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Written by RIKI MARKOWITZ / Contributing Writer

How Does The Upcoming Holiday Season Impacts Market Activity?

If you follow market trends for residential real estate in Central Texas, then you know that the busiest time of the year for REALTORS is from May through September. According to reports published by Texas A&M University Texas Real Estate Research Center, the summer months are by far the most popular time for buyers and sellers in the Austin-Round Rock area, with late spring and early fall trailing closely behind.

There's nothing really surprising about these trends, especially if you're the one out there pounding the sidewalk and showing properties. Then you know exactly when you're putting the most mileage on your vehicle. What might be surprising, though, is that December — a notoriously busy time of the year for shoppers, travelers and holiday revelers — is also a pretty serious time of the year for house-hunters.

A lot of brokers and agents notice that their schedules tend to pick up after the start of the new year when celebrations are in the rear-view mirror. After all, says Lorrie Kennedy, the 2022 president of Women's Council of REALTORS, Austin Network, during Thanksgiving and Christmastime, many clients have family in town and they

[holiday selling continues on page 12]



Williamson County Association of REALTORS
2022 INSTALLATION & AWARDS

Themed "Black Tie"
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| December 2022 | 1020 Vista View Dr 2401 | 2-A | 1615 | 3 Bed / 2.5 Bath | \$429,900 |
| December 2022 | 1020 Vista View Dr 2402 | 2-A | 1615 | 3 Bed / 2.5 Bath | \$429,900 |
| November 2022 | 1020 Vista View Dr 2501 | 2-C | 1615 | 3 Bed / 2.5 Bath | \$429,900 |
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Five Actions to Thrive in a Shifting Market



CORD SHIFLET
2022 PRESIDENT

If like me, you've been in this business for a long time, you know that working in real estate is a marathon, not a sprint. And while sometimes it can feel like you are in a race to the finish line, your fundamental business practices must remain consistent to ensure you can stay afloat and thrive in any given market at any given time. Ensuring that your business is strong enough to get you through tough times to capitalize on the good times is key to a long career as a REALTOR®.

Here are five tried-and-true business practices that successful real estate professionals do every day to keep their businesses thriving in any market condition.

Give Back

When you find yourself with more time on your hands, it's time to give back. Servitude is a business practice that comes naturally to REALTORS®, who serve their clients every day. Whether it's deepening your current charitable relationships or finding new opportunities to serve in your community, volunteering allows you to network with new people, give back and make an impact.

Bring your colleagues and team into the mix and use it as a team building exercise to generate goodwill internally and in your community. The ABoR Foundation is a great place to start. Whether serving as a Foundation Ambassador or participating in any of our volunteer opportunities throughout the year, there are plenty of ways to make a difference in your community and your business.



2023 Design Trends with Nikki Watson: **Tina Blanton** of Straight Realty, **Julie Waidelich** of Nest Properties and **Crystal Parker** of Straight Realty

Learn Something New

Knowledge is power, and now is a great time to get back into the classroom and expand your value proposition. Stop procrastinating on that designation or CE course you've been meaning to take. Education opens doors to creativity, new ideas and other professionals whom you can learn from. Just one aha moment or tangible takeaway from a class can put a new tool in the toolbox for a sale or successful business strategy.

From ABoR Global meetings, to legal updates, to MLS best practices, ABoR offers many convenient tools for you to pursue professional development opportunities. You can always access great education through ABoR On-Air or even recorded programming like our recent Market Shift Conversations series. If you missed one or both events, you can still download the recordings at ABoR.com/MarketShift.

Revisit Your Business Plan

Let's be honest. You wrote your business plan long ago, and it has been sitting on the sidelines ever since. It's time to plug back into it. Your business plan may contain a marketing strategy that you were too busy to dive into when the market was flaming hot. Now that you have some breathing room, it is time to hold yourself accountable for what you said you would do. Adjust as needed and rededicate yourself to your goals.

Mind Your Pennies

Look at your finances and see if there are ways you can cut expenses. Unnecessary subscriptions, office supplies and fees, and marketing bells and whistles can add up quickly. As a business owner, it's a best practice to consistently monitor for needless spending and ensure you're running a lean operation. Consider connecting with a professional CPA who can ensure you are adequately managing your taxes, find ways to write off expenses and help you understand your profit and loss margins. And of course, don't forget about an incredibly helpful member benefit, NAR's Center for Financial Wellness, which provides you with educational materials and resources for business planning and wealth building.

Do Money-Making Activities

How many lead-generating activities did you do this week? The 25-15-5 Rule is a great business practice: 25 touches per week (such as social media messages, pop bys, texts and handwritten cards in the mail), 15 calls per week, and a goal of setting five appointments per week.

In short, when the market shifts, it's time to double down on your career. Dig deep into time management best practices, build your business, update processes and procedures and refine your skill set. Reignite your sphere of influence and ensure you are deliberately reaching out to your client database.

ABoR Annual Meeting, November 30

We've had a very successful and productive year, accomplishing all of the major goals we set for the association and MLS. Join me as we celebrate and highlight our successes at the ABoR Annual Meeting on Thursday, Nov. 30. Our CEO, Emily Chenevert, and I will issue the 2023 State of the Association and share what you can expect from the marketplace in 2023. And you don't want to miss our keynote speakers, NAR economist Dr. Jessica Lautz and Austin Mayoral Candidate Kirk Watson, who will give us insight into the 2023 Central Texas housing market and proposed housing solutions on the table. It's going to be a great lineup, and you can register for the event on ABoR.com/Events. I hope to see you there.

May your holidays be merry and bright!

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New Year, New Business! Brand Yourself as the Expert in your Local Market



**MICHELE
SHERWOOD**
2022 PRESIDENT

Here at WCREALTORS, we take pride in our county, and work hard to make it the right place to live every day! With so much change going on in Williamson County, you might find yourself asking “how can I brand myself as the local real estate expert in my community?”

The first step in getting familiar with your local community is to get involved! Volunteering on your board, supporting and attending functions put on by the community's leaders, or simply staying on top of the news by reading the local newspaper are all effective ways to get involved and plug into your community. There are Facebook groups that start at the county level, scaling down to the city, and even the neighborhood level. These pages are geared to promote local events, new businesses, construction updates and other community news. These are great to share on your Facebook page or in your newsletter. An easy tool to put in your REALTOR® Toolbox.

It is imperative to network! Getting to know your local real estate pros is essential for the success of your business. The ease of having a go-to roofer, inspector, painter, landscaper, title company, mortgage company, etc. in your back pocket makes you look like a pro to your clients. Showing that you mean business! Not to mention that knowing reliable partners helps to keep the entire real estate process smooth for both you and your clients. Make sure to have your list with multiple companies, names and contact information so that you can be the go-to expert for all things real estate related. We have an amazing group of business partners here at WCREALTORS, and the list is growing every day. Come see how easy it is to work with one of them today.

REALTOR® branding is a topic that can be discussed from different perspectives, anytime and anywhere. There are multiple ways to brand ourselves and our business; social media, email, logos, taglines, pop-bys, promotional materials, cars, you name it — there's a way to brand it.

Knowing the ins and outs of your community is essential to being the best REALTOR® you can be. Nothing gains the confidence of your clients like being knowledgeable about a wide array of specifics about the location that they are seeking.

Knowing the local statistics of the community you serve is essential. Every month WCREALTORS releases market statistics that are posted on our Facebook page and website. Month by month, especially with this market shift, local real estate around us is changing. Our market statistics provide data such as number of closings, median sales price, price per square foot, and more for Williamson County and several other cities and zip codes within the county. If you need data related to a specific zip code or time frame, we can help.

Make sure to celebrate your clients. Nothing speaks volumes about your status as the local real estate expert more than sharing a heartwarming story of your clients' journey to homeownership. Make sure to update your email signature, business cards and all other marketing collateral with everything that you've done in your lifetime as a REALTOR®. These accomplishments don't just have to be a list of your designations. Serving at the local level within your association by volunteering on a committee, investing in TREPAC and attending events are all effective ways to further plug yourself in. You might just find yourself earning an award such as rookie or REALTOR® of the year, or even a top producer award.

The events committee at WCREALTORS is dedicated to bringing a wide array of fun and educational programming to help you become a local real estate expert. From bus tours to city updates, our events help our members to be the first to know about new developments in our area. Our professional development committee also works behind the scenes to bring classes involving social media marketing, Canva workshops and more.

Last but not least, make sure that you have a subscription to CTXMLS in your toolbox. With just over 7.5k subscribers, spanning over 17 counties, you can input your listings into the local MLS that is syndicated to over 4,500 consumer websites across the country. Just think about that for a minute — literally thousands of people will see your listing in a matter of minutes.

We all know real estate is local. What happens in Williamson County is not necessarily what is happening in neighboring counties. By becoming engaged with your local community and REALTOR® association and sharing your knowledge with your clients, you will become — and continue to be — the go-to real estate expert. We are Williamson County. We are just North of Weird, and we are working to make our members local experts every day.



Realty Texas Trunk or Treat: **Liesa Ormsbee** and **Miguel Stapleton**, both of Realty Texas



HCCM Golf Tournament: **Shannon Maynard** and **Sherri Berry**, both of Integrity Land Title



hey there!

I'm Nicole.

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RealtyLine is a proud member of ABoR, WCREALTORS, HBA and an honorary member of WCR Austin Chapter. We are equally proud to be a Major Investor in TREPAC (2019, 2020).

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Women's Council of REALTORS' Bras for a Cause: Haley Akchurin



Drees at Clearwater Ranch: Wade Lindstrom of Austin City Living, Chris Tinnell of Compass Realty, Derrick Jones of Austin City Living and Mike Tvinnereim of Drees Custom Homes

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Collin Chunta joins Austin Title with over 20 years of experience in the title industry. Collin is a native Texan and graduate from the University of Texas at Austin with a degree in Corporate Communications.

Collin prides himself on warm, professional, and timely communication. His years of experience provides clients with a depth and breadth of expertise that helps make even the most difficult transactions seem simple. His closing motto of "no surprises" ensures that all parties to a transaction feel valued and in the loop.

Collin is a resident of Allandale with his two sons, eight-year-old Barrett and three-year-old Brodie, and their Goldendoodle Toby. They can be found often at Northwest Little League games and Beverly Sheffield Northwest Park. Collin enjoys staying active and exploring the ever-growing Austin food and music scene.

Welcome To the Team Collin!

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Women's Council Bras for a Cause: Julie Mikeska, Lori Williams of Classic Realty, Kriston Wood of Keller Williams Realty and Tammy Marrow



HBA Golf Tournament: Hayden Doggett, Matt Podsednik, Stan Juszcak and Mark Albers



Doma Title Thrive for Five: Sal Casiano, Roxy Cuneo of Q Realty, Cesar Casiano of Keller Williams Realty and Laura Neff



SouthStar Bank Real Estate Summit: Tommy Holmes and Damien Martinez of SouthStar Bank

Photo Credit: Austin Board of REALTORS

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Welcome to our newest Texas team members!



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Jr. Escrow Officer
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SHERRI BERRY
Branch Manager /
Escrow Officer

Integrity Land Title

interview by Rachel Arterberry

Every closing at Integrity Land Title in Cedar Park, Texas, is accompanied by experience, reliability and integrity. Serving the Dallas-Fort Worth and now Cedar Park areas, Sherri Berry and the team in the Cedar Park office take pride in getting to know their clients and real estate agents to ensure that every transaction runs smoothly. Sherri has been a branch manager and escrow officer for more than thirty-five years. What does that mean to Sherri? As she explains, “Customer service is everything! It is not how many closings you do every year; it is how satisfied clients are with the service you provide that will turn into referrals.”

As a title professional, Sherri admits that she spoils each and every one of her real estate partners. From inviting them to events, to working late in order to meet a deadline, to answering late-night texts, Sherri takes her role and responsibilities seriously in this always-changing process, knowing that paying attention to the details can make all the difference. Sherri believes in the value of weekends with family but understands and appreciates how much of the real estate industry and transactions occur during the weekend. She never lets her agents down, making herself available to them when they need her in a pinch and following through on every promise. She believes Integrity Land Title is more than just a title company. It's about personal integrity and maintaining customer service that real estate agents, buyers, and sellers can rely on.

“Customer service is everything! It is not how many closings you do every year; it is how satisfied clients are with the service you provide that will turn into referrals.”

Integrity Land Title, a boutique company with empowered and passionate team members, has created this status for itself, offering more than just excellent service. The team of Escrow Officers and Administrative Staff believe in building community, too. Whether that means joining local organizations like the Chamber of Commerce, supporting local events, providing educational opportunities, or creating sourcing materials for agents, Integrity Land Title is out there representing the core values of the organization, doing everything with integrity!

Sherri believes that, “In life, being a person of integrity carries a long way, no matter what business or industry you are in.” Loyalty, reliability, honesty, and trust are the pillars that support superior customer service, and without them the house of cards will simply crumble. Sherri and the team at Integrity Land Title have built a reputation for being a loyal and trusted partner. They have provided title services to thousands of customers and agents. To learn more about Integrity Land Title's impeccable service, reach out at <https://www.integritylt.com/contact/>.



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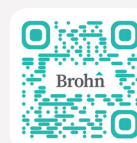
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[holiday selling continued from front page]

don't want to disrupt the festivities by putting their home on the market."

While it's true that inventory is low this time of the year, closings are not.

The past two years, more than 3,600 homes sold in December, while, at the same time, inventory held steady at 0.6. But in February, a period when sellers have more time to prep their homes for the market and buyers have more time to see properties, far fewer sales have been recorded. Since 2020, between 2,300 to 2,600 homes sold this time of the year. They tick up again in March — between 3,200 to 3,500 closes were recorded over the same period — but were still lower than during the holiday maelstrom.

The reason we went through all of that data was just to say, as the Christmas season is approaching, now is not the time to slow down.

Potential buyers in December can be more serious than buyers at other times of the year, says Debbie Vallone-Homeier, 2022 Four Rivers Board president. "In my experience, a lot of people have family or friends visiting, which makes it the perfect time to look for property if they're interested in buying here." Kennedy and Homeier both say this is when they see a lot of grandparents and empty nesters who want to move closer to adult children and friends that have previously retired in Central Texas.

The majority of sellers do wait to put their homes on the market until after the holiday season passes. Like we said earlier, trend reports show that inventory is lower in December. But that's good news for clients who are eager to sell property ASAP because this time of year, say Kennedy and Homeier, a good amount of people are relocating here for their career. If they're determined to buy rather than rent, their circumstances don't afford them the same flexibility that other buyers have.

Of course, families moving to Austin-Round Rock, and even Hill Country, could take their time and lease while they shop for a new home. According to Kennedy, she finds that clients moving from other areas of the country have been willing to lease while

they get familiar with the area and determine what neighborhoods they prefer. On the other hand, the past year or two that option has become increasingly less attractive, especially for first-time homebuyers. In Austin, the rental market has seen some of the steepest increases in the country. Homeier, owner/broker at Val-lone Real Estate in Blanco, says that in her experience, "Most folks want to buy something if possible because rents are outrageous. Plus, finding a rental is hard, too." Not only that, but committing to a one-year lease will eat into the money buyers stashed away for a down payment.

Kennedy, broker/owner at Classic Realty in Round Rock, says that earlier in her career, when she was a single mom, working during the holidays was beneficial. "I was hungry and ready all the time." For those just starting their real estate career, she suggests taking advantage of the holiday rush. "We can sell just as much in November and December compared to other busy times of the year," she says.

To get ready for the holiday season, and to let clients know she'll be in town, Kennedy says she hits her social media platforms. "I engage with people, remind them that I'm here and I'll even suggest making a donation to charity. I tend to go for the soft touch." Even long before the Thanksgiving and Christmas season arrives, Kennedy sends handwritten holiday cards to her entire database.

We'd be remiss not to mention that this is a unique year for Central Texas REALTORS. Between inflation and higher mortgage rates, it's hard to predict what the market will be like in a few weeks. "We're suffering from whiplash right now," admits Kennedy. If we do have a real-estate slowdown this holiday season, Homeier says there are advantages. "It's the perfect time to figure out your game plan and marketing strategy for the upcoming year." She recommends that brokers and agents finalize their mailers, pick out functions to attend over the winter and spring months, and seriously consider joining professional associations and volunteering for committee assignments. These are great ways to build-up a promising career in real estate.



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Changing of the Guard



LORRIE KENNEDY
2022 PRESIDENT

After joining the Women's Council of REALTORS, Austin Network in 2019, Aaron Lee, the incoming president, invited me to take on the role of 2020 Secretary (that title is now 1st Vice President). Despite my hesitation, he replied, "It's the easiest position on the Board; you'll simply be taking notes." We had no idea what 2020 would bring, but that year showed me what an invaluable organization this is. A national network of support and excellent education were introduced to me just in time for the pandemic. The 2020 Zoom sessions and classes helped me develop into a stronger instructor and leader. As a result, my goals have soared!

In 2021, I continued to serve on the Board, with no real hope of relief from the pandemic. By the end of the first quarter, each member of the board had suffered a tragedy. In an instant, we faced the prospect of losing our affiliation with the Network. This affiliation had carried me not only through the most challenging time of my career, but had also lifted me higher than I could have imagined or anticipated.

In my first conversation with our District Vice President and the State President, I promised to keep the Austin Network intact. That meant finding someone with the experience and contacts to reassemble the Board. By May 2021, I had assumed the role of Austin Network President. Honestly, I was unprepared and had a lot to learn, but I was committed to getting things done. People were brought into my path at every step. In 2022, the skeleton 2021 Board was expanded into a full executive board with multiple committee chairs and project team leaders! While evaluating and strengthening our support systems and partnerships with other real estate organizations, such as LGBTQ+ Alliance and Austin Young Real Estate Professionals (AYREP), we have experienced consistent growth.

In watching the people around me develop into amazing leaders and businesspeople has been a rewarding experience for me. Twenty months ago, I couldn't have imagined how strong this network would be today. These people made it happen. They have recognized leadership skills in others and assembled a strong leadership team for 2023. I am extremely proud of the

work that has been accomplished and wish to publicly recognize the individuals and teams who have contributed to its success.

Membership Director

It is my pleasure to introduce you to Kyle Taylor, REALTOR at Classic Realty. After becoming a member at the end of 2021, he accepted the role of Membership Director for 2022. As a result of his efforts, we now have very strong systems for connecting with and providing value to our members. Thanks to his persistence and passion, we've doubled our membership this year. Today, we are a mega network, with more than 100 members.

Events Director

Towards the end of 2021, Chris Rodriguez, a REALTOR at EXP, approached me with the offer to serve as our Events Director. He's made all our events successful this year and kept us on track, even filling in a couple of blanks for us. Without him and his expertise, my vision of hosting a PMN class would not have happened.

Treasurer

Ashley Long, partnership representative at LendFriend, was barely a member when she stepped up to serve as our treasurer. She even agreed to be a beta tester for National's new finance system. She keeps us and our money on track!

First Vice President

Carissa Chandler, a REALTOR with Austin Summit Group, has served as my Secretary now officially the First Vice President. This position is a bit more complex than "just taking notes"... she has definitely embraced the position, even organizing our records, while also keeping minutes, staying on top of our bylaws, and reporting to the state.

2023 President-elect

This year, Kacey Taylor, REALTOR at All City with the Choose Charlie Team, has been my right hand. There have been so many times that she picked up the slack when I didn't have the bandwidth. It has truly been my greatest honor to watch her grow into the leader she is today! My wish is that she is blessed with this much support in 2023!

It is my sincere pleasure to extend my deepest gratitude to each of these leaders. This is because they have contributed to making this year one of growth and treasured memories. Today, I am awed by the enthusiasm of the incoming board. The Women's Council of REALTORS, Austin Network is entrusted to the most capable and forward-thinking leaders possible.



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Berkshire Hathaway Quarterly Meeting: **Allan Hanson** of Berkshire Hathaway Texas Realty



AmeriFirst Financial Intro to Divorce Real Estate Class: **Sandy McIlree** of AmeriFirst Financial; **Nicole Feliciano** and **Michael Schwartz**, both of Priority Settlement Group



REALTOR Videos at Santa Rita Ranch: **Gay Puckett** of JB Goodwin REALTORS



Doma Title's Thrive for Five: **Aaron Lee** of Doma Title and **Kirk Moore** of Realty Texas



Design Trends with Integrity Title and Nikki Watson: **Shannon Maynard**, **Sherri Berry**, both of Integrity Land Title; **Nikki Watson** and **Litza Gonzales** of Integrity Land Title



Berkshire Hathaway Quarterly Meeting: **Jay Warren** and **Dede Jenkins**, both of Berkshire Hathaway Texas Realty

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| Dec/Jan | 113-B Pinnacle Lane | Barton A | 2 | 1594 | 3 Bed / 2.5 Bath | \$386,808 |
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| Dec/Jan | 117-B Pinnacle Lane | Live Oak A | 2 | 1524 | 3 Bed / 2.5 Bath | \$377,308 |
| Dec/Jan | 135-A Pinnacle Lane | Live Oak B | 2 | 1524 | 3 Bed / 2.5 Bath | \$377,308 |
| Dec/Jan | 135-B Pinnacle Lane | Live Oak B | 2 | 1524 | 3 Bed / 2.5 Bath | \$377,308 |
| Spring 2023 | 115-A Pinnacle Lane | Negley A | 2 | 1460 | 3 Bed / 2.5 Bath | TBD |
| Spring 2023 | 115-B Pinnacle Lane | Negley A | 2 | 1460 | 3 Bed / 2.5 Bath | TBD |
| SINGLE-FAMILY | | | | | | |
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| Nov | 203 Pinnacle Lane | Mueller B | 1 | 1570 | 3 Bed / 2 Bath | \$405,000 SOLD |
| Nov | 211 Pinnacle Lane | Lady Bird A | 2 | 2018 | 3 Bed / 2.5 Bath | \$462,500 |
| Dec/Jan | 213 Pinnacle Lane | Canyon A | 2 | 1921 | 4 Bed / 3 Bath | \$440,725 |
| Dec/Jan | 217 Pinnacle Lane | Lady Bird B | 2 | 2018 | 3 Bed / 2.5 Bath | \$462,500 |
| Dec/Jan | 219 Pinnacle Lane | Canyon B | 2 | 1921 | 4 Bed / 3 Bath | \$440,725 |
| Dec/Jan | 221 Pinnacle Lane | Lady Bird A | 2 | 2018 | 3 Bed / 2.5 Bath | \$462,500 |
| Spring 2023 | 121 Pinnacle Lane | Lady Bird A | 2 | 2018 | 3 Bed / 2.5 Bath | \$462,500 |
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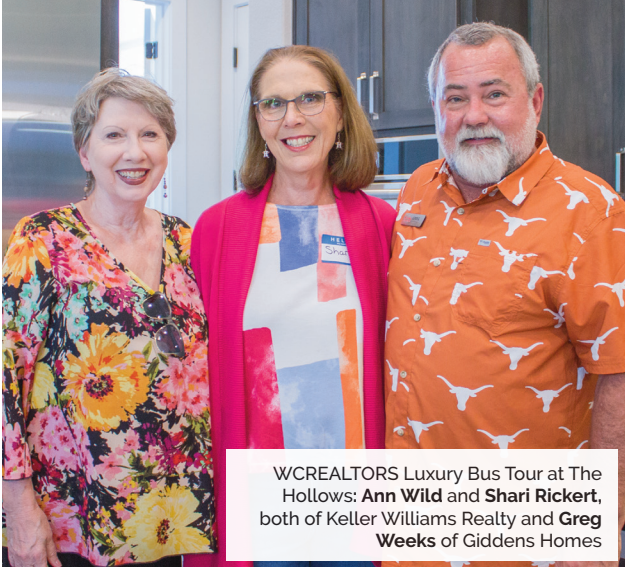
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WCREALTORS Luxury Bus Tour at The Hollows: **Ann Wild** and **Shari Rickert**, both of Keller Williams Realty and **Greg Weeks** of Giddens Homes



HBA Golf Tournament: **Mike Watson**, **Colin Durrett** and **Steven Tennis**



SouthStar Bank Real Estate Summit: **Mark Kelly**, **Jim Trungale** and **Shirley Sears**, all of SouthStar Bank



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