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## Can Audience Targeting Equate to Discrimination?

written by **RIKI MARKOWITZ**

Since the rise of social media, REALTORS across the country have come to the realization that to run a successful real estate business, their skills can't be limited to just home sales. To be competitive, agents must be able to design and run advertising listings, marketing campaigns and generate leads.

We can all agree that social media platforms and search engines were practically designed for these purposes. Billions of potential homebuyers and sellers are already online, hours upon hours, every day. Agents simply have to make sure their websites and listings are easy to find and that their ads reach as many qualified leads as possible. But there's a catch. One thing ad management networks do best is collect information on users and then use that data to optimize advertising and marketing outreach. So while technology has been a boon for lead generation, it also managed to set the real estate industry back several decades. You see, audience targeting can lead inadvertently to Fair Housing Act (FHA) violations.

According to the National Association of REALTORS' Real Estate in a Digital Age 2019 Report, 47 percent of agents said they use social media to promote listings and for generating high quality leads. For anyone who uses sites like (but not limited to) Facebook, Instagram and the Google Display Network, you need to know about audience targeting and how easy it is to accidentally cross the line into discriminatory advertising.

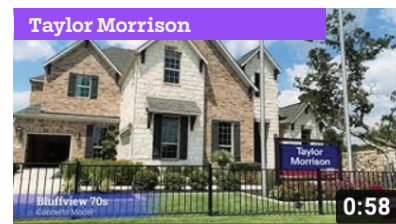
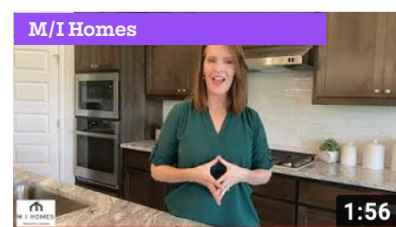
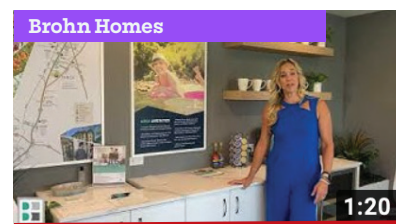
Just to show how common this problem has been, Google had to remove more than two billion ads in 2018, many of which violated the company's policies, such as discriminating against groups

based on race, age and religious beliefs. So there's a good chance that real estate professionals who used any one of the big ad manager platforms to run ads and listings prior to 2019 violated antidiscrimination laws. That's because those networks allowed — and even encouraged — users to create audience profiles. So an agent could select who sees a listing based on extremely personal traits, such as income range, marital status or even what type of food a person eats. The practice essentially deprived certain groups from seeing listings. That's problematic for anyone who doesn't want to violate the FHA, which prohibits discrimination based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status and disability.

Audience targeting tools have been removed from most real estate advertising platforms. These days, social media companies and ad manager networks are very careful about their sites being used as a vehicle for discrimination. In part, it's because the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) slapped one social media platform with a lawsuit for violating the FHA and the federal agency also admitted to investigating other tech giants for doing the same. The suit, announced in March 2019, accused Facebook and its subsidiary Instagram of "show[ing] targeted ads to users" and "encouraging, enabling and causing housing discrimination" across their networks. In a statement, HUD secretary Ben Carson said, "Facebook is discriminating against people based upon who they are and where they live. Using a computer to limit a person's housing choices can be just as discriminatory as slamming a door in someone's face."

Within months, Facebook created a new real

[Audience Targeting continues on page 20]



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# Keeping Safety Top-of-Mind

REALTOR® Safety is an ever-expanding topic. As a REALTOR®, you're faced with potentially risky situations every day. Meeting new clients, showing homes and even marketing online can pose risks to your person or your business.

Keeping safety foremost year-round and in everything you do can mean the difference between life and death. While it's tempting to believe that an attack would never happen to you, safety-related incidents are more common than you may think. According to the 2020 NAR Member Safety Report, in the last year:

- Nearly one in four REALTORS® (23 percent) have experienced a situation that made them fear for their personal safety or safety of their personal information.
- Nearly one in three REALTORS® (31 percent) have felt unsafe during an open house.
- The typical REALTOR® reported feeling unsafe less than once a year (54 percent) in terms of personal safety, but unsafe in terms of personal information every few months or more often (61 percent).
- One in 20 REALTORS® (5 percent) said they had been a victim of a crime while working as a real estate professional.
- More than half of REALTORS® (53 percent) use a smartphone safety app to track whereabouts and alert colleagues in case of an emergency.

**This September, ABoR is observing REALTOR®**

September is Safety Month, when we will launch a member input and research project to determine the safety programs, benefits and technologies you'd like to see us offer as an ABoR benefit. Member input will take place throughout REALTOR® Safety month as part of a month-long communications initiative of safety tips and best practices and you can provide your feedback now in

a short poll at [ABoR.com/Safety](https://ABoR.com/Safety).

You must make safe decisions continuously and know how to react when confronted with trouble. Below are our top safety tips for the well-being of your business, career, clients and personal life.

**Business Well-Being: Have a Safety Plan**

You have strategic plans, operational plans, and communication plans for your business but have you instituted a safety plan? In the real estate industry, we are faced with dangers every day and it's imperative to create processes that will help you avoid bad situations. Developing a safety plan can help you prepare and create a safe environment for you, your clients, colleagues and family.

**Professional Well-Being: Check Your Tech**

Plan ahead when you're going to be out in the field. Will you have mobile service everywhere? When you're showing in commercial property, older homes with thick walls, or rural properties, mobile reception may not be available. Always travel with a phone charger or battery pack and consider leveraging a safety app that will keep your emergency contacts informed of your whereabouts.

**Client Well-Being: Buddy Up**

Ask your clients about being partners on safety. You are taking safety precautions for yourself, but you also need their help. When selling their home, have them confirm they locked the house before leaving for showings. When meeting new clients, meeting at your office or a neutral location (such as a coffee shop) is a best practice that can help your



clients feel at ease, too.

**Personal Well-Being: Get Fit**

Consider exercise classes that double as self-defense training, such as boxing or Krav Maga. Many gyms and martial arts studios have virtual classes and online videos so that you can learn and train from home. You can also ask your peers, friends, and family if they have taken a self-defense class that they would recommend.

We hope you find these tips useful as you think about what precautions to take when planning your day-to-day tasks. For additional REALTOR® safety resources including webinars, best practices and shareable content, visit [NAR.Realtor/Safety](https://NAR.Realtor/Safety).

**Ready to Make an Impact? Volunteer with ABoR!**

As an ABoR member, you can play a direct role in the actions we take by volunteering to serve on one of our committees, advisory groups, or councils in 2021. A call for volunteers is going on now through mid-October at [ABoR.com/WeNeedYou](https://ABoR.com/WeNeedYou). Will you join us?



**CLOSER CLOSE-UP**

April is a Central Texas, Highland Lakes gal through and through. *“Being a mom to 5 children I definitely know how to read a room...closings are not always joyful occasions, though I love it when they are, especially when they’re first-time home buyers!”* Reach out to April and her team. You’ll be glad you did!

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**April Lyon**  
Escrow Officer  
Horseshoe Bay Office  
(830) 598-4898





# Austin-Area KB Home Communities

## Austin

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**Final Opportunity**

8009 Crystalbrook West, Austin, TX 78724

### Village at Northtown From the \$300s

- 1,353-2,898 sq. ft.
- 3-6 bdrms., 2-4 baths

14309 Silver Lace Ln., Austin, TX 78660

### Willow Trace From the \$360s

- 1,516-2,898 sq. ft.
- 3-5 bdrms., 2-3.5 baths

504 Weizenbock Ln., Austin, TX 78728

## Bastrop

### Piney Creek Bend From the \$210s

- 1,491-2,898 sq. ft.
- 3-6 bdrms., 2-4 baths

1502 Dragonfly Loop, Bastrop, TX 78602

## Del Valle

### Sundance Crossing From the \$230s

- 1,353-2,898 sq. ft.
- 3-6 bdrms., 2-3.5 baths

6305 Wagon Spring St., Del Valle, TX 78617

## Elgin

### Saratoga Farms From the \$200s

- 1,246-2,755 sq. ft.
- 3-6 bdrms., 2-4 baths

102 Schuylerville Dr., Elgin, TX 78621

## Georgetown

### La Conterra - Heritage Collection

**From the \$230s**

- 1,353-2,898 sq. ft.
- 3-5 bdrms., 2-3.5 baths

360 Tordesillas Dr.  
Georgetown, TX 78626

### Oakmont

**From the \$260s**

- 1,491-3,125 sq. ft.
- 3-6 bdrms., 2-4 baths

105 Kyndals Meadow Cove  
Georgetown, TX 78628

## Valley View

**From the \$220s**

**Grand Opening**

- 1,353-2,898 sq. ft.
- 3-5 bdrms., 2-3.5 baths

314 Thunder Valley Trl.  
Georgetown, TX 78626

## Hutto

### Villas at Star Ranch From the \$240s

- 1,353-2,898 sq. ft.
- 3-6 bdrms., 2-3.5 baths

337 Fort William St., Hutto, TX 78634

## Jarrell

### Sonterra

**From the \$180s**

- 1,246-2,898 sq. ft.
- 3-5 bdrms., 2-3.5 baths

505 Bailey Park Dr., Jarrell, TX 76537

## Kyle

### Stagecoach Crossing From the \$230s

- 1,491-3,475 sq. ft.
- 3-6 bdrms., 2-4 baths

141 Jarbridge Dr., Kyle, TX 78640

### Sunset Hills

**From the \$230s**

- 1,491-3,475 sq. ft.
- 3-6 bdrms., 2-4 baths

126 Azure Cove, Kyle, TX 78640

## Leander

### Haven Oaks

**Coming Soon**

- 1,491-2,881 sq. ft.
- 3-6 bdrms., 2-4 baths

San Gabriel Pkwy. and Heritage Grove Rd.  
Leander, TX 78641

### Mason Hills - The Lakes Classic Collection

**From the \$270s**

- 1,491-3,125 sq. ft.
- 3-6 bdrms., 2-4 baths

### Mason Hills - The Lakes Hallmark Collection

**From the \$310s**

- 2,089-3,475 sq. ft.
- 3-5 bdrms., 2-4.5 baths

1600 Abbott Cove, Leander, TX 78641

## Liberty Hill Area

### MorningStar

**Final Opportunity to Own**

109 Landry St., Georgetown, TX 78628

## Lockhart

### Meadows at Clearfork From the \$200s

- 1,491-2,881 sq. ft.
- 3-6 bdrms., 2-4 baths

602 Indian Blanket St., Lockhart, TX 78644

## Manor

### Presidential Meadows - Heritage Collection From the \$200s

- 1,234-2,495 sq. ft.
- 3-5 bdrms., 2-3.5 baths

### Presidential Meadows - Classic Collection From the \$220s

- 1,491-2,881 sq. ft.
- 3-6 bdrms., 2-4 baths

13620 James Garfield, Manor, TX 78653

## Pflugerville Area

### Greenlawn Village From the \$290s

- 1,353-2,898 sq. ft.
- 3-6 bdrms., 2-3.5 baths

17111 Gibbons Path, Round Rock, TX 78664

## Uhland

### Highlands at Grist Mill From the \$200s

- 1,353-2,898 sq. ft.
- 3-6 bdrms., 2-3.5 baths

120 Adeline, Uhland, TX 78640

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JOE FOWLER  
2020 PRESIDENT



DAVID GLENN  
SENIOR DIRECTOR  
Government Affairs

>> This month's column has been submitted of HBA's David Glenn, senior director of Government Affairs

# Texas' 87th Legislative Session During the Pandemic

Every two years the Texas Legislature convenes to conduct the business of the state, from healthcare to public education, from transportation to city and county affairs. The House and the Senate spend hours and hours debating the merits of the bills before them. An onlooker from the gallery can witness the organized chaos of the House proceedings, with 150 state representatives, members of the press, clerks, speaker staff and other legislative staff literally and figuratively rubbing elbows with each other on the House floor. Lobbyists and advocates work the halls, meeting with elected officials and staff, hosting lunches and dinners and educating lawmakers on issues big and small.

However, unsurprisingly, COVID-19 has majorly disrupted life at the capitol as we know it. During a time typically spent developing legislative agendas, advocates and elected officials have found themselves instead working to find ways to conduct the State's business in a world that relies heavily on face-to-face interactions.

Each regular session lasts 140 days with potential for additional 30-day sessions that can be called by the governor on an as needed basis. The legislature is only constitutionally required do to one thing — pass the state budget. However, each session, thousands of bills related to non-budgetary issues are filed, many of which fail, when they “die” in the process before they can be acted upon. Last session we saw over 10,000 bills filed, with approximately 20 percent of them signed into law.

This session, some capitol veterans expect fewer bills to be filed, with even fewer signed into law. There will be fewer opportunities for face-to-face discussion, so we expect that negotiations on bills will be significantly reduced. There will likely be less opportunity for the public to provide in person input as social distancing rules are enforced and many meetings move to a digital format. Popular events like Industry Day at the Capitol will have to change dramatically or be canceled, as many legislator offices will limit the number of visitors they will allow in their offices. These changes will dramatically change the way that advocates and the public interact with their elected officials.

Each session has its own unique set of priorities and next session is no different. Perhaps the most pressing issue Texas will face this session is related to the budget. At the beginning of the year, prior to the COVID-19 outbreak, the

comptroller forecasted a budget surplus. As COVID-19 took hold in Texas, many businesses slowed down or shuttered completely, resulting in reduced revenue from sales tax and oil and gas taxes. As a result of COVID-19, the comptroller has anticipated a \$4 billion deficit in the budget. Legislators will have to find a way to pay the state's bills for the next two years in addition to some outstanding bills from last session.

Another critical issue that the legislature will be looking at is redistricting. Every 10 years, after the most recent census data becomes available, the legislature redraws the boundaries for the House and Senate districts. This process is highly politicized, with each party vying for more favorable boundaries for their members. Due to some delays with the census, there are still some questions about how and when the redistricting process will take place, but it will certainly be top of mind for many legislators.

Other issues like public education and police reform are likely to get attention in session as well as COVID-19 relief to help stabilize the economy.

For our industry, the focus will be primarily defensive, as we will work to maintain the gains that we made last session. We will also be looking at legislation that will promote affordability and help remove regulatory barriers that make building difficult during the pandemic. After many cities moved their operations to digital formats, our members encountered a variety of challenges, some of which require legislative fixes.

Although no one knows what will happen next session, one thing that we know for sure is that it will be one of the most unique and challenging sessions Texas has ever faced. Rest assured that the advocacy team at the HBA and TAB will work hard to make sure that our industry's voice is heard in the 87th Legislative Session.

To ensure this is the case, the HBA has its own political action committee, HomePAC, whose purpose is to raise money as well as contribute to issue and candidate campaigns supportive of the housing industry in the Greater Austin area. HomePAC's Board is comprised of an outstanding group of industry leaders selected to make decisions on how and when to focus these political resources. Contributions to the HomePAC may be made as a corporation or an individual. Visit [www.hbaaustin.com/advocacy/](http://www.hbaaustin.com/advocacy/) for more details.

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**September 23**

### REAL ESTATE RESET

1:00p-2:00p  
Strategies, Tasks &  
Dialogue to Engage  
Your Sphere  
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Breakthrough Broker

**September 29**

### INSTAGRAM REELS

12:00p-1:00p  
Instructor: Chelsea Peitz,  
author of 'What to Post: How to  
Create Engaging Social Media  
That Builds Your Brand and  
Gets Results (for Real Estate)

**September 30**

### MATRIX 2020 UPDATE

10:30a-12:00p  
Join Jack Sellers  
of ABOR as we learn  
all about the new changes  
to Matrix for 2020

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# Are You an Engaged Member of Your Community?

As REALTORS® our clients and other industry peers see us as community leaders and the go-to person for many different topics and civic engagement is just one of them. This fall is proving to be unprecedented with a busy local real estate market, new back to school experiences for many, COVID-19 and the upcoming elections (local, state and federal). I wanted to take this opportunity to remind you about a couple of ways you can engage in the community this fall season!

### Respond to the U.S. Census

I encourage you to complete the 2020 U.S. Census. The data is used for a myriad of things such as where new hospitals, schools and fire departments are built. Data is also used to help determine how hundreds of billions of dollars in federal funding are used in communities just like Williamson County. As our area continues to show up on the top lists – fastest growing, best place to live and more, this data will help our leaders plan for many more years of positive growth.

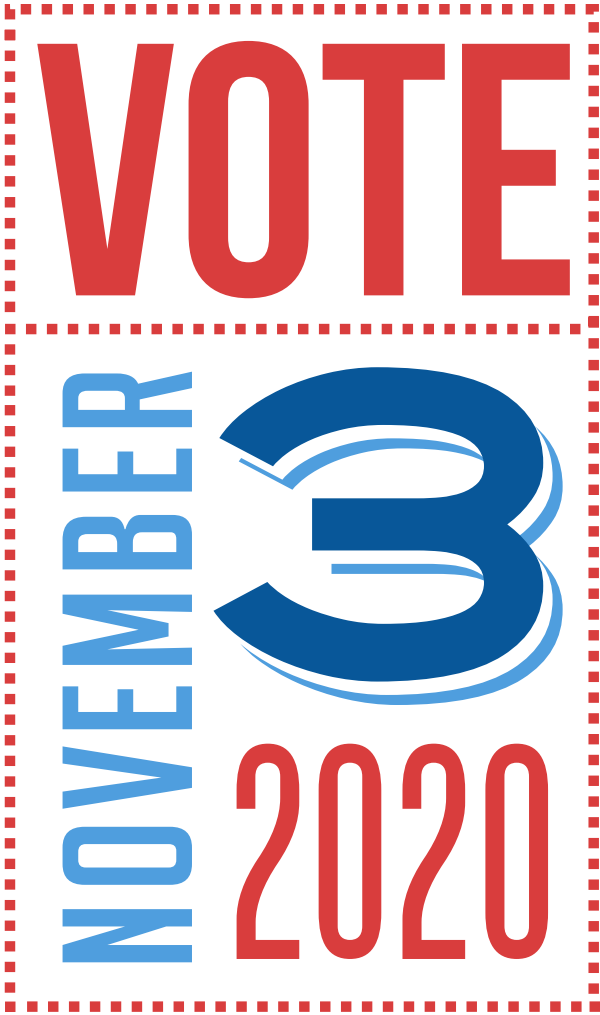
It is easy and literally takes just minutes to respond to the Census and you can do it online at [2020census.gov](https://2020census.gov).

### Register to vote and VOTE

Registering to vote and actually voting are two of the most important actions we can take as U.S. citizens. In fact voting is a right many in the world do not have. I urge you to check your voting status and vote on Nov. 3. This year's election is a little different due to COVID-19, (what isn't this year?), because the local elections have been delayed until Nov. 3. This will be a full ballot with everything from local school board trustees to the President of the United States.

The deadline to register to vote in the November Election is Monday, Oct. 5. Early voting is Oct. 13 through Oct. 30. Be sure to check with your local election office for more information and a sample ballot.

These simple but very important and effective tasks are two ways you can make a difference in your community. These are also great reasons to reach out to your client database; remind your clients and other business associates to respond to the Census, register to vote and vote.





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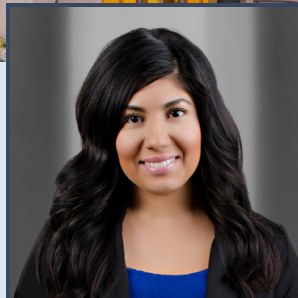


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All images must be 300 dpi and include a caption with first/last name and company affiliation. Press releases must be fewer than 300 words. Submission items will be included as space allows.

*get in touch*  
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SUSANNA BOYER  
2020 DIRECTOR

# Audience Targeting or Discrimination – When Are You Crossing That Line?

There is no place for discrimination in advertising or anywhere else for that matter. Unfortunately, when you want to send advertising to a “target market,” that could possibly be exactly what you are doing without even realizing it. The big social media giant used to allow advertising to certain categories such as age, gender, zip code, multicultural affinity or any detailed options describing or appearing to relate to protected characteristics, but they’ve had to change the way ads can be run and searched, due to auditors finding some inconsistencies and having historic settlement agreements made to a few civil rights organizations.

It is not just zeroing in on certain aspects of the protected classifications listed in the Fair Housing Act that is wrong. You must also think about the words you use when you are listing a property in the MLS. If you state the park, school, pool or whatever is “walking distance” from the property, then you have crossed that line, without even realizing it. What if a family with a member that is wheelchair bound or is just not fully ambulatory reads the description? In this case, it would just be best to say the property is just a “short distance” from said amenities.

What if you describe the temple, synagogue, monastery or mosque that is right down the street? Then you have discriminated against all the other types of religions that are not the particular one that you’ve described. Choose your words carefully to be all-inclusive such as “house of worship” because this covers all.

When describing a larger home, many REALTORS® tend to describe it as family-sized or big enough for a large family. Even though it seems normal, this is just another form of subtle discrimination against a single person that may want a large house for whatever reason. And on the other end of that spectrum is perfect home for empty nesters. Describing the property is the best option and let the prospective buyers or renters make their own decision on what and how to interpret the description.

Carrie Ann Ploppert, esq. is a Disability Rights Advocate in New Jersey. She publishes helpful articles on subtle discrimination. She wrote **Fair Housing Handbook: Avoiding Discriminatory Advertising** and says it is important that you know the test for discrimination.

“

The test for discrimination: Whether an ordinary reader/viewer/listener (consumer) of the advertising would think the statement contained in the advertising contains a preference for certain groups or is limiting certain groups.

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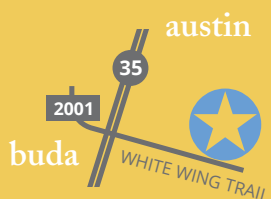
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INTERVIEW  
PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

# Rollingwood Management

Written by Katie Agness

For more than 34 years, Rollingwood Management, Inc. has been providing residential property management services as well as pairing tenants with their dream properties. Aimed at delivering impeccable management services for property owners and their investments, Rollingwood Management’s philosophy is to be the landlord’s advocate and to utilize its team’s experienced skillset to deliver expertise, integrity and decisiveness.

“Since our focus is solely on property management, our clients can expect the utmost in service. We are not overseeing home sales or managing apartment complexes, commercial properties or HOAs,” says Michael Francis, owner and broker of Rollingwood Management, Inc. “We work with owners of residential properties, which is usually a REALTOR, single-property owner or investors with multiple properties within their portfolios.”

choose Rollingwood Management because they see cost savings related to using a property management firm. Additionally, many clients experience personal benefits, as the strain and time commitment of managing their property is alleviated. “When a landlord uses a property management firm, we handle all communication and remediation with the tenants, even the problem ones which can cause stress on a landlord,” Francis says. “Also, it reduces the amount of time a landlord spends coordinating repairs, properly screening tenants, chasing down late rent payments, enforcing the terms of a lease, keeping up with everchanging legislation and reducing risk. Above all, the most important personal benefit for landlords is greater freedom.”

Even in recent months, as the pandemic hit, Rollingwood Management has remained committed to maintaining its high level of service and adapted to ensuring the care of its clients and tenants. “When the pandemic hit, we had two main goals: to keep our staff, tenants and vendors safe and to stabilize our owners’ income,” Francis says. “To date, we have been able to accomplish these goals. While we have had to set up payment plans to assist our tenants, no tenants have defaulted on their lease payments and all owners have continued to receive their payments.”

Specializing in Austin and the surrounding areas, Rollingwood Management serves Westlake, Bee Cave, Rollingwood, Round Rock, Pflugerville, Kyle and Buda. “Our team currently includes three experienced property managers, an accountant, an office manager and a maintenance technician,” says Francis, who oversees daily operations and marketing. “Each one of our team members brings a wealth of experience in their field that has a direct benefit to our investors, their tenants and their investment.

For residential property owners looking for property management services, Rollingwood Management provides an array of turn-key services. “Our clients come to us because they don’t want to be involved in the day-to-day business of their investment, but still expect trust, transparency and confirmation that their property is being well maintained and profitable,” Francis says. “We provide well-documented and easily understood monthly statement, oversee all property maintenance, send annual property surveys and attend to any tenant-related needs.”

Many clients



MICHAEL FRANCIS  
Owner and Broker

For more information and to read client reviews, visit [rollingwoodmanagement.com](http://rollingwoodmanagement.com).

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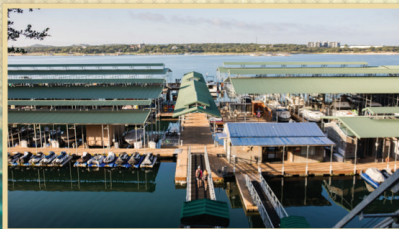
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[Audience Targeting from front page]

estate advertising portal and removed micro-targeting tools; Google announced a similar overhaul to its ad network this past summer. The changes, which occurred abruptly and with no warning, shook the real estate profession to its core. According to Facebook's "2019 Real Estate Trends and Insights Report," nearly 90 percent of agents' and brokers' media budgets went to online ads.

Ryan Rodenbeck, owner of Spyglass Realty, was one of the few agents who wasn't affected by the changes. He already felt that using social media platforms for advertising listings was too limiting. Rodenbeck believes agents should focus on branding instead, which is something that Facebook says their audience-targeting tools are much better suited.

Rodenbeck is an expert at running what Facebook calls educational promotions. So instead of posting an audience-targeting property listing, he can run a campaign that promotes the speed of which a property in a specific zip code went under contract. In this case, it's not a violation to use micro-targeting tools because he's not listing a house for sale or for rent. Rodenbeck's goal is to raise awareness of his agency, Spyglass Realty. Advertisements that celebrate newly sold properties or those under contract, as well as ads hyping Austin neighborhoods, in blog posts like "Must-Visit Attractions in Barton Hills," help to bolster his brand without depriving anyone of their right to housing.

"Facebook, Instagram and Google display ad networks aren't great sources for generating new leads," he says. "The ones we do get from these platforms are kind of fickle." If generating new business on social media is the primary goal, you have to put in a lot of time and energy and will get very little in return. "That's why you want to use these sites for branding," says Rodenbeck.

Tech companies are keeping some audience-targeting tools, but now there are built-in protections for the platforms and users. For example, REALTORS can place zip-code-target ads. But unlike earlier iterations, there's an automatic 15-mile radius minimum. The goal, of course, is to prevent someone from excluding what they might believe are undesirable neighborhoods, such as those with a heavy concentration of minorities or low-income earners.

Other changes that protect REALTORS from committing housing discrimination violations is by taking away the option to micro-target audiences based on age and gender. Now, any person over the age of 16 can see any published real estate listing.

There has been some understandable pushback. One example is when a broker has a listing in an age-qualified community. It doesn't make sense to run an ad if it's going to be delivered to people of all ages. On the other hand, if the listing agent attempts to target a specific age group anyway, the platform reserves the right to remove that ad. After the HUD lawsuit, platforms are not in the mood to negotiate. Repeat offenders can have their business accounts suspended from the platform entirely and permanently. So for anyone weighing their options — a lifetime suspension vs. a deluge of calls from unqualified prospects — one of these can severely debilitate a small real estate agency while the other is a temporary inconvenience.

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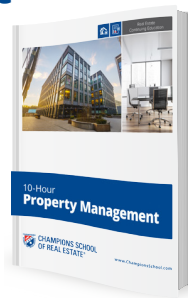
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Who can remember where you were when President Kennedy was assassinated? Who watched the moon landing on a black and white television back in 1969? Who remembers exactly where you were on 9-11?

If you are reading this, chances are you think this is a year that you will never forget and maybe you can't wait for it

to be over. But there is a lot more for you to remember this year for, especially if you are a real estate professional and chances (again) are better than ever that you are!

This is the 100th anniversary of the Texas REALTORS® trade association. Parts of the information that follows are taken from two publications: *Shaping Texas: The First Hundred Years of REALTORS® in the Lone Star State* and *TREPAC for the Busy Broker and Manager*.

In 1911, honest real estate dealers in Texas were concerned about unscrupulous operators referred to at the time as curb stoners. The Houston Post described them as "...men who make it a business of laying for suckers."

On Oct. 11, 1920, representatives from Abilene, Dallas, Denison, El Paso, Fort Worth, Houston and San Antonio met to establish the Texas Association of Real Estate Boards. They held the meeting in Dallas, where they endorsed supporting a proposed license act and voted to stage their first state convention in San Antonio.

Two months later, the association held its first convention at the Gunther Hotel in San Antonio. Organizers pulled out all the stops. For the opening banquet, four of their best hunters went out to shoot wild turkey, duck, venison and quail.

After several years, the association added more local boards, and in 1926, Texas went from the 25th largest association in the nation to the fifth largest.

Let's fast forward 50 years and look at the beginnings of TREPAC. As members celebrated the 50th anniversary of the association in 1970, extending political influence was a focal point. That led to the establishment of the Texas Real Estate Political Action Committee (TREPAC). By 1972, TREPAC reported \$17,250 in contributions from 923 investors. Six years later, annual contributions reached \$300,000.

From those humble beginnings, both our association and TREPAC have grown both in size and in influence. REALTORS® are without question the experts in all things real estate and TREPAC is the largest grassroots political action committee in Texas. Texas REALTORS®, your colleagues, volunteer their time and expertise to ensure Texas real estate is protected at all levels of government.

Now pay attention as there may be a test later! TREPAC dollars do not come from member dues. TREPAC investments are voluntary from members of the local, state and national REALTOR® associations who believe in protecting property owner rights and believe that REALTOR® issues need to be "top of mind" issues for our elected officials.

TREPAC does not support one political party over another. We are the REALTOR® Party. TREPAC supports candidates who understand the importance of a strong real estate market to the Texas economy. All candidates are vetted by REALTOR® leaders to ensure each one is a REALTOR® champion.

The upcoming 87th Legislative session is expected to be a session like no other session we have ever seen before. When the ses-

**The Budget:** This is the only thing that MUST be accomplished in the session. It's gonna be tough; because of the pandemic, sales tax revenues are down and oil and gas tax collections are down

**Criminal Justice Reform:** Texas Legislators will work to correct perceived errors in the criminal justice system, reduce prison populations and look at prison sentences that are considered too harsh or long for the crime

**Property Taxes:** Always a robust topic for REALTORS®, we will urge balance between assessed values and tax rates.

**Redistricting:** Before we can even get to the next session, we have a vote in November that is going to be interesting. Redistricting may not even get done in the session and those who know better than I do think there could be one or even two special sessions

**HOA and COA Issues:** Texas REALTORS® support efforts to reform laws governing homeowner's associations to ensure HOA and COA operations are transparent and resident (including buyer and seller) friendly

sion convenes in January of next year, there will be lots of topics up for consideration.

So... if you got this far, I hope you have a better understanding of what TREPAC is, what it does and why it is so very important to your profession. In these uncertain times, TREPAC remains strong and committed to standing up for issues that are important to us, our clients and property owners everywhere.

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And featuring these newly  
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Tacos and Book Drive: **Mick Donohoe** of SouthStar Bank



Independence Day Drive-By Lunch: **Seth Shipp** and parents, **Will Shipp and Adrian Alvara**, and **Amanda Aaron** all of SouthStar Bank



REALTORS in the Wild: **Patrick Jbeili** of Agent Realty ATX

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