

REVIEW

Omaha Area Board of REALTORS®



APRIL

TUE

07

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

09

RECHARGE (SERIES 2)

9:00AM - 4:00PM

Get ready to REcharge in 2026! The premier event returns revamped as an exciting three-part series in a new location, with fresh dates and a powerhouse lineup of keynote speakers.

FRI

10

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.

FRI

17

RAISE THE ROOF: WHAT EVERY REALTOR® SHOULD KNOW BEFORE IT STORMS

9:00AM - 11:00AM

Join a roofer, lender, and insurance experts as they explain how roof condition and industry changes impact coverage, loans, and negotiations, plus get practical tips and red flags to guide your buyers and sellers.



SCAN TO VIEW
THE OABR
CALENDAR

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

Three months ago, many of you were setting goals and building momentum for the new year. So, let me ask — how are you doing? For some, it's been an incredible start. They're on track or even ahead of their goals. But for others, motivation may have slipped, and progress isn't where they hoped it would be. One of the most common things I hear this time of year is agents making excuses — blaming the weather or saying they're "waiting for the spring market."

But what if the spring market isn't what it used to be?

Brian Buffini has been talking about the Dhulaigh Curve — based on decades of national data showing that a large portion of listings traditionally hit the market early in the year, with nearly 40% coming in the first quarter. That would suggest a significant portion of the opportunity has already passed by the time we reached April.

However, when you look at Douglas and Sarpy County data over the past few years, the pattern has changed. In 2023, September nearly outperformed April. In 2024, the fourth quarter was stronger than the first. In 2025, May — not March — was the peak, and activity remained elevated into the fall.

What does that tell us? The market hasn't disappeared — it's shifted. Opportunities are no longer confined to one "hot season." Buyers and sellers are active throughout the year, and the agents who stay consistent — regardless of the month — are the ones who win.

If you feel behind on your goals, don't wait for the market to catch up to you. Double down now. Adjust your plan. Stay in front of your clients. Success in this business isn't about timing one season — it's about showing up in all of them.

Wishing you success this season and beyond.

BRAD FRICKE,
2026 OABR President



REVIEW

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FRI

17
APR



RAISE THE ROOF

WHAT EVERY REALTOR® SHOULD
KNOW BEFORE IT STORMS

📍 OABR EDUCATION CENTER

🕒 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM

Register at omaharealtors.com/raise-the-roof

TUE

05
MAY

GOOD CONTRACT BAD CONTRACT

DO YOU KNOW THE DIFFERENCE?

📍 OABR EDUCATION CENTER

🕒 6:00 PM - 9:00 PM

Register at omaharealtors.com/contracts-2026

THU

07
MAY

RPAC CE DAY

05 . 07 . 2026

SATISFIES
FAIR HOUSING & ETHICS
CE REQUIREMENTS!

📍 OABR EDUCATION CENTER

🕒 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM / 1:00 PM - 4:00 PM

Register at omaharealtors.com/ce_day

APRIL IS FAIR HOUSING MONTH

On April 11, 1968, one week after civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated in Memphis, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Fair Housing Act into law. With a few pen strokes, housing discrimination became unlawful.

Over the years, the Act has been amended and broadened to extend protections to additional classes. The federal law prohibits discrimination in the sale, rental, and financing of housing based on race, color, religion, sex (including sexual orientation and gender identity), disability, familial status, and national origin.

Each state or local jurisdiction may also add protections to those already contained in federal law.

Individuals with disabilities and families with children are protected under the Act. Landlords and other housing providers need to modify policies, practices, and in some cases, physical structures to allow proper access. Nebraska added ancestry as a protected class in its substantially equivalent law.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has the authority to issue charges of discrimination and can issue penalties for violations. It established a federal enforcement system and increased funds for local fair housing agencies to ensure compliance. Testing is used as an effective and legitimate enforcement tool.

SIGNIFICANT RISK

Educating yourself on fair housing laws and being



accountable is critically important. Discrimination is not always intentional, but it is always unlawful and violates the NAR Code of Ethics. The professional standards process will result in sanctions when a member is deemed to have engaged in a discriminatory practice. Article 10 of the REALTOR® Code of Ethics was expanded in 2020 and now includes bigoted speech and intolerant conduct outside a member's real estate practice.

Violating Fair Housing Laws poses a considerable financial risk to all real estate brokerage and property management firms. Even if you believe you would never discriminate or that your actions were not intended to be discriminatory, it is essential to understand that you can still be liable under the law.

Violations often don't involve blatant discrimination and commonly have more to do with equal professional service than a pronounced bias. Think about how you might respond differently when you meet dissimilar people for the first time. Is your service based on objective criteria or on what you subconsciously believe?

Fair Housing law is designed to protect those adversely impacted in their ability to purchase or rent housing. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) uses an Administrative Law process, or it can be an action in District, State, or Federal court.

POSSIBLE PENALTIES

Being the respondent to a Fair Housing complaint can be costly. First, you need professional help. If you are found to be in violation, the penalties can be severe, including hefty monetary fines and even the loss of your license. A complainant may be awarded compensatory damages, including out-of-pocket expenses, while they needed alternative accommodation, and legal fees to process the claim. Additional damages for mental anguish and psychological injuries are also possible.

After 2025 adjustments, maximum civil penalties may be levied of up to \$26,262 for a first violation of the Fair Housing Act, \$65,653 if another violation occurred in the previous five years, and \$131,308 if two or more violations occurred in the last seven years.

Federal courts may also award punitive damages. These are not damages to reimburse the complainant but additional fines to punish the wrongdoer where there is clear evidence of willful or malicious intent. The best advice for real estate professionals is to understand the impact of your actions. Use procedures that empower you to provide consistent, equal service to all consumers in a methodical manner.

Fair housing complaints can come from a fair housing watchdog group, a governmental agency like HUD, or a private individual or their lawyer. You can also have a claim brought against you when a fair housing organization sends "testers" into the marketplace looking for violations. If the organization concludes that an agent has violated the law, it can file a complaint or lawsuit.

2026 OABR President Brad Fricke said, "Fair housing is more complex than most think, and a violation can be as little as doing something for one client that you didn't do for another. You should be consistent and treat all buyers and sellers the same."

Protect yourself by using the same protocol to ensure every client or prospective client receives the same service, starting with your initial consultation. If you require a preapproval process for one client, you must require it for every client.

Professional Development Chair Nicole Riddle said having a client sit down with a lender for an in-depth financial discussion is an important step to take early on. The lender will be able to provide a better idea of what each client can afford, factoring in insurance and property taxes. They will want to know that they will still have the money to continue enjoying their current lifestyle after making an offer on a home.

Since providing every client the same level of service is essential to upholding Fair Housing laws, consistency is critically important, which is why Riddle put together a packet for clients that includes all the essential information: a blank copy of the service contract, agency disclosure, buyer broker compensation form, information about wire fraud, and even the steps to expect during the transaction. Providing a copy of a blank contract allows the client to carefully review it and know what they're signing. She provides the same packet to everyone and keeps extras in her car.

Riddle said, "Consistency builds trust. A well-prepared buyer and seller presentation ensures every client receives the same professional guidance, no matter how busy your day gets. Standardized service isn't just fair—it's the mark of a true professional."

IT'S ABOUT THE IMPACT, NOT YOUR INTENT

In 2015, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that illegal housing discrimination can occur even without intent. Disparate impact refers to a policy or practice that adversely affects a protected class, even in the absence of a discriminatory motive. The Supreme Court agreed that disparate impact occurs when another policy or action with less negative impact could have achieved the same legitimate goal.

In recent years, the MLS has adopted policies to help limit a broker's exposure to a disparate impact claim that might be asserted when properties are not available to all people in the market.

For example, what if a listing agent's favored customers and close friends are the only ones to know about properties available in a desired neighborhood? In that case, buyers in a protected class may be on the outside, with their opportunities blocked. The practice is not obvious discrimination, and the listing broker did not intend to discriminate. Still, the court could deem the action to have a disparate impact and rule it

a violation of the Federal Fair Housing Law, subject to its severe penalties.

REDLINING

Redlining began in 1934 during the Great Depression, when the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) institutionalized the practice by designating neighborhoods with black residents as "red" or "high risk" for mortgage lending. The FHA's 1938 underwriting manual claimed that the infiltration of inharmonious racial groups would increase credit risk.

Discriminatory policies prevented people of color from purchasing homes using conventional financing. While the Fair Housing Act made redlining and other discriminatory practices illegal in 1968, the aftershocks continue to affect communities today, as formerly redlined areas often struggle with a lack of economic investment and development.

PROPOSED CHANGES IN FAIR HOUSING LAW

Since 1988, Congress has not passed major amendments to the Fair Housing Act itself. Still, numerous bills have sought to expand, strengthen, or restore protections—often in response to regulatory changes, emerging issues, or perceived weaknesses.

In 2025 and 2026, most efforts have focused on expanding protected classes, improving enforcement, addressing modern discrimination (e.g., digital/AI-based), and countering regulatory rollbacks. Many are bipartisan but have not yet become law.

■ EXPANSION OF PROTECTED CLASSES

- **Fair and Equal Housing Act of 2025 (H.R. 3696):** Bipartisan bill to amend the Fair Housing Act by adding "sexual orientation" and "gender identity" as protected characteristics, providing explicit federal protections for LGBTQ+ individuals in housing sales, rentals, and financing (currently inconsistent across states).

- **Fair Housing Improvement Act (S. 2827 / H.R. 5443):** Seeks to prohibit discrimination based on “source of income” (e.g., Section 8 vouchers), which would protect low-income renters using housing assistance.

■ STRENGTHENING ENFORCEMENT AND DETECTION

- **Housing Fairness Act of 2025 (H.R. 68):** Requires HUD to conduct nationwide paired testing to detect discrimination across protected classes (race, color, religion, sex, familial status, disability, national origin) in rental, purchase, and mortgage markets; reauthorizes the Fair Housing Initiatives Program through FY2028 to support anti-discrimination organizations; and establishes grants for studies and pilot projects on segregation and discrimination remedies.

■ RESTORING AND CLARIFYING HUD'S ROLE

- **Restoring Fair Housing Protections Eliminated by Trump Act of 2025 (H.R. 3086):** Aims to reverse certain Trump-era actions by amending HUD’s mission statement to emphasize inclusive, discrimination-free communities; requiring reinstatement of the Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH) rule (to combat segregation and disparities); mandating reviews of digital/AI-based discrimination in housing; and creating a public database of Fair Housing Act complaints.

Overall, post-1988 efforts reflect pushes to adapt the law to new forms of discrimination and reinforce enforcement amid housing affordability and equity challenges, though major statutory changes remain elusive.

2026 **RECHARGE**
REIMAGINED



SERIES TWO SPEAKER LEIGH BROWN

9:00 AM – 12:00 PM 7 DEADLY SINS OF SALES (#1643)

1:00 PM – 4:00 PM FEARLESS AGENT: HOW TO BECOME A FEARLESS REAL ESTATE PRO! (#1642)

SAVE YOUR SEAT! [OMAHAREALTORS.COM/RECHARGE](https://www.omaharealtors.com/recharge)

APRIL 09, 2026
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WCR OMAHA RPAC CHAMPIONS!

WRITTEN BY MELISSA MCELROY

The champions of real estate descended upon Champions Run on February 26 to raise awareness about the ultimate champion: RPAC. The breakfast, hosted by The Women's Council of REALTORS® Omaha Network, delivered an important message. RPAC has your back!

Like any champion, RPAC has claimed many victories. RPAC co-chairs Sarina McNeel and Liz Dennis detailed the many ways that RPAC defends the real estate industry and protects property rights.

One example of an RPAC victory happened when REALTORS® were deemed essential workers by former Mayor Stothert during a nationwide COVID lockdown. RPAC continues to fight tirelessly to prevent a service tax from being added to real estate commissions, which would be detrimental to the real estate industry. Fighting against document stamp increases is another area where RPAC continues to battle. The battle is ongoing, but essential to keeping housing affordable.

RPAC amplifies REALTOR® voices to ensure the real estate industry is heard. It tracks any legislation that could potentially impact the industry and builds relationships with elected officials. This helps keep the lines of communication open.

Omaha City Council Members Don Rowe and Brinker Harding, and Douglas County

Sheriff Aaron Hanson attended the breakfast. The elected officials have developed a strong working relationship with the real estate community. Rowe and Harding consistently vote to keep housing more affordable. Hanson has advocated for REALTOR® safety; he helped establish a REALTOR® liaison program and has promoted safety training for agents.

One of RPAC's top objectives is to raise funds to support pro-REALTOR® candidates. It has supported candidates on both sides of the aisle and down the middle. Even small investments add up to big change. RPAC contributions provide REALTOR® access to elected officials when issues are on the table. Elected officials vote on bills that impact business. Having someone listening to you and advocating on your behalf is the difference between staying in business and not.

As OABR Governmental Affairs Committee Chair Charles Chadwick often says, "You either have a seat at the table, or you might be on the menu." He said it's important to support RPAC financially. It is just a smart investment in your business.

McNeel said that advocacy goes beyond the transaction. RPAC advocates in all areas at all levels. Whether it is fighting ever-increasing housing costs at the local, state, or national level, defending property rights, or communicating directly with elected officials about the needs of the real estate industry, RPAC continues to fight for REALTORS® and property owners while advocating for affordable housing. 100 percent of all donations go directly to the campaigns of pro-REALTOR® candidates – your participation is encouraged.

WCR answered the rally cry. This year's event raised over \$38,000 in investments towards the 2026 RPAC drive!



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FACE THE REALTORS®

JOHN BREDEMAYER

THE STATE OF THE REGIONAL MARKET

Written by **Melissa McElroy**

John Bredemeyer is a self-described “eternal optimist,” and he is optimistic about the 2026 real estate market. The President of Realcorp Inc., a full-service real estate appraisal company in Omaha, said that optimism is essential to running a company.

As the featured speaker at the Face the REALTORS® program in March, he shared his wealth of wisdom gained over 45 years of real estate experience. He asked attendees, “When is the best time to buy a home?” He smiled when several shouted, “Today!”

“Yes, today is always the right time to buy,” he said with a nod.

He said the average Omaha buyer purchasing the average home was a 35-year-old with a \$100K income. So, if you see a well-dressed 35-year-old, that’s your target, he explained playfully.

After three years of stagnation and insufficient inventory to sell, the real estate market remains mired, but there are signs it is starting to open up. It’s no surprise that the appraiser discussed the importance of accuracy. He recalled an article from 20 years ago in the local daily paper that claimed the average home sale price in Benson was \$300,000, when the real average for a home in that area was closer to \$100,000.

It turned out that a property that was sold for \$100,000 was incorrectly entered in the MLS as a \$10 million sale, which drastically distorted the average. Accuracy matters, so does understanding the math behind a statistic.

According to the expert, even during flat periods, desirable areas still go up in value. He provided the example of the Happy Hollow neighborhood in Omaha and the Village of Coleridge, Nebraska. Both had noticeable increases in property values during stagnant periods.

“I think it’s important to have perspective as brokers and agents,” he said. “When considering the average home sale of an area, one should also look at how many homes were sold. Does the average make sense?”

Bredemeyer said the 30-year mortgage interest rate was 18 percent in 1982. Now, that number hovers around six percent. He expects the interest rate to stay in the five to seven percent range. “We won’t see 18 percent again,” he said confidently, “but we won’t see two percent again either.” Fannie Mae predicts mortgage interest rates will be around six percent in 2026.



Real estate prices remain relatively affordable and stable in the Midwest. Many markets experience large spikes and dramatic drops in home sales and prices, he said. “In Nebraska, we don’t go to the party,” he said. “But we don’t get the hangover, either.”

Technology has changed the appraisal

process. He said the latest update, with a new appraisal form known as Uniform Appraisal Dataset (UAD) 3.6 Redesign, becomes mandatory for all Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac loans on November 2, 2026.

The Uniform Residential Appraisal Report (URAR) has been redesigned to accommodate different property types, with a data-driven focus that enhances automated underwriting and risk analysis. It will include new data fields for specific, expanded fields on ADUs (Accessory Dwelling Units), solar panels, energy-efficient features, and smart home technology.

One area of interest in the residential appraisal field is reconsiderations of value for low appraisals. He joked with a smile, “There are no low appraisals, just high sale prices.”

“Stay away from price per square foot,” he cautioned. The unique nature of properties makes it difficult to blindly assess across the board. Is the property a ranch or a two-story? Does it have a basement finish? Typically, any area below grade is considered a basement. “Basement finish is worth less than above grade,” he said. And, as you know, not all basement finishes are created equal.

Another area that can prove problematic is the concessions reported at closing. Sometimes concessions are underreported, making it difficult to gather complete information.

“An appraisal is an independent, expert opinion of value. If done well, it should give you a good estimation of value,” he said, explaining that it is merely a snapshot in time. An appraisal from a year ago might not be the same today.

In any profession, the professional opinion is only as good as the professional who gives it. Bredemeyer said that, just as with doctors or lawyers, not all appraisers are created equal.

In his 45-year career, he learned the wisest thing to say when asked how much a property is

worth is, “That depends.” He explained that any appraiser worth their salt knows that many variables factor into the final amount that a property appraises for.

2026 OABR President Brad Fricke took the opportunity to remind attendees that when you leave out information about a property, use inaccurate information, or fail to provide pictures, it often gets thrown out as a comp, which hurts not only other agents but yourself, too. He said it was also important to list a property that is under contract as pending in the MLS.

Bredemeyer shared his expert knowledge of the many facets of appraisals with a room of real estate professionals, with the precision one would expect from an appraiser, especially one with nearly half a century of real estate experience.

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ELECTRIC⚡L CODE DEB⚡TE REIGNITES

The electrifying debate on electrical codes was reignited on December 9, 2025, when the Omaha City Council voted 4-3 to adopt a stricter electrical code for new construction in Omaha, exceeding the electrical code requirements for new homes in the State of Nebraska (which had opted out of certain provisions in the 2023 National Electrical Code).

The updated code requires features such as an exterior power box (emergency disconnect) to allow firefighters to more easily cut power to a house from outside during a fire, whole-house surge protectors, ground-fault circuit interrupter outlets, and arc-fault circuit interrupters (AFCIs) in additional locations.

Existing homes are not required to add these enhancements or upgrades. No one testifying at the council meetings indicated they would voluntarily apply these changes to their own homes.

Newer homes already have the lowest incidence of electrical fires, raising questions about the high cost and the necessity of these added requirements for further safety gains.

The four council members voting in favor of the measure had presented themselves as City Council candidates committed to working for affordable housing in Omaha.

Omaha Area Board of REALTORS (OABR) Governmental Affairs Director Perre Neilan testified against the measure, arguing on behalf of affordable housing concerns that these "nice-to-have" additions would increase costs and hinder accessibility for starter homes.

The added features are estimated to cost between \$700 and \$1,300 per new home, though some builders place the figure closer to \$2,000. According to the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB), a \$1,000 increase in home price typically prices out over 100,000 households nationally.



NE State Senator
KATHLEEN KAUTH

This action followed former Omaha Mayor Jean Stothert's veto of a similar attempt in November 2024.

At the State level, Nebraska Senator Kathleen Kauth introduced LB 1134 and LB 726, two bills that would align state and local electrical, building, and energy codes with federal law and prohibit state and local policymakers from adopting more restrictive code updates, in an attempt to keep building costs down and housing more affordable.



ASHLEE HENDRICKSON

LB 1134 seeks to amend Nebraska's state building code to revert to the national standard electrical code, which would include the 2009 residential code and the 2009 energy conservation code. It would require any cities or counties that adopted the 2018 codes to return to the older 2009 codes

and prohibit local entities from passing stricter codes than the 2009 International Code.

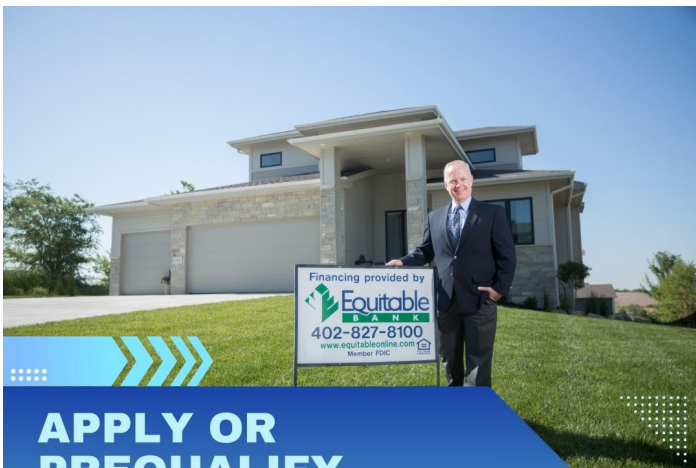
There would be exceptions if required by state or federal law, or if the city or county can prove they need a stricter code due to an imminent danger. It requires third-party evidence for any local code updates to ensure they are necessary for safety, rather than updating to the latest standard.

LB 726 specifically addresses updating references to the National Electrical Code in the State Electrical Act. Kauth also sponsored LB 531 in 2025, which aimed to exempt certain state-funded

projects from specific energy code compliance.

Ashlee Hendrickson, Governmental Affairs Director for the Nebraska REALTORS® Association, said the February 24th hearing on LB 1134 was a step in the right direction. It invited more necessary discussion on how limiting restrictive energy and electrical codes helps reduce the cost of building housing in Nebraska. The discussion will likely carry over beyond the 2026 Nebraska Legislative session.

Pushing back against government costs in housing will remain a priority for affordable housing advocates.



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REALTOR® ADVERTISING 2026

Written by **Melissa McElroy**

The National Association of REALTORS® took an “Uncommon” approach to elevate the REALTOR® brand, once again enlisting the help of Uncommon Creative Studio to expand on the “Right by You” campaign with the “More than Opening Doors” campaign.

The campaign strives to educate consumers about the critically important role that REALTORS® play in advocating for clients during one of the most consequential financial decisions a person will make, one potentially fraught with many pitfalls.

The campaign’s original message still rings true. REALTORS® are right by you or right by your side during the most important transaction you’ll face, and they will do right by you during that process.

The “More Than Opening Doors” campaign takes it a step further. It counters the common misconception that REALTORS® merely open doors or only show properties; it depicts them as the consummate professionals who guide wary consumers through the many complications that can arise during any given real estate deal.

Part of cultivating the brand is communicating the value of the trademark “R” with ad campaigns that bolster the status of REALTORS®. They are essential, ethical partners throughout the real estate journey. Consumers should specifically want to work

with a REALTOR®, not just any real estate agent, but someone held to the highest standards.

NAR’s Chief Marketing and Communications Officer Bennett Richardson discussed the new ad campaigns and the importance of moving beyond the “bunker mentality” in a recent Real Estate Insiders Unfiltered podcast. “Bunker mentality” is when industry leaders opt to operate from the proverbial bunker and do not tell their stories or cultivate the narrative.

The new approach focuses on outcomes more than merely the output or volume of ads. The goal is to showcase the many ways REALTORS® show up for their clients through the lens of a typical day to really underscore the myriad of ways they do more than merely open doors.

They zeroed in on the sweet spot of the consumer in the early stages of homebuying who perhaps has looked at listings but hasn’t been pre-approved for a mortgage or secured an agent yet, specifically, first-time homebuyers. The majority of the ads are streaming on digital billboards, online video, and social media platforms, and were informed by AI-driven data insights.

The messaging becomes much more impactful when focused on a targeted audience that centers on the consumer’s experience, presenting REALTORS® as the protectors who help clients navigate the many hazards in the often-rocky terrain of real estate.

Richardson summed it up best during the podcast when he said, “All we want to be doing is helping REALTORS® thrive in their day-to-day business and grow their business. One area where we think we can help, especially for the smaller independent agent, is marketing.”

PLANTING SEEDS

Every Spring, we plant seeds in a garden, hoping a bountiful harvest will grow if we tend to the garden. Similarly, we make connections within our industry, hoping it will flourish over time. There is nothing quite like in-person events to nurture connections while making new ones. WCR strives to organize amazing events that encourage networking, learning, and growing professionally.

We just had a great event in March for Women's History Month that featured Stephanie Olson, CEO of The Set Me Free Project[®]. We selected this organization as our charity partner because we believe it has an important mission: to stop human trafficking before it starts by promoting prevention education to all ages. Using research-based methods, the READY to Stand Curriculum[®] engages participants in meaningful and fun activities designed to inform and empower. Together, every person can take a stand against human trafficking.

Mark your calendars for our next WCR event! The annual Music Trivia Spring Event will be from 5 to 9 PM on April 23rd at The Barn at the Ackerhurst Dairy Farm in Bennington. There will still be the exceptionally popular costume contest. The wilder and crazier the better! We have seen some really fun ones over the years. You are encouraged to decorate your table with whatever theme you would like. There will also still be a split-the-pot.

We're doing a few things differently this year for Music Bingo. You can still bring your own food, but we

will have an option on-site. All of the drink and food options will be \$5 per item. Purchase tickets ahead of time, so you don't have to worry about cash.

You can purchase a single seat if you can't gather a group of eight. We will put together tables of eight with those singles. Dancing, singing, and laughing are encouraged. It will be a blast!

With any organization, it takes a village to make it run, which is why I'm happy to introduce our new benefits liaison, Shanon Loontjer, with DR Horton. She will assist us in making sure that our members are informed of all of the additional benefits Women's Council members receive, such as our Women's Council member-to-member referral network. It is continually listed as one of our top-member benefits in membership surveys!

According to the latest survey, WCR members prefer to refer their clients to other WCR members because they know that other members are high-level business leaders who follow through on clients' needs. Getting involved with WCR helps members cultivate their leadership skills and grow professionally with like-minded professionals.

Look forward to seeing you at our next WCR event!

ANGIE THIEL
2026 President
Women's Council of REALTORS[®]



2026 RECHARGE

REIMAGINED: PART ONE

Written by **Melissa McElroy**

REcharge 2026 electrified the Relevant Center in Elkhorn on February 20. No winter storm could trip the circuit breaker on the breakout event of the year. It powered on as attendees braved treacherous conditions to rev up their real estate repertoire. The first session of the reimagined, three-part series boasted not just one, but two electrifying keynote speakers.

Q ON SURVIVING SURVIVOR, REAL ESTATE

From surviving the unforgiving elements on Survivor to the unforgiving real estate industry, Quintavius “Q” Burdette thrives under adversity. The Survivor contestant, born one of 17 kids, described his upbringing in the opening of Survivor 46: “If I didn’t wake up first, I probably didn’t eat.” That hunger for success led him to be the first in his family to attend college, where he played football and ran track.

The “Ole Miss” graduate excelled in sports. Originally, after graduating from the University of Mississippi with a degree in Accounting, he became an accountant, but soon realized it wasn’t for him. He googled “How do I make my worth?” Real estate popped up. It set him on a path that changed the trajectory of his life.

Once he decided to pursue a career in real estate, it became his mission, his life’s passion. “I didn’t have a plan B,” he said. He had an early



hiccup when he accidentally broke real estate laws by passing out flyers before he was officially licensed. It was just one more lesson in a school of hard knocks.

In his first 30 days, he talked to over 6,000 people. He passed out business cards with his eye on the prize. After 75 days, he had no leads, nothing to show for his efforts. He said most people would have thrown in the towel by this point, but he was determined to succeed. That same passion and drive that he dedicated to sports helped him excel in this new arena.

On day 82, the phone rang. The caller met him while he was passing out business cards and admired Q's drive. He said to the young agent, "That's the kind of agent that I want."

By day 90, he had 10 pending sales on the board and went on to have the most closings of any new agent in his office. By year three, he did 300 deals.

According to Q, humble beginnings pushed him to perfect his hustle and become the number two agent in the country after a couple of years in real estate. "I like to hear 'no' a lot," he said. Every "no" got him closer to a "yes."

After mastering so many of his professional goals, he needed to find new ways to push himself. "I get bored easily," he admitted. According to him, real estate is like sports. You must prove your worth, and if you're going to "smack-talk" the competition, you better be able to walk the walk if you're going to talk the talk.

To stay motivated, he has a system where he strives to score four points a day. He assigns one

point for showing a house, one point for getting a deal under contract, and two points for a signed listing. Just like in football, he is constantly fine-tuning his game and strives to score as many points as possible. "You don't get points for attempts," he said. He pushes himself to get better every single day and said it's the only way to grow a business.

The out-of-the-box entrepreneur strategizes ways to spark interest. He partnered with a local cheesecake business that provides a discount when he buys in bulk. He buys 500 pieces of cheesecakes to hand out to prospective clients. Typically, he snags a couple of new clients.

With anything, it pays to rethink your game plan when the status quo starts to feel stale. Another strategy Q employs is parking in a subdivision and positioning himself to meet potential buyers and builders. He has built solid working relationships with builders with this approach. Investing in real estate is another strategy. He encourages agents to buy property.



Q said that there are 168 hours in a week. Carefully consider how you spend your 168 hours. Are you pushing towards success or burnout? When you factor in sleep, taking care of yourself, going to the gym, hobbies, family time, devotion, and spending time with friends, how much time is left at the end of the week?

The key to success is learning how to maximize your time. Q said he preferred sellers to buyers for this reason, because they required less time. He breaks down his time into productive hours, which are everything you do before you get new business, and non-productive hours, which are everything after.

He said that passing out 500 pieces of cheesecake was an example of productive hours. Out of 500 people, 50 people are typically added to the database. He might become friends with five of those people, who all have 1,000 friends on Facebook, leading to 5,000 more people he could potentially reach.

Q said that it was important to regularly like people's posts to improve the algorithm to become more visible online. It's also important to consider what you're saying and how you're saying it, whether you are posting on social media, cold calling, or door-knocking.

He had small groups do a thought experiment where they discussed what traits each person had that would make them a "super-agent." Groups came up with detailed descriptions, such as good communicator, great leader, good connector, consistent, problem solver, good listening skills, authentic, organized, observant, level-headed, and good negotiator.

The top-performing keynote provided tips on cold calling. When he calls someone new on the phone, he wants to establish if someone is a homeowner and if that person is interested in selling. He gives a brief introduction. "Hi, this is Q from REMAX." He will ask, "Do you have a second?" to be considerate of their time.

He will neutralize the conversation by relating it to something other than real estate. "I was doing a brief survey. Are you a dog person or a cat person?" He soon turns the conversation to the main point to discover if they are looking for a REALTOR®. Instead of asking, "Do you want to sell your home?" He might ask, "Have you thought about downsizing?" or "Have you thought about adding to your portfolio?"

Just like an athlete training for a sport, he stays committed to working on his craft. He said if you don't push yourself, some other agent will take your business. He gets up at 4:30 AM every single day and spends the first 20 minutes of the day in darkness with no phone. He then gets in a workout. Q strategically schedules his time.

When he is in a highly productive prospecting time, he wants to get the most output for his input. Text messages get the highest response rate. If he is cold calling someone, he will call back twice, back-to-back. He finds that people are more likely to pick up the phone. After the second attempt, he will leave a brief message asking the person to call him back. Once someone is a client, he asks how they prefer to be contacted.

If he could survive the elements for 13 days with no food, fire, or shelter, on Survivor, he could not only survive but thrive in real estate. Real estate gave him the confidence to take the leap of faith. "You can do anything you put your mind to," he said. You just need to be willing to jump.

SUNSHINE SHEDS LIGHT ON SOCIAL MEDIA

A ray of sunshine broke through the winter storm in the afternoon session with keynote speaker Heather "Sunshine" Haase. The REALTOR®, educator, and social media guru, said we can learn a lot from history. She proved this by outlining an extensive history of social media trends.

The dial-up days of the 80s and 90s paved the path for the first social media platforms like



Friendster and Myspace. By 2005, tagging became a useful tool. By 2007, smartphones revolutionized how we connect and communicate.

Social advocacy on social media took off when politicians and companies realized they had

the potential to reach millions. The hashtag changed how we search and produce content. By 2014, messaging on social media platforms became an easy way to keep in touch online. It was the start of the algorithm. Social media influencers exploded on the scene. By 2015, we had livestreaming. 2018 ushered in the vertical video. By 2019, there was a social media slump; by 2020, the worldwide pandemic changed the world.

In the day and age of ever-evolving AI and SEOs, Sunshine said that people crave authenticity. Technology is a powerful tool. It's not infallible and can't replace a human agent. It's important to disclose whenever you use AI to edit.

"You don't have to be on social media, but it would be really silly not to be," she said. A social media presence puts you out there in front of potentially millions of people. What social media platforms do you use? She said, "What you focus on expands."

Crafting your brand will set yourself apart from other agents. Your brand can be your color scheme, your tone, a signature hook, even your posting rhythm, whatever differentiates you from the competition. "Every post you make is a digital handshake."

Whether you wanted to perfect your real estate game or master your social media presence, the first session of REcharge 2026 left attendees ready to conquer today's challenges head-on, fully recharged.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

February Activity	MO	YTD
New REALTOR® Members	52	52
Resignations	62	62

Membership (As of March 1)	2026	2025
Designated REALTORS®	186	192
REALTOR®	3025	2954
REALTOR® Emeritus	104	93
TOTAL REALTORS®	3315	3239
Institute Affiliate	86	79
Affiliate Members	147	131
Key-Only Affiliates	138	118

Full membership report at OmahaREALTORS.com/membership-report

DESIGNATIONS

Seniors Real Estate Specialist® (SRES®)

- ▶ Michelle Ekeler, Evolve Realty

PERSONALS

Our Condolences

- ▶ To Marty Woodke, Staging Homes 360, on the loss of her husband

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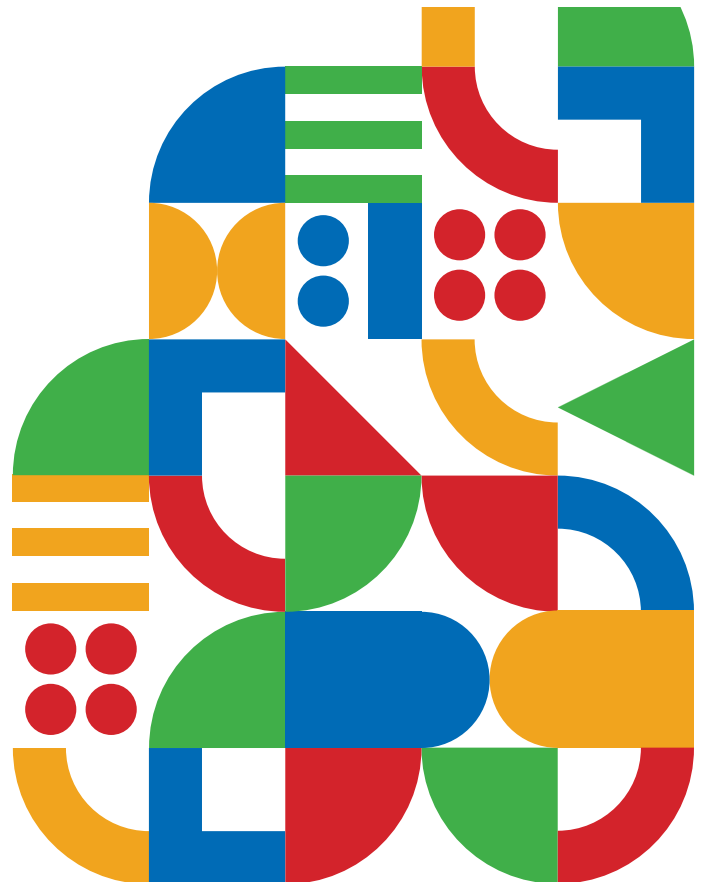
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REALTORS® Make the Market

Omaha Area Residential Snapshot

FEBRUARY 28	2025	2026	%
NUMBER ON MARKET	2,088	2,079	-0.4% ▼
NUMBER UNDER CONTRACT (MONTH)	879	978	+11.3% ▲
NUMBER OF SALES CLOSED (JANUARY)	1474	1410	-4.3% ▼
EXISTING SALE PRICE (MEDIAN JANUARY)	\$287,000	\$295,000	+2.8% ▲
NEW SALES PRICE (MEDIAN JANUARY)	\$424,075	\$435,000	+2.6% ▲

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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IN THE TRENCHES

Written by **Melissa McElroy**

In some ways, real estate is like a wild safari. You never know what creatures you might encounter out in the wild.

DANGER NOODLE

Lincoln-based REALTOR® Kim McKee prides herself on going the extra mile for her clients. She never imagined how that might get put to the test.

She was doing a live video tour of a property for her buyers when she saw something in the furnace room that almost gave her a heart attack.

There, mere inches away from her, draped over the water heater, was a ginormous snake.

When Kim called to inform the listing agent about the mammoth beast that appeared to be the size of a small dinosaur, she was told that the sellers, who had moved to North Dakota seven weeks ago, believed the snake had gotten out during the move.

Since the ball python was in the hibernating stage, it only ate once every eight weeks. She told the listing agent that she wasn't sure if the snake was dead or alive.

"Well, poke it with a stick," he told her over the phone. She wasn't about to risk life and limb for that.

REALTORS® wear many hats in the field. Kim wasn't looking to add "snake charmer" to the list of job skills.

SURE-FOOTED

The radiant sun beat down with a fervent ferocity on the first day of Spring. REALTOR® Mindy Kidney was enjoying an unseasonably warm March afternoon when she met a client at a showing.

The lockbox was on the side of the house at this particular property. Mindy walked over fallen leaves, the last remnants of winter, to get to the lockbox. She wasn't paying much attention when she heard a crunch. Something felt really weird under her feet.

Anyone who knows Mindy knows that she is perpetually clad in flip-flops, her signature footwear. There was very little between her soles and whatever cracked underfoot.

That's when she looked down and saw that she had stepped on a dead animal, hidden from view by the leaves. It appeared to be a decaying raccoon.

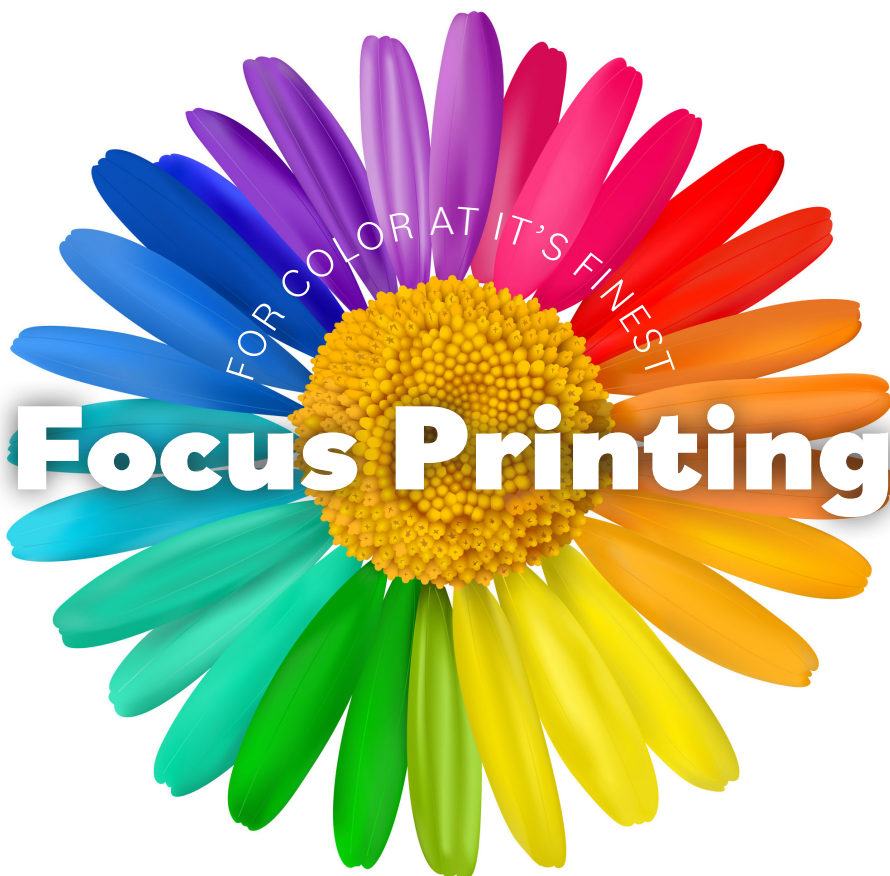
Her client witnessed the comical expression of abject horror flash across her face when she realized what had happened. She tried not to dry-heave from disgust.

Encountering the odd and unusual in the field is all in a day's work when you're working in the trenches of real estate. With a bit of grit and a sense of humor, you will thrive in the wild.

REVIEW

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