The county needs to be a part of the solution. We’re not going to throw philanthropic dollars at it without the county having some skin in the game.”

#### EXPANDING THE REACH

In Immokalee, the Immokalee Fair Housing Alliance is moving forward with its project to build 128 two- and three-bedroom affordable apartments on 9.5 acres at Lake Trafford Road and 19th Street, with rents averaging around \$850 a month. It’s moving through the county approval process, with a public hearing before the planning commission scheduled in April.

The alliance has raised the \$750,000 needed to purchase the land and conduct the necessary environmental and traffic studies. Next steps include raising the millions of dollars needed to build the project, which will service Collier County residents making 60 percent of the area median income or below.

“We’re prioritizing farm-worker families who work year-round in Immokalee, as well as other low- and moderate-income families,” says Dr. Arol I. Buntzman, chairman/CEO of the Immokalee Fair Housing Alliance. “And from all the early indications, if we were building 10 times as many units, they would be full.”

The alliance is also in discussions with a landowner about either purchasing seven acres of land or doing a joint venture on

a project to build housing for teachers, firefighters and other low- or moderate-income government and nonprofit employees in Immokalee.

“For people in the upper-middle and upper incomes, their quality of life will deteriorate if we cannot attract and keep people working in the low- and moderate-income areas,” says Buntzman. “Who’s going to cut the grass in the gated communities? Who’s going to clean the swimming pools or work in the grocery store? Having decent, affordable, safe housing benefits everybody. And if we don’t have it, it’s going to start hurting us.”

It definitely stung when Naples medical device manufacturer Arthrex decided to expand in South Carolina, partly because of the challenges around workforce housing in Collier County. “A lot of people don’t want to drive an hour every day,” says Waller. “The lack of affordable housing touches on everyone.”

Future development of the rural lands area of the county continues to be a hot topic of discussion. When Rivergrass Village was



approved by the county recently, developer Collier Enterprises did not include any affordable housing in the project but made a \$500,000 donation to help fund down-payment assistance for essential services personnel buying homes in Rivergrass.

“The preference would always be for the developer to provide the units on site within their development, so that we have some permanently affordable homes in the county,” says Giblin. He says that the rules governing the development of the rural lands area are currently under review and that regulations around affordable housing are one thing being looked at during that process, a recommendation that was advocated for by the Affordable Housing Advisory Committee.

Collier County has also created an Affordable Housing Trust Fund, though it’s still early days for that. Currently money only goes into that fund when surplus county land gets sold, and it’s got a balance of just \$160,000. But the Affordable Housing Advisory Committee has been tasked with

finding other funding sources for the trust. “And we’re going to turn every stone,” says Waller, NABOR’s Citizen of the Year in 2016.

NABOR itself also continues to push forward on the issue of housing affordability. “I believe we can always do more for housing that is affordable in Collier County,” says Lauren Melo, president of NABOR. “NABOR lobbies the state each year for affordable housing at Great American Realtor Days. It has been a key talking point for as long as I can remember.”

REALTORS® know that quality of life plays a big part in their ability to sell homes. “When people move into town, they ask about the school district,” says Connolly-Keesler. “If we can’t keep our good teachers and we start seeing problems in our district, that’s going to affect housing. If crime goes up because we can’t hire good police officers because they can’t afford to live here, that’s going to affect housing.”

Giblin says that numerous studies have debunked the myth that affordable housing

lowers property values. “Proximity to housing that’s affordable actually increases property values,” he says. “You’ve got a built-in workforce and it reduces other strains, like on the roads. Think about the infrastructure that we’re spending on, and the time spent in traffic. If (current commuters) were to live closer to where they work, the savings would trickle down everywhere.”

And Shear, of McDowell Housing Partners, wants REALTORS® to remember that projects like the Bembridge site can help turn renters into homebuyers in Collier County, by allowing them to live within their means and hopefully save some money for the future. “What we’re trying to do is find ways to get people into good quality housing but also allow upward mobility to ultimately move to homeownership,” he says. “Don’t forget about the people who reside in these communities, because they have jobs and careers. We would love to see more people moving out of our communities to find themselves in new homes that they own.” **NR**

# WHERE'S THE NEW HOME CONSTRUCTION?

We show you where new homes are being built throughout Collier County.

BY DICK HOGAN

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ollier County's inventory of homes for sale is getting a little tight—but a booming national economy and a thriving local market for new construction should provide a robust supply of homes throughout 2020.

“Existing inventory is falling but it's still above what's considered equilibrium for the market,” says David Cobb, regional manager of

housing data provider Metrostudy. “In December we were sitting at 6.8 months' supply and normal is six. So it's gotten better because it was at nine or 10 months' supply a couple years ago.”

The bottom line, Cobb says, is that “the economy looks really strong. I think builders are going to have a pretty good 2020—so long as we don't get hit with one of these wild-card events—because the economic metrics are good nationally and they're good locally.”

Still, experts say, one statistic doesn't apply to every neighborhood, as Collier County continues to grow and new communities spring up along Immokalee Road, State Road 951 and East Tamiami Trail. Growth in the supply of new homes is being led from the eastern edge of the county: two of the top three Collier County communities for new-home starts in 2019 were Ave Maria (No. 1 at 306) and Orange Blossom Ranch (No. 3 at 209), according to Metrostudy. Naples Reserve, in second place at 211 starts, is located off U.S. 41 near State Road 951, as is another major project, Fiddler's Creek.

As those corridors have matured, there's been a fundamental change in the way people think about where to live in Naples, says Wes Kunkle, president and managing broker at Kunkle International Realty.

“I remember when people would say, ‘I don't really want to be east of 41,’” he says. “And then it was I-75: ‘I don't really want to be east of 75.’ Now you hardly hear that terminology anymore.” Home buyers are now willing to look east because of “the lure of the new home compared to the 20-year-old home,” Kunkle adds.

Meanwhile, prices west of U.S. 41 have increased so sharply that

there's little in the area that most people can afford and nowhere to build new homes, said Coco Amar, vice president for strategic growth in South Florida for William Raveis Real Estate.

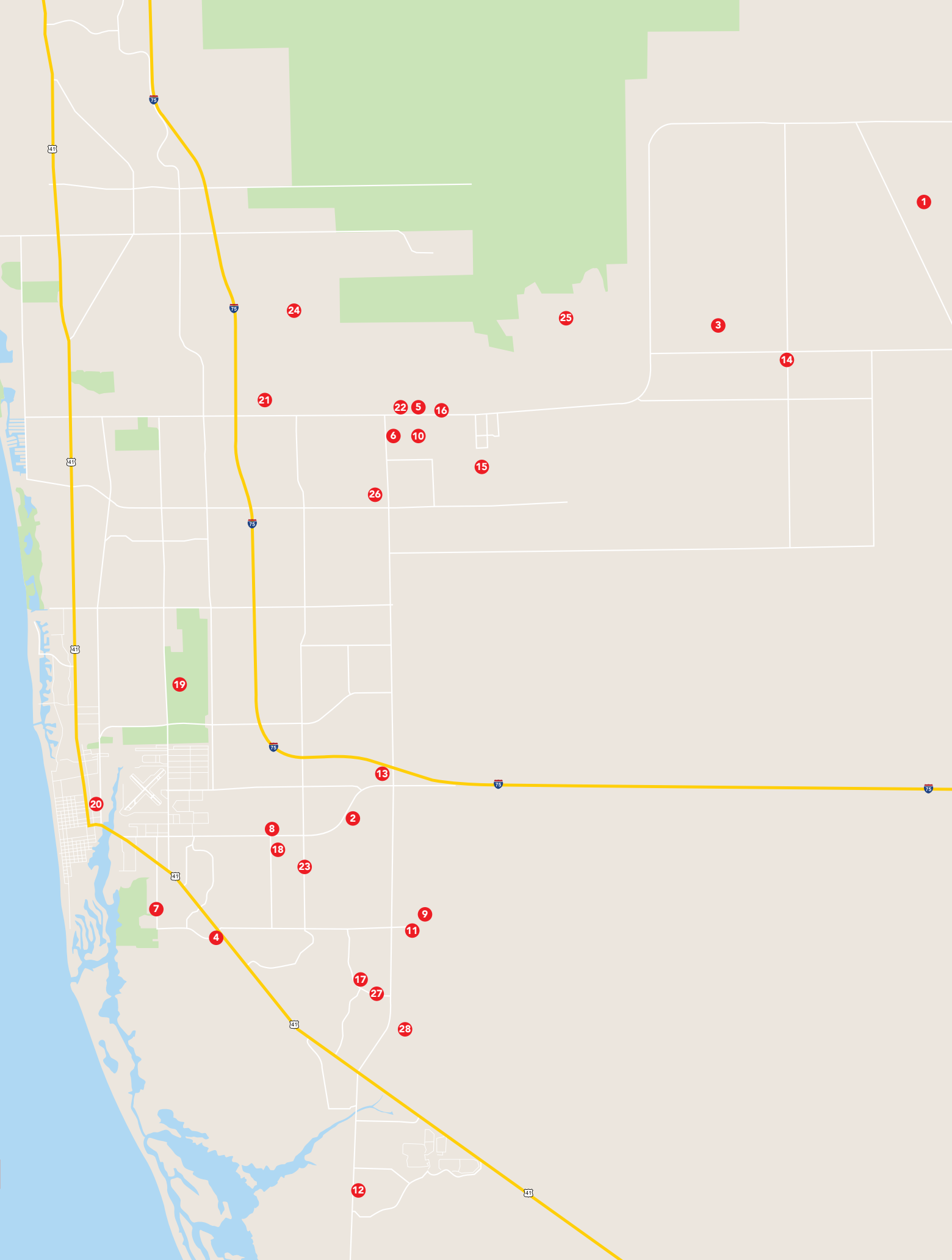
“The pricing for that aging inventory is still not low enough to attract the rehab group, the reconstruction group or the renovation group,” she says. “There isn't enough of a cushion. So you have a whole segment of the inventory that really needs to be redone and it's kind of stuck there and people are opting to move for the new, which is of course in different locations.”

Mike Hughes, vice president and general manager for Downing-Frye Realty, says Collier's robust health care industry may be a draw as well. “Proximity to hospitals and doctors is a nice amenity” for aging baby boomers, he notes.

The future of residential growth may be in the 185,000-acre Rural Lands Stewardship Area, created to allow a string of mixed-use communities east of Golden Gate Estates along the county's eastern fringe. The program allows the formation of the so-called “rural villages” to provide the opportunity for growth after the rest of the county's been largely built out. Ave Maria, approved in 2005, was the first of the controversial “rural villages” to be approved in the area. A second, Collier Enterprises' 1,000-acre Rivergrass Village, was approved Jan. 28 by the county commission. But the vote was 3-2, with opposition voiced by environmental groups concerned about possible overdevelopment. Rivergrass is approved for 2,500 homes and 100,000 square feet of commercial space on 1,000 acres along Oil Well Road east of Golden Gate.

Besides Ave Maria and Rivergrass, four more rural villages have been proposed. If all are approved, they'd have a total of up to 2.745 million square feet of commercial along with homes for 62,858 residents.

Hughes acknowledges that “the county is kind of wrestling with” the rural villages concept but that they'd be a good source of new inventory in the future. “I'm very intrigued by it, to be honest,” he says. “I love the idea.”



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## THE BIG PLAYERS

These are the top five communities for generating new-home inventory in Collier County, leading the industry in new-home starts in 2019:

### 1) Ave Maria

306 starts in 2019

**Builders:** Del Webb, CC Homes, Pulte Homes, Lennar Homes

5076 Annunciation Circle #104, Ave Maria 34142

Located south of Immokalee on the eastern edge of Collier County. It was created as the first of the “rural villages” where future growth is planned.

### 2) Naples Reserve

211 starts in 2019

**Builders:** Ashton Woods, D.R. Horton, Florida Lifestyle Homes, KTS Homes, Lundstrom Development, Marvin Development, McGarvey Custom Homes, Stock Signature Homes

14745 Leeland Drive, Naples 34114

Located in south Naples off U.S. 41.

From \$354,900.

### 3) Orange Blossom Ranch

209 starts in 2019

**Builders:** Lennar Homes, Pulte Homes 1976 Parson St., Naples 34120

Located off I-75 in eastern Collier County.

Townhomes, villas and manor and executive home designs from 1,417 square feet to more than 3,000 square feet.

### 4) Isles of Collier Preserve

171 starts in 2019

**Builder:** Minto Homes, Stock Signature Homes

5445 Caribe Ave., Naples 34113

Located off Tamiami Trail East in south Naples.

Single-family homes and condominiums. \$374,900-\$1,090,900.

### 5) Bent Creek Preserve

162 starts by Lennar

9432 Greenleigh Court, Naples 34120

Located south of Immokalee Road east of Collier Boulevard in North Naples

Single-family homes and villas from the mid-\$200,000s.

## A WIDE RANGE OF COMMUNITIES

Here are some of the residential communities where homes are being built now in Collier County.

### 6) Abaco Pointe

Toll Brothers

14723 Kingfisher Loop, Naples 34120

Villa homes.

\$336,995-\$497,495.

### 7) Arboretum

Mattamy Homes

Bayshore Drive and Thomasson Drive, Naples

4720 Bayshore Dr, Naples, FL 34112

\$288,990 to \$363,345.

Coach homes and villas.

### 8) Avalon

Neal Communities

6916 Avalon Circle, Naples 34112

\$321,609-\$329,172.

Carriage homes, 1,660 square feet.

### 9) Azure at Hacienda Lakes

Toll Brothers

8786 Saint Lucia Drive, Naples 34114

Located east of Collier Boulevard along Rattlesnake Hammock Road.

\$476,995-\$639,995.

### 10) Compass Landing

Mattamy Homes

3725 Helmsman Drive, Naples 34120

\$392,990-\$542,990.

1,994 square feet-3,747 square feet.

### 11) Esplanade at Hacienda Lakes

Taylor Morrison

8603 Maggiore Court 34114

Located east of Collier Boulevard along Rattlesnake Hammock Road.

\$346,900-\$483,382.

### 12) Fiddler’s Creek

Ashton Woods, Taylor Morrison, Pulte

Homes, D.R. Horton, Stock Development, Gulf Bay Homes, Harbourside Custom

Homes

8152 Fiddler’s Creek Parkway, Naples 33114.

Located on Collier Boulevard near Marco Island.

### 13) Fronterra

CC Homes

8725 Madrid Circle, Naples 34104.

Near Davis Boulevard and Collier Boulevard just west of I-75.

\$277,990-\$363,990.

1,133 square feet-2,529 square feet.

### 14) Golden Gate

Maronda Homes

2944 Everglades Blvd., Naples 34120

\$228,900-\$439,166.

1,273 square feet-3,130 square feet.

### 15) Greyhawk at Golf Course of the Everglades

Pulte Homes

9252 Cormorant Drive, Naples 34120

\$398,990-\$766,975.

1,691 square feet-3,900 square feet.

### 16) La Morada

WCI

2371 Montserrat Lane, #102, Naples 34120

\$309,999-\$339,999.

Coach homes, 1,741 square feet-2,110 square feet.

### 17) Lely Resort

Stock Development, Lundstrom Development

8020 Grand Lely Drive, Naples 34113

Near Tamiami Trail East and Collier

Boulevard in south Naples

### 18) Marquesa Isles

Neal Communities

2122 Marquesa Circle, Naples 34112

Off County Barn Road near Davis Boulevard in east Naples

\$336,990-\$432,387

### 19) Miramonte at Grey Oaks

Ronto Group

2386 Grey Oaks Dr N, Naples, FL 34105

From \$1,795,000

Villas and single-family homes.

3,700 square feet-5,000 square feet.

**20) Naples Square**

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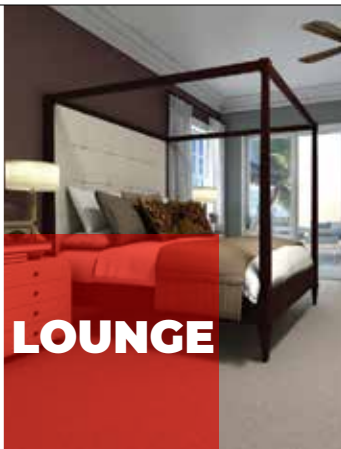
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**GRANDVIEW AT BAY BEACH COMES TO FORT MYERS BEACH**

We take a side trip to this new Lee County condo development.

New luxury condominiums for active retirees may be a thing of the past in the largely built-out area west of U.S. 41 in Naples.

But Naples-based London Bay Development Group is bringing its trademark cutting-edge design and modern amenities to Grandview at Bay Beach condo, which broke ground in February at the south end of Fort Myers Beach.

The 11-story tower within the gated Waterside neighborhood at Bay Beach will have 58 waterfront residences starting in the high \$900,000s.

“We’ve already seen great interest from homebuyers motivated by the desire to live within walking distance of the beach, and enjoy world-class panoramic views and resort-style amenities,” said Mark Wilson, president of London Bay Development.

Scheduled to open the summer of 2021, Grandview will feature amenities ranging up to 11-foot ceilings and private two-car garages for the six penthouse units, plus Waterside’s tennis courts, walking and jogging paths, fishing pier and beach access.

–Dick Hogan



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# Growing together

COMMERCIAL GROWTH AND RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT  
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BY DICK HOGAN



A

healthy economy and increasing numbers of middle-income residents are combining to result in a surge of commercial development in Collier County.

Many of the new residents are drawn by one thing, says Mike Hughes, vice president and general manager for Downing-Frye Realty: “Jobs.”

That’s what sets Naples apart from other Florida communities, he said. “A lot of retirees still need to supplement their income. We have jobs. And if you go up the west coast there are some areas that have waterfront property just like us but they don’t have the jobs.”

Hughes adds that “A lot of the jobs up north, you don’t have to work in that particular area. A lot of those jobs, those people can work anywhere. You can kind of live wherever you want to live.”

Commercial builders are gauging where the new residential construction is going and are acting accordingly, says Wes Kunkle, president and managing broker at Kunkle International Realty.

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“I think it’s that developers are being smart enough that they’re building commercial development around the residential so that you’re not that far away from, say, a Publix or Whole Foods or anything like that,” he said.

In part, Kunkle explains, the expansion eastward is driven by the lack of inventory to the west. “I think that for the normal buyer and seller,” he says “it’s the lure of the new home.”

But, he says, increased retail development means prospective home buyers are now more willing to broaden their search. “I don’t hear anything about location anymore,” he adds.

Coco Amar, vice president for strategic growth in South Florida for William Raveis Real Estate, said the newcomers are a different breed: younger, often with families and less able to pay the higher prices that prevail west of U.S. 41.

“Are we getting a different demographic coming into Collier County? I believe the answer to that is ‘Yes,’” she says. “We’re getting a very different, broader demographic of different status. And that, of course, changes the game, as well.”

These newcomers are happy to snap up the homes being built in communities that have sprung up as development marches east along Immokalee Road, State Road 951 (Collier Boulevard) and U.S. 41, she says.

That, in turn, spurs commercial growth throughout the county, Amar said.

Here are some of the recent commercial projects that are planned or under way throughout the county:

### **ARTHREX**

Arthrex, the medical device manufacturer that is the county’s largest private-sector employer, is building a new six-story, 300,000-square-foot headquarters scheduled to open later this year. The new building is part of a three-structure expansion that will also mean the hiring of 560 new employees.

Arthrex has also developed a 160-

room, four-story hotel and a two-story, 38,000-square-foot wellness and medical facility with an employee fitness center and health clinic.

### **ONE NAPLES**

Stock Development is moving through the county review process with plans for its proposed mixed-use development One Naples a block from Vanderbilt Beach in North Naples.

The company’s original plan for the six-acre site drew protest from nearby residents who contend that its proposed condo tower was too high and that the project would cause too much additional traffic on local roads. The revised plans include two 16-story high-rise condominium towers instead of the original 21-story one. One Naples would also have up to 25,000 square feet of commercial development.

### **PARADISE COAST SPORTS COMPLEX**

The first phase of Paradise Coast Sports Complex is scheduled to open this summer with four fields. Once fully completed, it will have 19 fields, a lake and a 5,000-seat stadium.

Collier County officials hope to attract both local and visiting amateur sports events with the complex. Paid for with \$80 million in tourist tax revenue, the facility is expected to be complete by 2021. It’s being built on a 60-acre tract on the northeast corner of Interstate 745 and Collier Boulevard.

A number of new hotels have already opened close to the complex, according to information provided by the county: a WoodSpring Suites extended stay hotel at City Gate and a new Staybridge Suites at Lely are operating while several other

family-oriented, mid-range hotels are under construction on the north side of the county.

New hotels mean new jobs for residents, and the visitors staying in them are expected to add more than \$1.8 billion to the community from tourism each year, according to the county.

Also underway are promotional efforts with sporting event planners, arts organizations and music promoters.

### **BURLINGTON COAT FACTORY**

More than 10 years after the Kmart at Collier Boulevard and U.S. 41 in East Naples shut down, its space is finally being filled by some major retailers. Burlington Coat Factory, Home Goods and Planet Fitness plan to move into the Freedom Square, where the Kmart closed its doors in October 2009.

That’s not the only hard-luck retail space being repurposed in Collier’s commercial development boom.

Organic grocery store Lucky’s Market announced Jan. 27 that it had filed for bankruptcy protection in January and shut down most of its stores—including the location it was leasing at 3815 Tamiami Trail E. in East Naples. However, Lucky’s is now under contract to sell that store (and four others in the state) to Publix.

### **NEW KEISER UNIVERSITY CAMPUS**

The first phase of a new two-story, 40,000-square-foot Keiser University location is taking shape on a vacant six-acre site at 4001 Tamiami Trail E. in East Naples and scheduled to be completed by late summer.

The campus will be constructed in two phases, with a two-story building in each phase. The second smaller, 25,000-square-foot building will be used for university expansion or other commercial use. **NR**

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## Safety in selling

Here are a few preventative measures to keep agents safe during showings and open houses. | BY TESS RAINES



Crime prevention and safety awareness are trending topics among REALTORS® following a few well-publicized incidences involving real estate professionals. In 2015, Janice Tisdale, a real estate agent in

Texas, was held hostage during a showing by a buyer who wanted \$4,000. In what became a national case the year before, real estate agent and wealthy broker Beverly Carter was kidnapped by prospective buyers and lost her life.

It's tough to imagine Naples as an area where REALTORS® would need to think twice about their safety, but it pays to be vigilant and take the proper precautions.

Captain Tim Guerrette of the Collier County Sheriff's Office, who is also a broker for Florida Pro Realty, acknowledges that Neapolitans often take the town's general tranquility for granted. "I think because of the community we live in we have a tendency to feel really safe," he says. "People have a tendency to drop their guard because of that."

But locally, REALTOR® safety has centered around incidences in which agents found themselves the victims of stalking. Prospective buyers will see an image of an attractive real estate agent on signage, or in person at a sales center, and begin tracking them by making frequent return visits. Fortunately, these specific situations did not escalate, but Guerrette adds that victims don't usually notify law enforcement because they believe the situation doesn't warrant police intervention. To help combat this, Guerrette urges agents to use caution with their profile pictures on the internet and to always dress professionally,

in business attire. He also recommends using professional photos, not ones that were taken when the REALTOR® was at the beach with family or in another personal setting.

When it comes to showing houses, there are a number of precautions that REALTORS® can take to ensure their safety. They should first become acquainted with the area if they aren't already. Being familiar with the layout of a rural area, like Golden Gate Estates, for example, or knowing when an area will be less populated—say, a condo building off season—is an advantage. Guerrette adds that having your mobile phone completely charged is "probably the most important thing."

In the event that you're in an area with poor cell service, ask someone to go with you or tell a coworker or family member where you're going and give them the exact address. Guerrette recommends having that person contact you at a designated time if they don't hear from you first. Once you arrive at the address, park your car in a position where you can easily drive away.

For an extra layer of protection, Guerrette recommends gathering as much information on the prospective buyer as possible prior to meeting them. When clients call to schedule an appointment for a showing, Guerrette typically asks for their full name, number and a checklist of who will be coming to the showing. "It's OK to be nosy and know who you're meeting with," he says. Even setting up an initial meeting at a Starbucks to go over properties can help you get a feel for the person.

FOREWARN is a safety app designed exclusively to give REALTORS® background checks on buyers and mitigate potential risks. Inputting basic information into the app, such

as the client's name or phone number, will give the agent a rundown of the buyer's information, including any criminal history, current assets and financial risks. To subscribe to the app, the agent must fill out an online application with their real estate credentials.

It's best to err on the side of caution if you feel apprehensive about a particular person. Ultimately, Guerrette says to listen to your gut. "Go with your sixth sense; that truly is probably the best," he says. "We have a tendency in real estate to please, but slow down and find out who you're dealing with and try to learn about the person you're going to show the house to." He explains that if you're feeling uneasy, it's acceptable to bring another REALTOR® with you or cancel the appointment altogether and reschedule for another time.

Hosting an open house doesn't usually allow agents the advantage of knowing who they'll be dealing with, but it does give them the opportunity to scope out their surroundings. Guerrette tells REALTORS® to familiarize themselves with the home, including where all the doors are and how they unlock. He adds that Florida homes typically have glass sliders with intricate locking mechanisms, so an agent should know how they operate before officially opening the home.

If an agent is sitting in an open house alone, he or she can prop open an emergency window, but Guerrette warns against doing this for any additional doors or windows. "If you open up everything, people can get in every way, as well," he says. "It's good to have a one-point entry with knowledge of how to exit if needed."

Adhering to this advice allows REALTORS® to gain control and gives them the chance to avoid a potentially risky or unsafe situation.



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# To Sell and Protect

Pools are a major factor in child drownings—as a REALTOR®, you can help prevent a tragedy.

| BY TESS RAINES

Loosing a child to drowning is a parent's worst nightmare, and because of Florida's water-centric environment, these tragedies happen all too often. According to the Florida Department of Children and Families, 88 children died by drowning in the state in 2018.

Child drowning often occurs when parents are busy or when there are no layers of protection in place, according to Paula DiGrigoli, executive director of NCH Safe and Healthy Children's Coalition of Collier County.

"It happens to the best parents," she says. "That's why we have to have these barriers. Children are very curious."

The Safe and Healthy Children's Coalition works with over 70 local and national agencies and engages with the community regularly to ensure families are aware of all water safety measures. They have established Life Jacket Loaner Stations at local beaches and hold the annual Great Naples Duck Race and Safety Festival. The funds from this event go toward swimming lessons and providing water safety materials and door and window alarms for families with young children.

DiGrigoli explains that many incidences of child drowning occur when a parent or grandparent believes that the child is with another family member. "A lot of people feel that 'I'm a great parent and I know where my children are going to be.' You can't," she



says. "A lot of drownings are when parents are cooking or mom is using the bathroom (while) the children are watching TV." Simply turning away for a minute is enough time for a tragedy to take place.

She emphasizes the importance of multiple layers of protection for families in a home with a pool or neighboring pond. Door alarms sold on Amazon and Home Depot work well to alert parents that a child might have wandered outdoors, but DiGrigoli advises parents to attach them high up on the door so a child can't reach and potentially disable them. Any mesh or aluminum pool fence works to deter children as well, but patio furniture and toys—anything a child can climb—should also be put away when the pool is not in use.

However, one of these layers alone is not enough to prevent a drowning. A child's curious nature can lead them to figuring out how to get past a baby gate or through a door with an alarm that has weak batteries. Because of this, DiGrigoli recommends implementing additional safety measures, such as a "designated water watcher"—someone whose duty at family gatherings or pool parties is to keep a close eye on the pool for short periods of time before assigning another adult to supervise.

In the event that a child is missing, parents are encouraged to check every source of water first—bathtubs, pools or neighboring ponds and canals. Don't just glance from a distance—go to the edge and look to the

bottom.

"The last layer that we recommend is learning to respond in case of an emergency," DiGrigoli says. "Learn CPR and call 911. Those seconds count."

There were three child drownings in Collier County during 2019, and two of those were children of families visiting from up north. DiGrigoli says that out-of-state families typically don't have pools and are often unaware of the dangers. This puts REALTORS® who are renting and selling homes to these families in a powerful position to reverse the statistics.

"REALTORS® can maybe provide the water safety booklets that we have and emphasize the four points of protection (barriers, supervision, learning to swim and first aid response) to guide them to us," DiGrigoli says. REALTORS® can access these materials by emailing [info@safehealthychildren.org](mailto:info@safehealthychildren.org) or calling (239) 624-4033. To avoid scaring families out of renting or purchasing house with a pool, she adds that REALTORS® can even hold the conversation on child water safety until after the closing of the home.

She's thankful for the first responders and other agencies collaborating for child safety awareness in the county, but she acknowledges that REALTOR®s are a vital link in this equation. The ultimate goal, she says, is "for REALTORS® to say, 'we want everyone to buy homes with pools—and we want them to be safe.'"

“

Barriers will give you time to avoid a tragedy.

—Paula DiGrigoli, executive director of NCH Safe and Healthy Children's Coalition of Collier County

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# Bonjour! ¡Hola! Hello!

NABOR®'s Global Business Committee helps REALTORS® successfully navigate global transactions and welcome international buyers

| BY TESS RAINES



NABOR®'s Global Business Committee strives to educate REALTORS® on all aspects of business dealings and transactions with international customers.

In 2019, 36,400 homes in Florida were purchased by foreign buyers, equaling 9 percent of total existing home sales in the state, according to Florida Realtors®. Because such a large number of real estate clients are from other countries, including Canada, Germany, Spain, Albania and Cuba, it's important for REALTORS® to know how to promote Naples and make the purchasing process smoother. On the flipside, area locals may be looking to purchase property in another country and need to work with an agent that is well-versed in international real estate affairs. The Global Business Committee collaborates with National Association of REALTORS® to provide agents with classes and networking events that prepare them for complex global transactions.

Izabela Wright, the chair of NABOR®'s Global Business Committee, explains that there are a number of things that must be considered in an international transaction. "Global transactions are significantly different and more complex than domestic deals," she says. "From currency issues and financing, to visa and tax laws, working with a REALTOR® who knows how to handle these differences can make or break a real estate transaction."

She explains that the educational programs provided to members by the committee are the most important resource for informing agents. Topics cover currency exchange and investment performance to regional market conditions and tax issues. "Our last class was about U.S. rentals for foreign customers when they buy property here and they want to rent it," says Wright. "We also have classes about immigration updates for international customers. They have limitations when they come to the U.S. We give updates about this."

The committee also invites speakers to the classes for additional layers of education on a specific topic. Past speakers have included Carol Obermeier and Brian Solis, the director and manager of air service development for Southwest Florida International Airport, respectively. NABOR® partners with the airport, which is a major link for attracting international customers to Naples.

One of the committee's major goals is to help REALTORS® become Certified International Property Specialist designees, or CIPS, which indicates that an agent is equipped with the tools and knowledge to properly and

effectively navigate the global real estate market. This is an NAR® designation that is recognized nationally.

The potential to be a CIPS designee also benefits REALTORS® by growing their business, says Wright. "The number of CIPS designees in NABOR® is growing every year but we have over 6,700 members and around 80 CIPS designees, so there is still a lot of potential," she explains. "Naples is a beautiful destination for second homes for a lot of our international customers."

Lana Svyetlana Butsky is a member of the Global Business Committee and a CIPS designee. "CIPS courses prepared me to work with buyers and sellers from different countries with a greater understanding of their culture and customs," she says. "I receive more referrals, serve my foreign buyers and sellers better and help U.S. buyers purchase properties in other countries."

Several committee members themselves have rich international roots from all over the world. Wright, for instance, is originally from Poland, and Butsky is a native of Yugoslavia. The diversity of the members makes the committee an educational resource in itself, where members can turn to each other for information or advice on the area from which they hail.

A CIPS institute training will be offered later this year—on Sept. 8, 9, 10, 11 and 14—to those interested in becoming a CIPS designee. Each session will consist of a full-day class that covers information on transaction tools, local markets and real estate customers from different regions around the world. The classes will be held at NABOR®, and those interested can register at [nabor.com](http://nabor.com). Once the course is completed, REALTORS® must fill out and submit a CIP application to NAR®.



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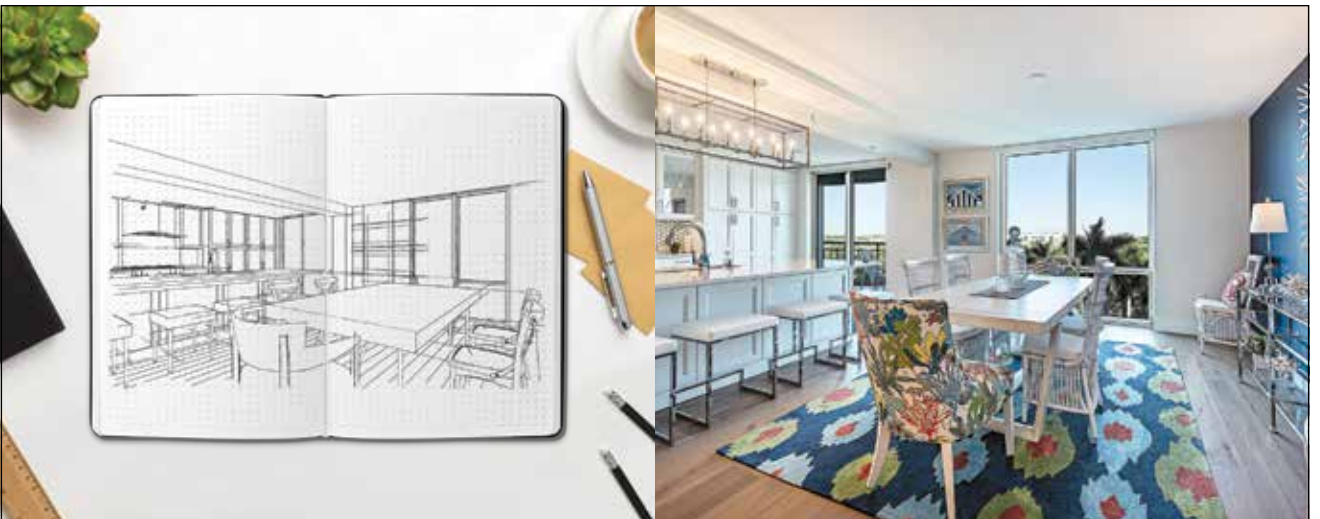
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## Dear Corie: Is it sneaky or just a different type of real estate service?

BY CORIE CHASE

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**Dear Corie:** I am a REALTOR® and I have been a member of XYZ REALTOR® Association for almost eight years. I have worked with a variety of real estate buyers and sellers throughout this time and I meet a lot of new potential clients and customers based upon referrals.

Recently, I obtained a listing for a home and I immediately placed it into the MLS with the following specific showing instructions: "Call Listing Agent," "Call Listing Office," "No Sign on Property," and "Short Notice OK." With the seller's permission, I provide the garage door code for access when showings by cooperating REALTORS® are requested. The home has been on the market for roughly one month now.

When I contacted my seller earlier today to discuss a potential offer, he brought to my attention that there was a recent showing of his home by REALTOR® Sneaky. REALTOR® Sneaky did not contact me or my office in advance as required by the showing instructions. When I questioned my seller further, I found out that REALTOR® Sneaky approached my seller to present an exclusive offer to rent/lease his property. My seller said that he felt pressured and signed the agreement to rent/lease this property that I currently have listed for sale! He went on to further explain that REALTOR Sneaky had previously had his home listed for sale, prior to my listing the property for sale and that prior listing had the exact same showing instructions. It appears REALTOR® Sneaky kept the garage door code and used it to enter the property without contacting me first!!

Needless to say, I was furious when I heard this. Every REALTOR® knows that he or she should not be engaging in any practice or taking any action inconsistent with exclusive representation or exclusive brokerage relationship agreements that other REALTORS® have with clients!

I am considering filing an ethics complaint against REALTOR® Sneaky for interfering with my exclusive representation agreement that I have with this seller! Can you provide some guidance on whether I have grounds?

Signed, Furious!!

**DEAR FURIOUS:** Based on what you have described, there are a few considerations under the Code of Ethics before filing a complaint. First, you might have an argument that there was a violation of Article 3, as supported by Standard of Practice 3-9. Standard of Practice 3-9 states that REALTORS® shall not provide access to listed property on terms other than those established by the owner or the listing broker. It is unclear, based on what you described whether REALTOR® Sneaky accessed the property to show it to prospective buyers or whether REALTOR® Sneaky was conducting a showing for rent/lease pursuant to its rental listing agreement with the seller. If the former applies, you may not have a case against REALTOR® Sneaky. You might need to obtain some additional information.

Second, as for the exclusive offer to rent/lease agreement that was signed by your seller, please note that Article 16, as supported by Standard of Practice 16-3, states the following: *Article 16 does not preclude REALTORS® from contacting the client of another broker for the purpose of offering to provide, or entering into a contract to provide, a different type of real estate service unrelated to the type of service currently being provided (e.g., property management as opposed to brokerage) or from offering the same type of service for property not subject to other brokers' exclusive agreements.*

It's important for you to note that for a complainant in any ethics hearing before the Professional Standards Committee, the ultimate burden of proving that the Code of Ethics was violated is at all times on the complainant.

# Q & A

Clear, strong, and convincing is the standard of proof for which a violation of the Code of Ethics may be found by a hearing panel. The National Association of REALTORS® defines clear, strong, and convincing as that measure or degree of proof which will produce a firm belief or conviction as to the allegations sought to be established.

Based on the information you have provided, you may need to do some additional fact-finding to determine whether you can maintain a claim and meet the required standard of proof. At this point, it is hard to say how this case might conclude if it were to be brought before a hearing panel of the Professional Standards Committee.

*Corie Chase is the Chief Administrative Officer for the Naples Area Board of REALTORS®. (239) 597-1666 or Corie@NABOR.com*



# How to avoid contracting pitfalls

BY SHARON ZUCCARO, ESQ., AND JEFF JONES

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25 YEARS

ilker celik

## 1. How can I make sure that I have the correct Seller information when writing a Sales Contract ?

- Pull the Last Deed of Record from the Property Appraiser's Office.
- Does the name in the listing match the Deed? If not, ask the listing agent why not? Perhaps someone has passed away and a probate has been completed. There could be a good reason, but maybe not.
- If the Deed shows title in a trust, be sure to use the Trustee's name and Trust name on the Contract (John Doe as Trustee of the John Doe Trust dated 1/1/2020) and have the Trustee sign as Trustee. If there is a different trustee name in the listing than on the Deed, verify whether the original trustee has died or resigned. Speak with an attorney if you are unsure how to proceed.

## 2. What do I do if I learn that a person listed in the last Deed of Record has passed away ?

Was the title held by decedent and another person with rights of survivorship?

- The survivor can sign the contract to sell the property.
- Notify the closing agent that one of the parties has passed away.
- Obtain a Certified Copy of the Death Certificate.

Was the title held by decedent alone or as tenants in common (no right of survivorship)?

- A probate must be done and a Personal Representative must be appointed. The Seller in the Contract should be listed as Jane Doe, Personal Representative of the Estate of John Doe.
- The Personal Representative must be appointed by local probate court through Letters of Administration. The probate from another state has no jurisdiction over Florida real property.

## 3. What is required to identify the Escrow Agent on a Sales Contract ?

- 61J2-14.008(b) When a deposit is placed or to be placed with a title company or an attorney, the licensee who prepared or presented the sales contract ("Licensee"), shall indicate on that contract the name, address and telephone number of such title company or attorney.
- If you fail to include that information on the Contract, it is a FREC violation and you are subject to fines.
- Writing TBD does not count. Talk to client about escrow/closing agent before writing the offer.

## 4. How do I determine the Effective Date of the Sales Contract ?

- The Effective Date is the last date either Buyer or Seller signs or initials the contract in NABOR, so if the parties do not date their initials after several counteroffers, the legal Effective Date could be several days before there is a fully executed contract and the Buyer's inspection period could be shortened.
- The Effective Date is always "Day 0" when counting time periods and deadlines in the Contract





**5. What are the most important things to review before submitting an Offer or Counter offer ?**

- Make sure the period of offer and acceptance has not expired.
- Make sure all signatures and initials are dated.
- Make sure all amounts on Page 1 are correct and that the addition is correct.
- Make sure the Escrow Agent is named with complete contact information.
- Make sure that all parties are named correctly along with their contact information.

**6. If there is more than one HOA in the community what is required?**

- Prepare an HOA Disclosure Summary for each HOA.
- Check to make sure that the name of the HOA is spelled correctly.
- Verify that all the required amounts are current and exactly correct.
- Do not insert amounts that are not specifically required anywhere on the form.

### **7. What is a Pending Special Assessment?**

- Sellers will want to disclose any pending assessments to avoid potential responsibility for the assessment which has not been levied as of the date of the Contract.
- The Seller can add a pending assessment disclosure in the Other Terms and Conditions section.

### **8. For a Buyer using a Financing Contingency what are the key issues in the Contract?**

- Use the figure that the borrower will actually apply for Page 1 of the Contract.
- The actual financing contingency lan-

guage refers back to the amount on Page 1, so if the mortgage amount on Page 1 is blank, then the contingency is meaningless.

- The Mortgage Contingency Date allow reasonable time for loan processing and approval if not waived or extended on that Date the Seller can cancel the Contract.
- To extend the Contract up to 10 days when solely a Lender delay under the CFPB rule the Buyer must first waive their contingency and notify the Seller in writing.

### **9. What issues are important if the Seller is foreign?**

- FIRPTA will apply ... best to have your



# MOORINGS PARK



- Buyer contact their Attorney and/or Financial Advisor for details and advice
- If the purchase price is from \$300,000 to \$1 million determine if the Buyer has been advised to be able to sign a personal use certification at closing. This will reduce the withholding amount for the Seller.
  - If the purchase price is under \$300,000 the Seller is exempt from withholding if the Buyer is advised to be able to sign the personal use certification.
  - If you are working with a Buyer who intends to use the property for personal use (as defined in FIRPTA) and is advised to be able to do so, then include the FIRPTA addendum to make their offer more attractive to the Seller.

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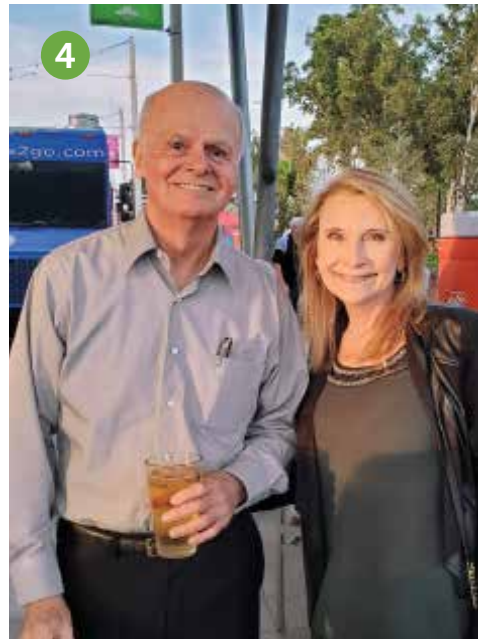


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# Partying and politicking

RPAC's big kickoff event was held on Jan. 16 at Celebration Park in Naples—and celebrate is just what everybody did.





1. (l to r) Stuart Tackett, Ken Abbott and Brett Brown
2. (l to r) Danielle Brazil-Hudson, Laurie Herbers and PJ Smith
3. (l to r) Cheyenne Luckey, Melissa Bognaski and James Hinson
4. 2003 NABOR® Pres. Jim Pilon and 2010 NABOR® Pres. Brenda Fioretti
5. 2017 NABOR® Pres. Dominic and Linda Pallini
6. James Hinson and Gwen Gideon
7. The event at full swing in Celebration Park.

Photos: Wade Mastro

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# NABORhood

## Come on, get happy!

NABOR®'s Young Professionals Network held its first monthly Happy Hour on Jan. 30 at the Hampton Social.



1. James Hinson, YPN Committee Chair David Jablonski, Michael Cook, and YPN Committee Director Liaison Nick Bobzien
2. Atia Hart, Sara Brand, Cheyenne Luckey and Amy Sonnicksen
3. Stephanie Ross and Rosa Madrid

Photos: Melissa Bognaski

# Great American NABOR® Days

The annual Great American REALTOR® Days event was held in Tallahassee from Feb. 3 through Feb. 5. REALTORS® from all over Florida, including a contingent from NABOR®, converged on the state capital to meet with lawmakers and let their voices be heard on the issues impacting the real estate industry.



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1. Gov. Ron DeSantis giving the keynote address at the Legislative Luncheon.
2. 2009 NABOR® Pres. Brett Brown tells the audience at the Legislative Luncheon what he sees as the benefits of investing in RPAC.
3. A group meeting with Sen. Kathleen Passidomo (R-District 28). (l to r) Paula Angelopoulos Urbinati, PJ Smith, Sen. Kathleen Passidomo, Terrilyn VanGorder, Steve Joselyn, Marco Island Area Association of REALTORS® Association Executive Kandy Sweeney, 2020 NABOR® Pres. Lauren Melo, Nick Bobzien, Bette McGilvray, MIAAOR® Pres. Ileana Bogaert, Rosemary Langkawel, 2012 NABOR® Pres. Bill Poteet, Danielle Hudson, 2009 NABOR® Pres. Brett Brown, 2007 NABOR® Pres. Spencer Haynes.

Photos: Wade Mastro



3

## Welcome aboard!

NABOR held its new members networking event at Noodles Café in Naples on Nov. 19.



1. (l to r) Maureen Thomas, Patty Wood and Diane Harris

2. (l to r) Danielle Sneed, Mike Sneed, Luis Gomez and Rick Romeo



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# Visions of sugar plums ...

NABOR®'s Young Professionals Network held its Holiday Pajama Party on Dec. 12. The mood was anything but sleepy as partygoers donned their favorite nighttime couture.



1. (l to r) YPN Committee Chair David Jablonski, Zachary Kaye and YPN Committee Vice Chair Mariana Birmingham.  
 2. (l to r) Zack Shackleton, Sagan Trombley and Morgan Hila  
 3. The gang gathers 'round Santa.

Photos: Wade Mastro

# Nothing could be finer than a meal at Lake Park Diner

**WHY WE LOVE IT:** Lake Park Diner, which opened in November, brings together all the best of what the team of Chef Michael Voorhis and developer Adam Smith created at first the Bevy restaurant downtown Naples, and later their Smith Organics food truck, in an upscale diner and garden setting. It's perfect for grabbing a quick and healthy business-day breakfast or lunch to go or for a relaxing al fresco dinner with craft cocktails and splurge-y desserts that make you feel like a grown-up kid.

**IDEAL MEAL:** Dinner time calls for a specialty cocktail to ease the workday's tensions. Try the Pineapple Ridge for the kick of tequila and heat of muddled jalapeños stirred with pineapple and lime juice, house sour mix and tajin seasoning, a Mexican blend of chili peppers, salt and lime. For starters, the Fry Flight lets you sample a hat trick of sweet potato fries with avocado aioli, truffle fries with garlic aioli and herbed fries with kalamata aioli. Specialties of the house include rotisserie chicken and grass-fed burgers or go gourmet with Miso Wild Salmon and organic brown rice, miso-glazed sweet potato and kale and pumpkin seed pesto. Whatever you order, save room for one of LPD's crazy dessert shakes. Crazy, because not only do you get a creative shake, like the



red velvet one, for instance, but also a wedge of cake or maybe a donut for “garnish.”

**VIBE:** Grab a wood-slat table on the covered patio wrapped in podocarpus yews and other greenery. Peruse the menu posted outside, then head to the order window. It all sounds like a fast-food chain operation, but it is far from it. Your order arrives on lovely tableware with real utensils (unless you're getting it to go, in which case everything is disposable but earth-friendly). It's like you're on a designer picnic.

944 Seventh Ave. N., Naples, (239) 228-6351, [thelakeparkdiner.com](http://thelakeparkdiner.com)

—CHELLE KOSTER WALTON

## Etiquette Check

When it comes to professionalism, etiquette is as important as ever.

**BUSINESS PROFESSIONALISM, ESPECIALLY IN REAL ESTATE,** is crucial to the success of a partnership or transaction. It's easy to dismiss professionalism in the favor of casual interactions—which modern technology makes incredibly accessible—but clients are longing to work with someone who puts their needs first. The old rules of etiquette still apply. In fact, they are as important as ever.

Evelyn Cannata, who owns the Etiquette by Evelyn consulting service in Naples, believes that because the local real estate business is so competitive, standing out from other REALTORS® simply has to be your No. 1 goal. The key to achieving that aim is to build meaningful relationships with your clients.

“They have to become part of your family,” says Cannata. “It is building warmth, empathy, conscientiousness and optimism.”

She likens each client interaction to what she calls a “custom fitting,” in which agents tailor their service to the individual and his or her needs. Cannata suggests REALTORS® invite their client out for lunch or coffee to chat and get to know more about them.

“Learn their personal history, their wants and their needs so you become armed with information and can anticipate their needs before they even tell you,” she explains.

She adds that REALTORS® can extend their courteousness to the information they give a client. Any details that are crucial to the home or property being considered should not be omitted.

“You have to know your product inside and out: the neighbor-

hood, school system, if children are in the picture, and safety factors,” she says. “You never want your client to feel blindsided or not informed if they forgot or did not ask you something they should have.”

To establish good customer service over the phone, Cannata recommends that agents follow a formula when answering or placing a call: “State your full name, title and company,” she says. “Always return a call or a follow-up—unfortunately, today that does not always happen.”

Cannata reiterates that first impressions matter—what you wear and the state of your office when meeting a client will create an image of you that the client will remember. To ensure that the impression is positive, dress the part of the consummate professional. It should almost go without saying that wearing jeans and a T-shirt when meeting a new client is a big mistake.

During that meeting, greet the client with eye contact and a firm handshake. Cannata advises agents to maintain open body language by keeping the arms and legs uncrossed and hands out of your pockets. This shows that you are alert and attentive to the client, she explains.

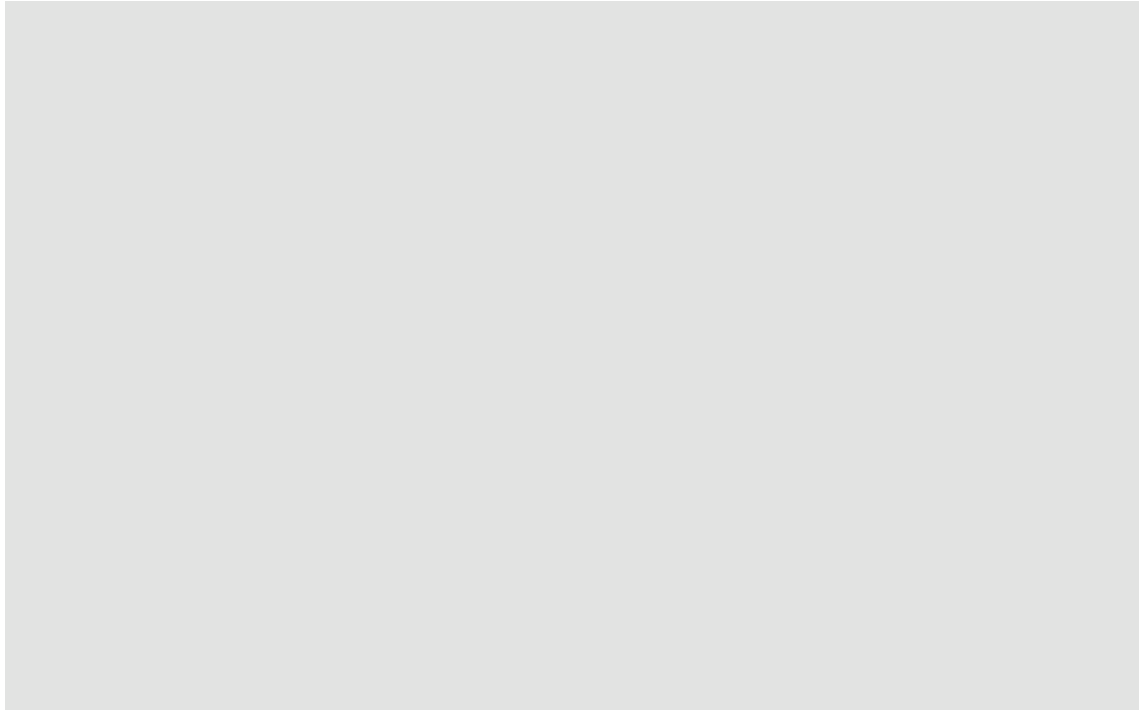
Showing a client how much you care makes the difference in a market that is highly competitive. A client who trusts you and has confidence in your work is likely to earn you several new referrals.

—TESS RAINES

# Out and About

**BAKER MUSEUM AT ARTIS–NAPLES PRESENTS *COLOR FIELD*.** Jump at your last chance to see the bold colors and shapes that make up this interactive sculpture exhibition placed in and around The Baker Museum. See pieces like the untitled, oversized wind chime by Sam Falls and the hanging sculpture *Hunnybunny (In a Pickle)* made by Claire Helen Ashley from duct tape, rope and canvas. **Through May 10, [artisnaples.org](http://artisnaples.org)**

–JAYNIE BARTLEY



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