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REALTOR Safety Month: Prioritizing the Well-Being of Real Estate Professionals

written by TAWANNA VEROCK

As September unfolds, the real estate community turns its attention to REALTOR Safety Month, an initiative aimed at raising awareness about the safety challenges faced by real estate professionals. The National Association of REALTORS® (NAR) and Texas REALTORS® emphasize the importance of safety in a profession that often places agents in unpredictable and potentially dangerous situations. With alarming statistics highlighting the risks, it is essential for REALTORS® to adopt best practices that prioritize their safety.

Understanding the Risks

According to the NAR's 2022 Member Safety Report, nearly 44% of REALTORS® reported experiencing a situation that made them fear for their safety while on the job. This statistic underscores the urgency of addressing safety concerns within the industry. The report also revealed that 25% of REALTORS® have been involved in a situation where they felt threatened, while 15% reported being the victim of a crime.

In Texas, the situation mirrors national trends. A survey conducted by Texas REALTORS® found that 60% of respondents felt unsafe while showing properties, and nearly 30% reported experiencing harassment or inappropriate behavior from clients. These figures highlight the pressing need for safety training and awareness among real estate professionals in the Lone Star State.

Common Safety Concerns

Several key safety concerns consistently arise for REALTORS®. These include:

- 1. Meeting Clients in Unfamiliar Locations: REALTORS® often meet clients in vacant properties or unfamiliar neighborhoods, exposing them to potential risks, including theft, assault, or other dangerous situations.
- 2. Open Houses: Open houses are a staple in the real estate business, but they can also attract unwanted attention. REALTORS® may find themselves alone with strangers, increasing the risk of confrontation or harm.
- 3. Online Presence: In today's digital age, many REALTORS®



maintain a strong online presence. While this can be beneficial for marketing, it may also expose them to stalkers or unwanted attention. Personal information shared on social media can make REALTORS® vulnerable.

4. Driving: REALTORS® spend a significant amount of time driving to show properties, attend meetings, and conduct business. Distracted driving, road rage incidents, and car thefts are all potential hazards.

Best Practices for REALTOR Safety

To combat these risks, NAR and Texas REAL-TORS® recommend several best practices that can enhance safety for real estate professionals:

- Sources and train best plactices that can be should prioritize safety education and training. NAR offers resources and courses focused on safety awareness, including the "REALTOR® Safety Program," which educates members on identifying potential threats and responding effectively. Texas REALTORS® also provide safety training and resources to empower their members.
- 2. Use Technology Wisely: Leveraging technology can enhance safety for REALTORS®. Apps that allow for location sharing, emergency contact notifications, and virtual tours can reduce the need for in-person meetings. Additionally, using secure lockboxes minimizes the need for REALTORS® to be alone in vacant properties.
- 3. Establish a Safety Plan: Creating a personal safety plan is crucial for REALTORS®. This plan should include strategies for various scenarios, such as checking in with a colleague or friend before and after showing a property, having a predetermined code word for emergencies, and knowing the locations of nearby police stations.

SAFETY MONTH: CONTINUES ON PAGE 11









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It is our pleasure to be a member of ABoR, WCREALTORS, HBA, and have been designated as an honorary member of the WCR Austin Chapter. We are equally proud to be a Major Investor in TREPAC (2019, 2020).

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Unlocking New Horizons: How the 2024 N.A. Global Congress Can Transform Your Business

KENT REDDING 2024 PRESIDENT

REALTOR® Berkshire Hathaway TX Realty



Fall is almost here, and it's shaping up to be an exciting one. I wanted to share some details with you about a groundbreaking event happening in October: the first-ever 2024 North American Global Congress.

If you're a real estate professional, investor, or industry enthusiast, the 2024 North American Global Congress is an event you don't want to miss. Happening from Oct. 1-3 at ABoR Headquarters in Austin, this congress will bring together leaders from the United States, Canada, and Mexico to discuss the future of real estate, explore opportunities for cross-border collaboration, and share innovative solutions for the challenges facing our industry. Here's why attending could be a game-changer for you and your business:

Unprecedented Networking Opportunities

The North American Global Congress is a unique platform to connect with innovators, thought leaders, and professionals from across North America. From the opening reception to the various networking events, you'll have ample opportunities to build relationships that can lead to new partnerships, collaborations, and business ventures. The connections you form here could open doors to opportunities that transcend borders.

Educational Excellence Across a Range of Topics

Whether you're interested in the latest trends in residential and commercial real estate, the impact of technology on the industry, or new market opportunities, there will be sessions tailored to your interests. Expert-led discussions will cover topics such as housing market insights, policy developments, and the latest technological advancements shaping the industry.

Inspiring Community Tours

Get an up-close look at some of Austin's most innovative housing developments, revitalization projects, and sustainable solutions. These community tours are not just about sightseeing—they are about gaining insights into successful projects that you can apply in your own communities. Learn from real-world examples of how creativity and sustainability are transforming urban landscapes.

Expert-Led Sessions with Cross-Border Insights

Gain insights from leading experts on housing markets and policies in Canada, Mexico, and the United States. Special sessions like "State of the Countries" will provide a deep dive into opportunities for cooperation and investment across North America. These expert-led discussions will help you understand how to navigate different markets and what strategies are effective in various regions.

A Preview of Day Two: The 2024 Unlock MLS Central Texas Housing Summit

Take part in Unlock MLS's biggest event of the year: the 2024 Central Texas Housing Summit. If you're involved in the real estate industry or have a vested interest in the future of housing in Central Texas, the 2024 Central Texas Housing Summit is for you. This year's event promises to be the best one yet, with a powerful lineup of speakers and panels providing insights into the region's housing market and beyond.

- Here are five reasons you should attend:
- Gain insight from industry leaders.
- Be one of the first to view the 2024 Central Texas International Homebuyers Report.
- Engage in discussions with local lawmakers and leaders.
- Learn from a panel of local homebuilders.
- Discover housing solutions with Austin City Manager TC Broadnax.

Take Advantage of Strong Networking Opportunities

I hope you'll bookend the Central Texas Housing Summit on Oct. 2 with the North American Global Congress on Oct. 1 and 3, and experience a transformative three days for you and your business! Register now at <u>ABoR.</u> <u>com/GlobalCongress</u>.

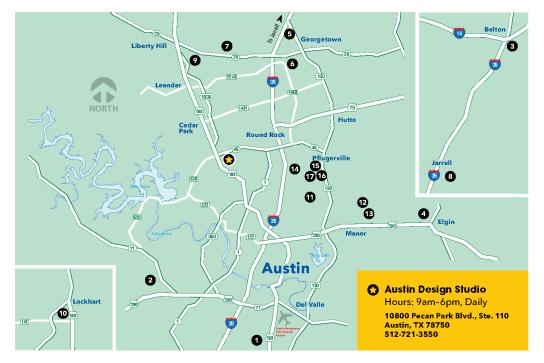
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Renewing Your Membership is Crucial for Success

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As we enter the fall, it's time to think about the many ways your REALTOR® membership fuels your success — and why renewing it is so crucial. Dues season is approaching, and continuing your membership ensures you remain connected to the resources, education, and support you need to thrive in a dynamic market. Here's why renewing matters now more than ever.

The real estate industry is constantly evolving, and keeping your skills sharp is essential. Renewing your membership gives you access to valuable educational opportunities, from continuing education courses to certifications that help you specialize. Investing in your growth ensures that you remain competitive, knowledgeable, and ready for what's next.

Legislation can have a major impact on the real estate market, and it's vital that REALTORS® have a voice in shaping those decisions. Our association advocates on your behalf at the local, state, and national levels, ensuring policies that protect both you and your clients. By renewing your membership, you continue to benefit from this essential advocacy, which safeguards your business and strengthens the profession.

Real estate is a relationship-driven business, and being part of a professional community opens doors. Membership provides opportunities to network with peers, attend industry events, and form partnerships that can lead to referrals and collaborations. Don't miss out on the chance to stay connected to this vibrant network by renewing your membership.

In today's competitive landscape, access to accurate market data can make all the difference. Renewing your membership ensures you

maintain access to critical resources such as housing reports, market forecasts, and other tools that position you as an expert in your field. Having the right information at the right time empowers you to guide clients effectively.

As a REALTOR®, you adhere to a strict Code of Ethics that sets you apart from other real estate professionals. Continuing your membership signifies your ongoing commitment to ethical business practices, helping build trust with clients and the public. Maintaining this standard is essential to enhancing your professional reputation and the overall image of the REALTOR® brand.

The real estate world can be unpredictable, and having a support system in place makes a big difference.

Membership provides access to legal advice, dispute resolution services, and other resources designed to help you navigate challenges. Whether it's managing a difficult transaction or staying compliant with changing regulations, renewing your membership means having reliable support whenever you need it.

Renewing your membership is more than a yearly obligation — it's a vital investment in your career and professional growth. As dues season kicks off, remember the many benefits that come with membership: education, networking, advocacy, and ongoing support. By renewing, you ensure that you stay connected to these essential resources, empowering you to succeed in the months and years ahead."



Welcome. Amber!

Join us in welcoming Amber to our team and experience the difference that expertise and dedication can make in your title insurance needs!

Amber's extensive background spans over two decades in the real estate industry, including new construction, re-sale, and investments. Amber is uniquely positioned to understand the needs of real estate agents and their clients. Whether navigating complex transactions or seeking insightful guidance, Amber is here to support you every step of the way!



Amber McCubbin



Brunch at The Twilight: Blair Little of David Weekley Homes, Claire Dunn of South Austin Homes and Todd Batch



ABoR Cheers to TREPAC: **Romeo Manzanilla** of Christie's Intl. Real Estate, **Amy Kobza** of Better Life Realty and **Dave Kapur** of All City Real Estate

KB Home Networking Hour: **David Garcia** of The Elite Group and **James Hilfiker** of KB Home







ABoR Diversity Summit: ABoR Diversity Committee and Alexia Smokler of NAR, fourth from left





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SAFETY MONTH: CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

- 4. Trust Your Instincts: Trusting one's instincts is vital in the real estate profession. If a situation feels uncomfortable or unsafe, REALTORS® should remove themselves from that environment. It is essential to call for help if they feel threatened.
- 5. Stay Aware of Surroundings: Maintaining situational awareness can help REALTORS® identify potential threats before they escalate. This includes being mindful of who is present during showings and being aware of exits and escape routes.
- 6. Use a Buddy System: Whenever possible, REAL-TORS® should consider working with a partner, especially during open houses or property showings. Having another person present can deter potential threats and provide support in case of an emergency.

The Role of Associations

Professional associations play a pivotal role in promoting safety within the real estate industry. NAR and Texas REAL-TORS® have made significant strides in raising awareness and providing resources for their members. The NAR's "Safety Matters" campaign is designed to educate REALTORS® about safety issues and encourage them to adopt safe practices in their daily routines.

In Texas, the Texas REALTORS® organization emphasizes safety through its educational programs and resources. By providing safety training and materials, they empower REAL-TORS® to take proactive measures in safeguarding themselves while conducting business.

Real Stories of REALTOR Safety

Real-life experiences can often underscore the importance of safety measures. In one instance, a REALTOR® in Texas was showing a property when a client became aggressive and threatening. Thanks to a safety plan that included a check-in protocol with a colleague, the REALTOR® was able to alert authorities and safely exit the situation.

Another REALTOR® shared how utilizing technology, such as a location-sharing app, allowed her to keep her family informed during a late-night showing. This simple precaution provided peace of mind and an added layer of safety.

These stories highlight the need for REALTORS® to be proactive in their safety measures and to share their experiences with colleagues to foster a culture of safety within the industry.

As REALTOR Safety Month unfolds, it serves as a reminder for real estate professionals to prioritize their safety in an often unpredictable profession. The statistics from NAR and Texas REALTORS® highlight the need for increased awareness and proactive measures to mitigate risks. By educating themselves, utilizing technology, and establishing safety protocols, REALTORS® can create a safer working environment for themselves and their clients.

In a profession where personal safety can be compromised, it is essential for REALTORS® to remain vigilant and proactive. The commitment to safety is not just about protecting oneself; it is also about fostering trust and security within the communities they serve. As the real estate industry continues to evolve, so too must the strategies for ensuring the safety of those who work within it. This September, let's make a concerted effort to raise awareness and prioritize safety in real estate.

By working together, REALTORS® can cultivate a safer environment that not only protects their well-being but also enhances the trust and confidence of their clients.



Ivan Garcia, Damien Martinez, Kristy Hollis and Rosalinda Larson, all of SouthStar Bank





WCR Reels in Real Estate: Cariann Gillmore, Janea Merriewether and Shauna Goodwin, all of Capital Title of Texas





Continuing Education: Key to Mastering Austin's Dynamic Real Estate Market

SONIA GUARDADO 2024 TEXAS PRESIDENT



REALTOR® Magnolia Realty

The real estate market in Austin is dynamic. The city's rapid growth, fueled by the tech industry and an influx of people seeking a better quality of life, presents unique challenges for agents. The tools, regulations, and market conditions that worked even a few years ago may no longer be relevant today. As the environment changes, so must the strategies and knowledge of those working within it. This is why continuing education isn't just important — it's essential.

At the heart of any profession, including real estate, lies the concept of mastery. Mastery is not achieved by reaching a plateau and resting there, content with one's knowledge. Mastery is an ongoing journey without a clear end. The moment an agent believes they've "learned enough" is the moment they begin to fall behind. Real estate agents who commit to continuing education understand that staying still is, in fact, moving backward. The market never stops evolving. The successful agent must be ready to adapt, whether it's understanding the latest technologies, new legal frameworks, or emerging market trends. Continuing education equips agents with the latest insights, ensuring they remain competitive and relevant in an industry where relevance can make or break a career.

Take, for example, the increasing importance of technology in real estate. Digital tools like virtual tours, data analytics, and online marketing strategies are no longer optional — they are essential. The agents who master these tools will dominate the market, while those who resist them will inevitably fall behind. Continuing education bridges the gap between yesterday's practices and tomorrow's opportunities.

Continuing education ensures that an agent can operate with the highest level of competence. It allows agents to stay informed about changes in the law, which is particularly important in a regulatory landscape that is constantly shifting. For example, fair housing laws and the rules surrounding zoning and development can change with little notice, especially in a rapidly growing city like Austin. An agent unaware of these changes could unintentionally violate the law or give bad advice to a client, leading to disastrous consequences. In this sense, continuing education is not just about knowledge — it's about



Carlos Gaztambide Jr. and Angelica Leon James of Priority Settlement Group of Texas ethics. When you advise a client, it's about ensuring you do so from a place of competence and integrity. Clients trust real estate agents to act in their best interests, and part of that trust is the expectation that their agent is fully informed. Education is how you live up to that expectation.

Real estate is an industry where knowledge and expertise directly impact your ability to generate leads, close deals, and build a reputation. Continuing education can give you the edge to differentiate yourself from competitors. Whether it's obtaining specialized certifications, staying current on market trends, or mastering new technologies, agents who continually expand their knowledge base will be the ones who thrive in a competitive market.

In furthering RRC's commitment to providing exemplary continuing education, I invite you to join us for one of our three courses in October to expand your knowledge base and network. All courses are available in

KB Home Networking Hour: Ramon Valeriano of LPT Realty and

Marianne Marvin of Realty Texas

person and virtually, and they are open to members and nonmembers alike. On Oct. 2 in San Antonio, we'll feature CRS Instructor Kim Knapp, who will offer eight hours of CE credit for "0-60 Sales in a Year & Beyond," with a particular focus on navigating the new NAR settlement requirements. On Oct. 7, join us for two four-hour CE credit Tyler-based classes with CRS Instructor Addie Owens: "Five Steps to Success in Any Market" and "Navigating Divorcing Clients." On Oct. 16 in Houston, I'll be joined by Texas RRC Past President Nicholas Chambers for "Three Secret Strategies to Rock the New Real Estate Marketplace," offering two hours of CE credit.

Ultimately, continuing education is about more than just meeting licensing requirements or staying competitive. It's about mastery. It's about integrity. And it's about providing the best possible service to clients who trust you to guide them through life's most significant financial decisions."





ABoR Diversity Summit: Kindra Zepeda of Independence Title and Christine Chau of FirstHand Properties

Advertiser Featured Article

Randolph Texas Development: The Ultimate Steward of the Land

BY RACHEL ARTERBERRY

Randolph Texas Development is more than a builder or developer — this family-oriented business is proud to be a steward of the land.

In recent years, Texas has seen a massive economic boom. With the economic benefits offered by the state, companies have been flocking to Texas, including Samsung, Facebook, and Apple. According to Grant Rollo, vice president of Randolph Texas Development (RTX), "Austin has always been a little tech hub. With no state income tax, Texas offers the most diverse opportunities in the union for families and companies to make their decision to be in control of their own destiny." As more families come to Texas looking for housing and good education for their children, "I don't see the boom slowing down at all," continues Rollo.

Regarding RTX's role in the housing market, it remains focused on Lariat, with approximately 200 residents currently living in the Lariat community and another 547 lots to be completed by February 2025. The company has also recently acquired 600 acres in Bertram, Texas, about five minutes west of Liberty Hill. This new development will feature a mix of half-acre, one-acre, and standard master-planned communities, with the first homes scheduled for delivery in January 2026. Another property just outside of Leander, currently in the entitlement phase, will likely see groundbreaking in May 2025, with one-acre lots planned for the development.

These developing housing communities offer a range of home sizes, providing a variety of product types. Whether someone is looking to downsize, buy their first home, or expand with a growing family, RTX offers something for everyone right in their neighborhood.

For Randy, Grant, and Will of

Randolph Texas Development, the motivation goes beyond acquiring land or creating communities. Their vision is deeply rooted in their respect for the land, the environment, and its protection for future generations. They aim to balance the growth of the housing market with mindfulness of the increasing strain on Texas' natural beauty, landscape, and resources.

Of course, new groups of builders and developers are constantly looking to break into the market. However, Rollo and the RTX team use an outside-the-box approach to land development that exceeds simply meeting housing demand. "It is about our problem-solving ability. As a small company, we have the flexibility to try something new, do something different, and find sources for our own utilities beyond the traditional route," Rollo explains. "I spend the bulk of my time lately studying water. Where's the water coming from? What quality is it? How much can you get? How do you design a community to foster and encourage your residents to be water-conscious? Is it a metal roof with a rainwater collection system tied to irrigation? Is it xeriscape yards? Is it smaller footprints? At RTX, we evaluate all those options to ultimately create a self-sufficient benefit to the surrounding community, rather than a strain on a major municipal system."

"The world is moving toward more climate-sustainable energy efficiency. One of our foundations is being a steward of the land

and keeping it as native as we can for master-planned communities to capture the existing topography and really capitalize on how beautiful the Texas Hill Country is. We put a premium on maintaining the natural qualities of any project we do. When you're able to capture the natural beauty of a community, you foster community involvement and create a sense of personal responsibility," Rollo continues.

To help meet the growing demand

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Grant Rollo Vice President

ronment in focus, RTX has expanded its team. What was once a small office of three just a year ago has now grown to include three additional team members, including a controller, another project manager, and an administrative assistant. This growth allows for a more streamlined approach and supports the continued expansion of the company. RTX has also moved its administrative office closer to the city to strengthen relationships with clients and government entities, increasing its involvement in the community and the broader development landscape in the Austin area. Additionally, RTX has partnered with other groups, serving as project development managers to build strong relationships and continue their involvement

With their mission in mind, Rollo is excited about the opportunities ahead, many of which are often overlooked by other developers. They plan to continue growing, innovating, and pioneering in

For additional information or to partner with Randolph Texas Development, please contact RTX at info@randolphtexas.com.



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KB Home Networking Hour: Darrell Reiley of Austin Preferred Properties and Jeffrey Rentz of Keller

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ABoR Diversity Summit: ABoR President Kent Redding of

> AMBA Monthly Luncheon: Kristin Carroll, Margie Burciaga and Brian Reese



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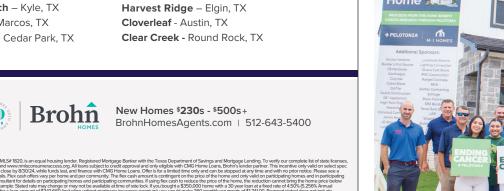
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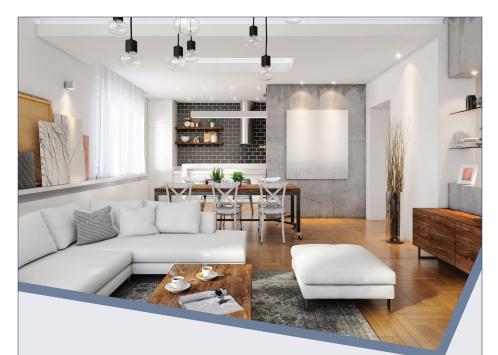
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SCAN FOR OFFICE LOCATIONS





Due to the recent NAR Settlement Changes, be sure

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