

February 2026



REVIEW

Omaha Area Board of REALTORS®



FEBRUARY

FRI
06

2026 ECONOMIC UPDATE WITH NAR ECONOMIST: LAWRENCE YUN, PH.D

10:00AM - 11:00AM

Dr. Lawrence Yun, Chief Economist and Senior Vice President of Research at the National Association of REALTORS®, will share his nationally recognized analysis and forecast of the real estate market for the year ahead in this morning session.

TUE
10

NEW REALTOR® ORIENTATION

9:00AM - 12:30PM

Kickstart your real estate journey at our New REALTOR® Orientation, where you'll gain the tools, knowledge, and connections to build a successful career from day one!

THU
12

REALTOR® NIGHT WITH THE OMAHA SUPERNOVAS

7:00PM - 9:00PM

Join the OABR Social Events Committee for a fun-filled night with the Omaha Supernovas Professional Volleyball Team.

FRI
13

FINANCING THE SALE SHOW ME THE MONEY

9:00AM - 12:00PM

The agent will be able to assist their client on the different financial options that are available so the client can make a sound financial decision based on their individual financial needs.



**SCAN TO VIEW
THE OABR
CALENDAR**

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

ACCURACY MATTERS?

What is the one thing that matters most to our clients?

Each week, you invest countless hours growing your business — brainstorming marketing ideas, designing Canva posts, investing in lead-generation systems, and some of you even do things you never thought you would on video hoping to grab someone's attention. Trust me, I've seen some of those videos — and made a few myself. We put all this effort into earning a new client, yet there is one thing that can undo it all.

It doesn't matter if we are helping a buyer or a seller, every one of us relies on the same thing as the backbone that supports our entire business.

After more than five years of involvement — including serving as Chair of the MLS Users Group in 2025 — it's concerning to see how often MLS information is incomplete or incorrect. Missing fields and bad data don't just create inconvenience; they can undermine the trust we work so hard to earn.

We all want that next closed transaction — the client who refers friends and family. When those clients start asking questions, most REALTORS® go straight to the MLS. If the information isn't reliable, we risk losing the one thing our clients value most: trust!

When I started in real estate in 2002, MLS data was our golden ticket. We were the gatekeepers. Today, in 2026, buyers and sellers have access to countless portals and AI tools that gather information instantly — yet they still turn to us for guidance and advice. While we offer much more than facts and figures, the data we rely on must be accurate if we expect clients to trust us.

As we move further into the new year, I challenge you to take a few extra minutes every time you enter or update MLS information. Accuracy matters. Not only can poor data impact your client relationship — it can impact your closing. I've had multiple appraisers share that they've had to disqualify the highest sale in a neighborhood due to missing MLS data.

Small details compound. Accuracy in the MLS protects your reputation, your client relationships, and your next transaction.

Let's continue to raise the bar — for our clients and for our profession.

BRAD FRICKE,
2026 OABR President



REVIEW

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**MLS CUSTOMER TRAINING
& SUPPORT ADMINISTRATOR**

Jaycee Miller

THU
05
MAR



📍 OABR EDUCATION CENTER

🕒 9:00 AM – 10:00 AM

Register at omaharealtors.com/march-2026-face-the-realtors

FRI
10
APR



📍 OABR EDUCATION CENTER

🕒 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Register at omaharealtors.com/finance

FRI
17
APR



📍 OABR EDUCATION CENTER

🕒 9:00 AM – 11:00 AM

Register at omaharealtors.com/raise-the-roof

BEWARE

CYBER SCAMS ON THE RISE!

Written by **Melissa McElroy**

As a real estate professional in the Midwest, you're a prime target for cybercriminals. Wire fraud, business email compromise (BEC), and account takeover scams frequently hit agents, title companies, and escrow officers, and clients during transactions—often resulting in massive losses when closing funds are redirected.

The FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3) has documented a sharp rise in these threats. Since January 2025, they've received over 5,100 complaints of account takeover (ATO) fraud via impersonation, with reported losses exceeding \$262 million nationwide. BEC scams—especially devastating in real estate—continue to cause billions in global losses annually, with attacks surging in sophistication through 2025.

Why Real Estate Is a High-Risk Industry

In real estate transactions, scammers exploit email chains full of sensitive details: client names, closing dates, wiring instructions, and large fund transfers. Common tactics include:

- **Business Email Compromise (BEC):** Hackers phish for login credentials via deceptive emails or texts, monitor conversations for weeks or months, then impersonate a trusted party (e.g., title company, lender, attorney, or even you as the agent) to send "updated" wiring instructions right before closing.

Funds are sent to fraudulent accounts, often overseas.

- **Account Takeover (ATO):** Criminals use social engineering to trick victims into handing over login credentials or MFA codes/OTPs. They pose as bank support, tech help, or law enforcement, claiming urgent issues like "fraudulent transactions" (sometimes fabricating stories about purchases like firearms to escalate fear). They may direct you to fake phishing sites or loop in accomplices impersonating officials.

Once they control an email or phone, they intercept or spoof legitimate communications to alter payment details.

Cell Phone Takeover Tactics to Watch For

Scammers often gain full access by hijacking your phone number:

- **SIM swap fraud:** They convince your carrier to transfer your number to a new SIM they control.
- **Port-out fraud:** They open a new account with a carrier and port your number away.

Signs include sudden loss of service, unauthorized SIM change alerts from your carrier, or unexpected password reset notifications for email/bank accounts. In real estate, this lets them intercept 2FA codes and take over transaction-related accounts.

Red Flags in Your Inbox or Calls

Be extra vigilant for:

- Urgent demands to wire funds immediately to "secure" a deal or avoid "penalties."
- Requests for payment via gift cards, cryptocurrency, wire transfers to unfamiliar accounts, or other irreversible methods.
- Emails/texts with typos, odd grammar, mismatched sender addresses, or attachments/links.

- Spoofed caller IDs mimicking banks, title companies, or government agencies.
- Communications from "known" contacts that feel slightly off (e.g., new email signature or urgent tone shift).

Local examples include:

- Scammers impersonating the Douglas County Sheriff's Office, demanding cryptocurrency for "unpaid property taxes" with arrest threats.
- Phishing emails posing as the "Director of Nebraska Department of Revenue" with fake payment notices and malicious attachments.

These tactics prey on urgency and authority—common in time-sensitive closings.

Essential Protection Steps for Real Estate Pros

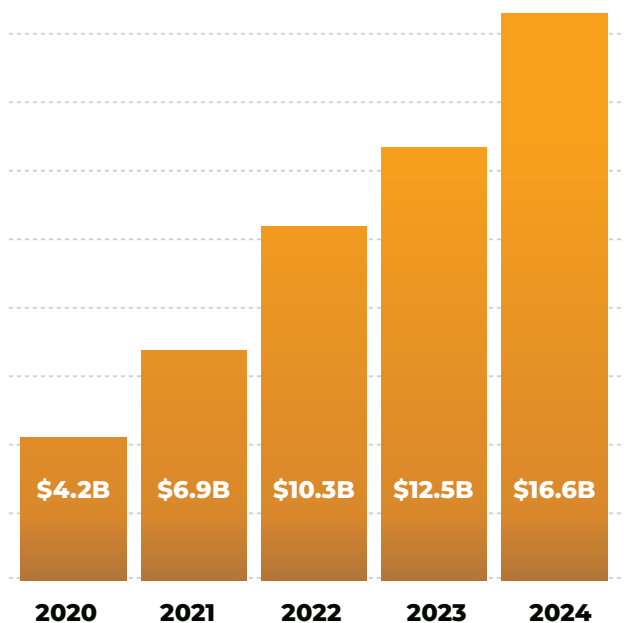
Implement these protocols to safeguard yourself, your

clients, and your transactions:

- 1 Verify Requests Independently** — Never trust an incoming email, text, or call changing wiring instructions. Always call the sender using a verified number from your records, official website, or directory (not the one provided in the message). Confirm verbally with the title company, lender, or client.
- 2 Never Pay or Share Info** — Banks, title companies, government agencies, or law enforcement never request passwords, MFA codes, gift cards, crypto, or wire payments via unsolicited contact.
- 3 Secure Your Accounts** — Use strong, unique passwords (no reuse across accounts). Enable multi-factor authentication (MFA) everywhere—preferably app-based or hardware keys over SMS. Change passwords regularly.
- 4 Monitor Actively** — Set up transaction alerts on business and personal accounts. Review emails and bank activity daily, especially during active closings.
- 5 Educate Your Team & Clients** — Share these warnings with staff and advise clients on the risks of wire fraud. Use secure client portals for sharing sensitive docs and instructions.
- 6 Report Immediately** — If something seems suspicious:
 - Contact your bank's fraud department or local branch right away.
 - Report to the Douglas County SCAM Tip Line: 402-444-SCAM (7226).
 - File with the FTC at reportfraud.ftc.gov.
 - Forward phishing emails to reportphishing@apwg.org.
 - Forward phishing texts to SPAM (7726).
 - Notify your IT team or broker for email compromise checks.

Staying informed is your best defense—scammers evolve quickly, but awareness and verification habits

LOSSES OVER THE LAST FIVE YEARS



stop most attacks. In an industry built on trust and large transactions, these simple steps can prevent devastating financial and reputational damage. Protect your deals, protect your clients, and protect your business.

CREDIT: FBI Internet Crime Complaint Center
SOURCES: FBI, Nebraska Department of Revenue, consumer.ftc.gov, pinnaclebank.com

REMINDER OF LAND SCAMS

A recent attempted land scam in Ralston was stopped thanks to a sharp-eyed real estate professional. A local property owner near 84th & Harrison streets discovered an unauthorized attempt to sell their land without their knowledge or consent.

Scammers are becoming more sophisticated, often impersonating legitimate owners or sellers to fraudulently list and attempt to sell properties they do not own—particularly vacant land parcels, which are prime targets because they are often unmonitored and owned by out-of-state or absentee individuals.

This incident is a critical reminder: Always verify identity, authority, and ownership before proceeding with any transaction. As a first step, use tools like your FOREWARN® app (free with your membership) to quickly check individuals.

When you are contacted by anyone you suspect is fraudulently identifying themselves, please get in touch with the authorities immediately. Go to omaharealtors.com/safety for a list of whom to call depending on your location and circumstance. Of course, call 9-1-1 if you feel immediately threatened. Knowledge is power! Together, we will outsmart criminals. Taking a few moments to verify individuals can prevent devastating consequences and protect your personal safety and professional reputation. Red flags to look for:

- The scammer will claim to live out-of-state or be on vacation and won't meet in person. They insist on doing everything by email. They often refuse to speak by phone or appear on a video call and will refuse to meet in person for the signing.
- They need a fast sale and are offering to list the property below market value. They may claim a family emergency, a financial crisis, or other time constraints.
- The email address or phone number is from a foreign country.
- The scammer presents a questionable photo ID or other documentation.
- They request that a for sale sign not be placed on the property.
- They insist on attracting a cash buyer; they quickly accept an offer and demand a quick closing.
- The scammer uses their own notary to create falsified documents for the title company.
- They insist that the sale proceeds be wired to them or to multiple accounts.

Ways to protect yourself and clients from a scam

- Request an in-person meeting with the seller.
- Make sure the seller's face matches the one on any government-issued ID provided.
- Do independent research on the seller; a quick web search or the FOREWARN app could help rule out some scammers.
- Be aware of a seller willing to accept an offer below market value in exchange for the buyer paying cash and closing quickly.
- Never let a seller arrange their own notary at closing.
- Use a trusted title company to coordinate the exchange of closing documents and funds.

SOURCES: nar.realtor, lirealtor.com, gcar.net

ALERT: NEW ZOOM SCAM!

Scammers are posing as out-of-state buyers, contacting Omaha-Area agents by text/phone, then insisting on a Zoom meeting to discuss or view properties.

The plan is to send you a malicious Zoom link that installs malware when clicked, potentially compromising your computer, client data, business files, or even enabling identity theft/fraud.

Local REALTOR® Don Keeton was targeted. Using the FOREWARN app, he found no identity linked to the scammer's phone number — a major red flag.

Protect yourself by following three simple steps:

- 1 Immediately check their phone number in the FOREWARN app. No matching info means high risk!
- 2 Decline their link. Politely insist on sending your own verified Zoom invite to their email address.
- 3 Verify further if anything feels off (ask for ID proof, cross-check details).

Report suspected scams right away:

- Notify your broker.
- Following safety steps at omaharealtors.com/safety.
- Report it to the FBI's IC3 webpage at ic3.gov.

Stay vigilant — scammers evolve quickly, and this tactic has been reported by other associations in recent months. Your awareness and quick checks can prevent serious breaches.



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DROP IN MORTGAGE RATES BOOSTS HOME SALES

Written by **Melissa McElroy**

After a slowdown in recent years, lower mortgage rates have given the housing market a measurable boost.

According to The National Association of REALTORS®, existing home sales jumped 5.1 percent in December, pushing home sales to a nearly three-year high; lower mortgage rates helped fuel the spike. NAR noted that while lower interest rates helped increase sales, affordability still presents barriers, especially for potential first-time buyers.

NAR's 2026 economic forecast boldly predicted a 14 percent increase in home sales. NAR's Chief Economist, Dr. Lawrence Yun, also predicted two additional cuts by the Federal Reserve Board this year, supporting the downward move in mortgage rates.

Lisa Brodersen, a Senior Loan Advisor at Guild Mortgage, said, "I absolutely see 2026 as the year of a housing reset. Attitudes have shifted, and buyers are tired of waiting. They are ready to make 2026 their year of homeownership."

She added, "Lower interest rates help with affordability and will give even more buyers the opportunity to qualify for a home that may have been out of their reach two years ago. It's going to be an exciting year!"

REALTOR® David Matney said that there was over a 15 percent increase in homes on the active market in Douglas and Sarpy Counties in 2025 compared to 2024. "More inventory means more

choices for buyers. Buyers in today's market are being more selective. They are doing home inspections, asking for repairs, and asking for concessions. Buyers are not necessarily paying full price in today's market."

After a couple of years of nearly non-existent growth, a rallying housing market is exciting news for real estate professionals.

OMAHA AREA: 2025 HOUSING MARKET RECAP

Median Sale Price - Existing Homes

\$300,000 (+2.6%)

Median Sale Price - New Homes

\$425,803 (+0.6%)

Total Number of Home Sales Closed

12,369 (+3.8%)

Total Number of Homes Available for Sale at Year-End

2,304 (+9.8%)

Source: Great Plains Regional MLS

EMPOWER HOURS: FINANCIAL PANEL

Written by **Melissa McElroy**

Three experts sat in front of a room full of real estate professionals, ready to explain the many complicated facets of financial planning in the latest Empower Hours, sponsored by the Young Professionals Network (YPN) in the OABR Education Center in January.

The panel was comprised of **Austin Watton**, Financial Advisor at Northwestern Mutual; **Debbie Gatzemeyer**, Owner of Outsource One Bookkeeping; and **Scott Weaver**, CPA and Business Advisory Services Senior Manager at Frankel. The moderator was Brooke Ayoub, OABR 2026 YPN Chair.

The panel's central lesson: Build a solid strategy with a trusted financial advisor. Based on your specific needs, consider a team of experts: a bookkeeper, CPA, insurance agent, or attorney specializing in business law or estate planning.

Debbie Gatzemeyer emphasized tracking business expenses. Apps let REALTORS® quickly log purchases, such as staging materials, so agents avoid losing paper receipts and ensure tax-deductible claims are secure.

She said she understands the chaotic nature of real estate and how REALTORS® are pulled in many directions at once. Keeping track of every expense is often stressful. Gatzemeyer has encountered overwhelmed clients who waited until the last minute to prepare, some even handed over a disorganized shoebox of receipts. An app like QuickBooks Self-Employed can save you-and your bookkeeper-headaches at tax time.

Scott Weaver said a critically important component of financial planning for REALTORS® is

ensuring that 40 percent of commission checks are set aside for taxes in a separate account. Any remaining balance after paying taxes can be invested.

The panel also addressed some misconceptions about setting up a business plan. Many independent contractors believe they should form an LLC or Limited Liability Company. He said everyone's situation is different, and forming an LLC doesn't necessarily mean you'll save money.

Weaver also described the three stages of your business: infancy, when you're just starting out and need to form the basic structures; intermediate, when your business has momentum; and advanced, where you have more revenue to manage and may need more advanced money management, such as estate planning.

Austin Watton provided tips on saving on taxes. He advised working with an advisor and putting a decent amount towards retirement. There is an option to roll over unused 529 funds to a Roth IRA. There are specific limits and criteria that should be closely examined with your tax advisor.

He discussed tax-deductible, charitable donations,



LEFT TO RIGHT: Austin Watton, Debbie Gatzemeyer, Scott Weaver

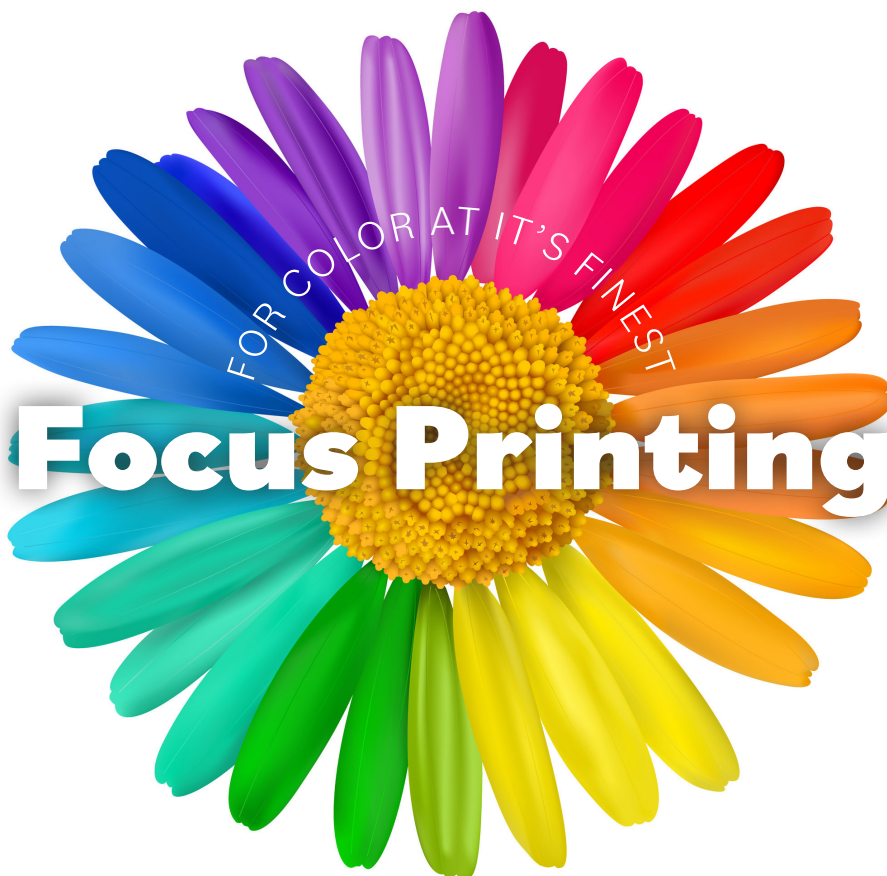
Roth IRAs, and fielded a question about the 1610 deduction, where you can deduct wages paid to your child or grandchild for legitimate, age-appropriate work in your business, saving you on taxes. It must be real work, such as data entry, not household chores, and pay a reasonable wage. For Child's Tax Savings, a child can earn up to their standard deduction (\$14,900 in 2025).

Since REALTORS® do not have guaranteed income, Watton explained the importance of having the right insurance coverage to protect yourself. There are many types of insurance, such as Errors & Omissions (E&O), that protect you from lawsuits that allege professional negligence, misrepresentation, or failure to perform professional duties. There's Property & Casualty (P&C) Insurance that covers property, auto,

and specialty insurance. Umbrella Insurance for personal liability provides additional coverage beyond primary insurance policies, such as homeowners or auto insurance. Health Insurance, Life Insurance, Disability, and Long-Term Care (LTC) help protect you and your dependents.

YPN Chair Brooke Ayoub said, "YPN is not just for the young, but also the young at heart, the young in the business, or anyone who wants to learn more about the industry."

She said, "YPN is a committee dedicated to bringing value to the association; personal and professional growth is at the core of our mission. Providing opportunities like our Empower Hours allows us to support OABR members in their continued growth and development."



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For those brave souls pursuing a career in real estate, there's a powerful weapon that will help them navigate the uncertain terrain. REALTORS® are like Jedis who have taken extensive training. Having access to the right knowledge can help you ascend. Knowledge is power.

The REALTOR® Property Resource (RPR) Learning Center provides the knowledge needed to succeed. It is the go-to, one-stop shop for property data, tools, and reports. And it is included at no additional charge with your REALTOR® membership!

Organized by topic, there is a plethora of training content: webinars, video tutorials, guides, and eBooks, which can be incorporated into an educational plan.

There's a report for every real estate need, designed to be easy for clients to understand. It gives you the 411 on market trends, financial analysis, and prospecting, and can help you with listing presentations, buyer tours, and open houses.

The RPR Trainer Hub is a resource that provides access to flyers, email templates, social media graphics, and promo copy for RPR classes and events.

According to RPR Marketing Communications Manager Michael Burkhart, "RPR gives REALTORS® access to reliable data, market insights, and customizable reports that help them speak confidently about pricing, trends, and neighborhoods.

By turning complex information into clear, client-friendly visuals and explanations, RPR helps agents demonstrate expertise, build trust, and guide smarter buyer and seller conversations."

He said, "One of the quickest and most informative ways to get familiar with RPR is by taking advantage of its blog site. Here, agents can find a wealth of blog articles on just about every topic in real estate. There is also tons of information about residential and commercial RPR capabilities, the RPR mobile app, as well as info for brokers and association leadership."

Burkhart added, "Perhaps even more helpful is the blog. This page features links to all of RPR's free, live, monthly webinars. Taught by expert RPR trainers, these classes are the perfect way to get introduced to RPR and dig deeper into its benefits. Agents can also watch on-demand webinars, download eBooks, and get printable guides to help them on their RPR journey." **blog.narrpr.com/learning**

He said, "RPR builds confidence. From pricing, prospecting, marketing, reporting, and so much more. RPR is built specifically for REALTORS®, with tools designed to support real-world conversations. From mobile-friendly workflows to trusted data and ongoing enhancements, RPR continues to evolve based on agent feedback, helping REALTORS® work smarter, present more confidently, and stand out as informed market experts."

Interested in learning about RPR's many uses? Burkhart recommends going to **blog.narrpr.com/tips/50-ways-realtors-use-rpr**.

Nicole Riddle, OABR's 2026 Professional Development Chair, is a fervent supporter of continually bolstering your real estate expertise and loves RPR.

"RPR is one of the easiest and most effective tools for getting fast, reliable intelligence on a property before ever meeting with a client. When time

matters—and it always does—RPR allows me to walk into appointments, showings, and listing presentations prepared and confident.”

She explained how the information provided gives her a clear edge. “What I love most is how easy the reports are to read and understand. In one place, I can quickly review property details alongside community data, school information, and neighborhood insights. It eliminates the need to bounce between multiple sources and allows me to focus on strategy instead of searching for information.”

Riddle promotes RPR to fellow agents. “I often tell agents that RPR is one of the simplest ways to become the expert in your market. When you arrive at a showing with relevant insider information already in hand, clients feel that preparation immediately.”

She said having access to important information, such as the previous sales history, helps her when pricing a property.

“From a pricing and negotiation standpoint, RPR is

invaluable. I review mortgage details and previous sales history to help formulate potential offer strategies. The CMA tool is straightforward and intuitive, and the pricing range feature is especially helpful when working with sellers. It allows us to have an informed conversation about where they want to position their home in the market, whether that’s competitively, aggressively, or conservatively,” she said.

The real estate expert pulls RPR reports for both buyers and sellers. For sellers, it helps guide pricing and expectations. For buyers, it provides deeper insight into the property and the surrounding area, empowering them to make confident decisions.

She said, “RPR helps me work smarter, not harder, and it helps my clients feel informed, prepared, and supported every step of the way.”

In an ever-evolving industry, having access to industry knowledge will give you a competitive edge, or in the wise words of Obi-Wan Kenobi, “Use the force.”



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Find the next YPN Committee meeting on the OABR calendar!

WCR 2026 INSTALLATION & AWARDS

Written by **Melissa McElroy**

The queens and kings of real estate made their way onto the scene at The Hispanic Art Center on December 16th, for the 2026 Women's Council of REALTORS® Installation. An explosion of bright hues adorned the interior of the historic building, creating a festive ambiance, accentuated by the enticing aroma of taquitos wafting through the air.

2025 WCR Omaha President Trac Burkhardt reflected on the past year and recognized those who made it possible, starting with Membership Director Amy Dritley, a digital creator for businesses who owns Designed by Red. Dritley onboarded 29 new members to the WCR-Omaha network in 2025.

Burkhardt also recognized Angela Hunter, who drives engagement for WCR events by managing the WCR-Omaha's social media and email platforms, and Holly Lombardo, the 2025 Treasurer, who chaired and helped organize the two most profitable WCR fundraisers – Music Trivia and Golf – while managing the organization's finances with care.

Cali Rethwisch was also recognized. The 2025 WCR Omaha Event Director increased overall event engagement by over 30 percent. She hosted a three-part business series that was hugely successful, especially an event featuring Nebraska Volleyball Coach John Cook.

The 2025 WCR Omaha President saved the best for last and recognized the woman of the hour, Angie Thiel, who she said was instrumental in certifying the Omaha

Network with the National WCR organization and poised the local organization to move to the next level.

Amy Dritley then took the stage, showcasing her trademark humor in a moving speech about her dear friend and incoming WCR President, Angie Thiel. That kinship has been cultivated over many years of working alongside each other, both devoted to an organization that promotes women into leadership roles. That level of camaraderie isn't forged overnight. It's formed over blood, sweat, tears, and perhaps some occasional shenanigans.

She began her speech somberly. "I wanted to tell you a little story about the spring of 2016. It was a dark and dreary day in Omaha."

A smile flashed across her face.

"Just kidding. Anyway, I was giving a presentation about Facebook Live or something at REBarCamp, and this curly-haired girl kept asking all these questions, and finally I said, "Give me your number, and I will follow up with you."

She smiled and said, "Ladies and gentlemen, that began the friendship of Amy and Angie. That's crazy to think that nine and a half years ago I met this fun-loving, giggly, tech-handicapped girl."



2026 WCR PRESIDENT: Angie Thiel



2026 WCR LEADERSHIP: Angela Hunter, Sue Laubert, Matt Circo, Rachel McClanahan, Jen Pagel, Angie Thiel

"We have made a lot of memories, so many that we have a book of all our selfies. I have watched Angie go from struggling REALTOR® to leading a team and loving it. We have been in a book club, we have traveled together, we have been in Masterminds together, and more, I probably should not share. I am so honored that she asked me to be here tonight to represent her with her new role."

When Thiel graced the stage, she offered her heartfelt gratitude and recognized the many leaders who helped WCR evolve into the thriving organization that it is today. A megawatt smile flashed across her face as she peered into the audience.

Many friends, colleagues, and leaders in the real estate industry were in attendance, along with her

husband and her parents, who beamed with pride. It seemed fitting that the Installation took place in The Hispanic Art Center, a historic building where her mother attended a show many years prior. Decades later, her mother would proudly witness her daughter step into a new leadership role, cheered on by her daughter's peers.

By the end of the evening, awards were presented and the incoming 2026 WCR Omaha Board of Directors was sworn in, setting the stage for the year ahead.

WCR OMAHA CHAPTER

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PRESIDENT-ELECT

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TREASURER

Matt Circo

MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR

Rachel McClanahan

EVENTS DIRECTOR

Sue Laubert

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Angela Hunter

2025 AWARDS

REALTOR®-OF-THE-YEAR

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ENTREPRENEUR-OF-THE-YEAR

Rachel McClanahan, REALTOR® Virtue Group eXp Realty

STRATEGIC PARTNER-OF THE YEAR

Holly Lombardo, Guild Mortgage

OUTSTANDING SERVICE

REALTOR® Sue Laubert, KW Elite Virtue Group

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50 Mile March

SUNNIER DAYS AHEAD

The final days of winter seem to cling on for dear life; as we endure the frigid temps, sometimes the winter blahs set in.

One way to battle the seasonal humdrums is by seeking glimmers of light. Spending quality time with friends and family, curling up on the couch with the dog and watching a favorite show, and getting out and about, all bring much needed joy during dreary, winter days.

One great outing that lifted my spirits was the WCR January Mixer. It's always uplifting to see all the amazing WCR members in a casual setting and get the opportunity to mix and mingle. It gives you the chance to get to know folks on a more personal level and interact with people you might not otherwise meet one-on-one. It's one of the reasons that we encourage non-members to attend this event. They get to check us out and find out what out what they're missing.

There are many perks to being a WCR member and WCR events are definitely one of the those perks. Being able to network with the best women leaders in the industry, share information, and develop friendships, really pushes you to grow and get outside your box. It makes a big difference at the closing table when you already have a rapport with another professional. People want to work with someone they know and trust.

Mark February 26th on the calendar for another WCR event: the annual RPAC Breakfast, which will be

from 9 to 11 at Champions Run. There will be a breakfast buffet, mimosas, and plenty of networking opportunities, all while supporting RPAC, an important organization that fights for property rights and the real estate community. Sarina McNeel and Liz Otto will give a presentation at the breakfast which will illuminate the many ways that RPAC has fought on our behalf.

Stay tuned for more information about our spring event. We are putting together another Music Trivia Extravaganza. It's always a blast. People get decked out in costumes and listen to great tunes, all to raise awareness for our charity partner The Set Me Free Project, an organization that provides prevention education to stop human trafficking before it starts. We are very proud to support this non-profit and the important work they do!

There's so many outstanding events on the horizon at your local WCR. We are excited for the coming year and all the adventures we will get to experience! I look forward to seeing you at the next event. Together, we can accomplish so much!

HOPE YOU HAVE AN OUTSTANDING FIRST QUARTER!

ANGIE THIEL
2026 President
Women's Council of REALTORS®



2026 RECHARGE

SERIES ONE SPEAKERS



QUINTAVIUS "Q" BURDETTE

9:00 AM – 12:00 PM | SURVIVING 2026 AND COMING OUT A WINNER |
This *Survivor* shares simple, proven strategies to stay productive and win in 2026, including smarter time use, focused daily priorities, stronger cold calling and door-knocking techniques, and practical ways to grow your brand using the tools you already have.

Top RE/MAX agent and dynamic speaker, Q Burdette shares high-impact strategies for growth and professionalism. He also appeared on Survivor (Season 46), applying the same "lead from the front" mindset that drives his real estate success.



HEATHER "SUNSHINE" HAASE

1:00 PM – 4:00 PM | SOCIAL MEDIA BLUEPRINT | Social media can feel overwhelming as algorithms shift and trends come and go. This 3-hour Social Media Blueprint workshop teaches participants how to build a clear, consumer-focused strategy that prioritizes trust, connection, and credibility, with an emphasis on value-driven content, ethical practices, and a practical understanding of how trends influence consumer behavior.

Heather "Sunshine" Haase is a REALTOR®, trainer, and national speaker with 7+ years of experience. She specializes in first-time buyers, military clients, and agent referrals, and speaks nationwide on mindset, social media, and professional growth.



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MARGARET ZACH
ALEXANDER ZAMORA VIRGEN
MOE ZAW
GERALDINE ZERSE
BARBARA ZORN
LONDON ZUEHLKE



MEMBERSHIP REPORT

December Activity	MO	YTD
New REALTOR® Members	22	234
Resignations	10	353
Membership (As of January 1)	2025	2024
Designated REALTORS®	189	194
REALTOR®	2982	2972
REALTOR® Emeritus	100	93
TOTAL REALTORS®	3271	3259
Institute Affiliate	86	79
Affiliate Members	141	132
Key-Only Affiliates	134	120

Full membership report at OmahaREALTORS.com/membership-report

DESIGNATIONS

Accredited Buyer's Representative (ABR®)

- Cynthia Robirds, Real Broker NE, LLC

Seniors Real Estate Specialist® (SRES®)

- Paul Cummings, Nebraska Realty

PERSONALS

Our Condolences

- To the family and friends of Darrick Sautter, Hike Real Estate, on his recent passing
- To the family and friends of N.P. "Sandy" Dodge IV, NP Dodge Real Estate, on his recent passing
- To Jeff Grover, Nebraska Realty, on the passing of his father, Richard Grover, Nebraska Realty

VIRGINIA AYERS

DIVERSITY SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT

I was raised in a military family, with my father serving as a career Air Force noncommissioned officer. My early years were shaped by living abroad in England and Guam, returning between overseas assignments to Omaha—my mother's hometown and a place my family has called home for generations. Following my father's retirement, Omaha became our permanent home, grounding me in a community I continue to serve today.

After passing my real estate exam on November 6, 2025, I joined Nebraska Realty as a newly licensed agent with a strong foundation in housing services and a deep commitment to clients. Prior to entering real estate sales, my career focused extensively on property management and housing placement, including securing homes for newly arrived refugees and educating landlords on both market-rate and subsidized housing programs. I have spent many years managing a wide range of properties throughout Omaha, giving me a practical, detail-oriented understanding of the local housing market.

In the past two years, I overcame significant medical challenges, including cancer, multiple surgeries, chemotherapy, and radiation. That season of recovery prompted a clear sense of purpose: to build a lasting legacy by helping families achieve stable, sustainable housing through homeownership. Real estate became the natural extension of both my professional experience and personal calling.

The most rewarding aspect of my work is guiding individuals and families through one of the most important decisions of their lives—making the dream of homeownership a reality. I approach every client relationship with resilience, integrity, and an unwavering belief in what is possible.





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REALTORS® Make the Market

Omaha Area Residential Snapshot

DECEMBER 31	2024	2025	%
NUMBER ON MARKET	2,098	2,304	+9.8% ▲
NUMBER UNDER CONTRACT (MONTH)	659	622	-5.6% ▼
NUMBER OF SALES CLOSED (YEAR-TO-DATE)	11,915	12,369	+3.8% ▲
EXISTING SALE PRICE (MEDIAN YEAR-TO-DATE)	\$292,500	\$300,000	+2.6% ▲
NEW SALES PRICE (MEDIAN YEAR-TO-DATE)	\$423,100	\$425,803	+0.6% ▲

AFFILIATES Add Value!



Home Standards Expands to offer New Termite Inspection Service

Termite expert Michael Ludvigsen joins Home Standards to lead expansion.

Pictured: Jon Vacha (Vice President), Ludvigsen, Steve Vacha (President)

Termites are real, they cause real damage, and they're one of the hardest issues to spot during the home-buying process. In many cases, termite activity and the damage it leaves behind can stay hidden inside walls, crawl spaces, and framing for years. By the time signs are visible, repairs can be expensive, and the conversation gets a lot harder for everyone involved.

That's why having an experienced termite inspector matters. Michael has lived in Omaha for years and brings

over 10 years of termite inspection experience to Home Standards, along with a strong background in client service and clear communication. His job is simple: help buyers, sellers, and agents understand what's happening, what it means, and what the next step should be.

Termite inspections add another layer of confidence during due diligence, protect a buyer's investment, and help avoid surprises after closing.

Convenience!

Our job is to make the inspection process as

convenient as possible - and with us now offering it, the agent doesn't need to call two different companies!

Home Standards is already known for thorough, reliable inspections and a smooth process that agents trust. Adding termite inspections is one more way we're expanding that same high standard of service, giving you a stronger toolkit for protecting your clients and supporting a clean, informed transaction.

To schedule a termite inspection call 402-392-2020 or visit HomeStandards.com



Sewer Scoping

We also now offer the service of scheduling a sewer scope inspection. One call to us and we will do the rest and get a plumber scheduled to make sure your client can avoid an expensive surprise post close.



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THE TRENCHES

Written by **Melissa McElroy**

The brisk arctic breeze cuts to the bone. The desolate wasteland seems unending. The market can, at times, feel equally unforgiving. Sometimes, having a sense of humor is the surest way to survive the rugged terrain.

BRAZEN BOSS

REALTOR® Bill Swanson has been in the business since the '80s and has plenty of tales to tell. He remembers many years ago, when listings were printed in books that came out every two weeks, with only one photo per listing. Back in those days, someone contracted from OABR would drive out to a listing, take a quick picture of the property, "and jet." The agents laughed at all the times that the photographer would accidentally snap a picture with a dog pooping in the yard or something equally absurd – maybe a side-view mirror from the car window.

Bill had a colleague in his office- we'll call him Bob. There was this one time when Bob anxiously awaited a new client's listing to be printed in the latest MLS book. Bob took his client out to lunch that day, knowing that the MLS book would be delivered by the time they returned. When they got back to the office, Bob excitedly showed the client his listing.

The client, who was married, studied the picture a little closer. "Wait a minute. That's my boss' car in the driveway," he said confused. The man remembered all the times his boss would give him busywork to keep him occupied and the boss would often "have an errand to run" at the same time.

BAD, MAD, & UNCLAD

REALTOR® Mike McGlynn remembers working on an investment property in the early 2000s. The 115-year-old home was in desperate need of renovation. The massive home boasted three floors. Each floor had its own entrance. He decided to live on the top floor while the extensive overhaul was underway. He started much-needed, comprehensive work on the main floor.

One day he noticed the front door was open and thought, "Hmm, that's really odd." There was nothing on the first level worth stealing. It was completely empty, except for some insulation they were installing.

That's when he spotted what looked like a body. He inched closer and closer to the unidentified figure, unsure of what to expect. That's when he realized it was a lady, who was completely naked, wrapped up in the insulation. He wasn't even sure if she was dead or alive.

He soon realized that she was alive and called the police. When they showed up, they knew who the woman was. Apparently, she had a habit of getting extremely intoxicated and passing out in random places. She came to and yelled, "Leave me alone!" as they escorted her off the premises, covered in insulation remnants.

"Have fun cleaning that up!" one of the officers said to Mike with a snicker, as he pointed to a puddle on the floor.

It's never a dull moment working in real estate. With some grit and humor, you will survive the trenches.

REVIEW

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