



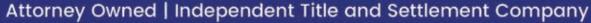
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TABLE OF

CONTENTS



08



oducers Team



Are You Ready to ring into Market?

28

Fraud -



een the Most Person in our Life?



Words b Target These Sellers to Gain More Listings!

24





Red Flags in Real Estate



32 Spotlight MaxHouse Price



38 Agent Desiree Rejeili



Partner Spotlight Sardina, HomeTech



50 Wickwire



58 Healthy Ground Yourself in Nature



60 Top 250 Standings









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12 · April 2023 NOVA Real Producers • 13



>>> publisher's note

Dear Real Producers of Northern Virginia,

As we emerge from another winter, it's time to start thinking about the spring real estate market. Despite the uncertainty and volatility of the past few years, there are many reasons to be positive and hopeful about what lies ahead.

Interest rates remain historically low, making it an ideal time for buyers to enter the market. Low rates can help spur demand and lead to increased competition for properties, which is great news for sellers. And even though interest rates are on the rise and can impact the real estate market, it's important to remember that they are just one factor among many. The economy, supply and demand dynamics, buyer motivation, investor demand, and local market conditions can all contribute to a robust real estate market, even in the face of rising interest rates.

The overall economy is still showing signs of strength and stability, which bodes well for the real estate market. With more people returning to work and consumer confidence on the rise, we can expect to see increased

demand for homes in the coming months. Overall, while a low-inventory market can create challenges for REALTORS®, it can also create opportunities for those who are able to adapt to the market conditions and leverage their skills and expertise to serve their clients effectively.

Moreover, there are a number of demographic trends that are driving demand for housing. As millennials continue to enter their prime homebuying years, they are driving demand for starter homes and entry-level properties. At the same time, baby boomers are looking to downsize and simplify their lives, leading to increased demand for smaller, more manageable homes.

In short, the spring 2023 selling market is shaping up to be a positive and hopeful one for real estate. With low interest rates, a strong economy, and demographic trends driving demand, there are many reasons to feel optimistic about what lies ahead. So get ready to spring into action and make the most of this exciting market!

Thank you to all of you who attended our Masquerade Sneaker Ball on March 23rd! We will have photos from the event in next month's issue. In the meantime, please check them out on our social media pages and be sure to tag yourself and your friends! Next, we're excited to gather with everyone again on May 3rd for our Lawnapalooza event, which is going to be another great time together as a community. Keep an eye on your inbox for details and your exclusive invitation!

This month, we're pleased that preferred partner **Pruitt Title LLC** has joined the NOVA Real Producers family. Welcome!

With gratitude,

Kristin Brindley

Owner/Publisher
NOVA Real Producers
313-971-8312
Kristin@kristinbrindley.com
www.novarealproducers.com



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

What strategies are you implementing to help your clients navigate the competitive spring market?







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Who's been the most influential person in your life?



GRANT BRONSON
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My father. He's a retired army veteran who then got into the government contracting business. He's a tried-and-true businessman and loves to learn my day-to-day and wants to do flips with me. He's happy I'm not in X-games like I originally wanted to do. But he would be happy either way. X-games are just dangerous and he doesn't want me to die.



AARON NICHOLS
McEnearney Associates
My wife.



LINDSAY UNDERWOOD RLAH Real Estate My parents.



JOHN MARTINICH REAL Broker

My parents. The older I get, the more I realize how much they helped pave the way for who I am today.



KENNY HOWARD
Dry Home Roofing & Siding, Inc.

The most influential person in my life would have to be my oldest brother, Jim. He has always been there for me, no matter what the situation. He also got the brains in the family, lol, so I often come to him for information on anything, really. He has helped mold me into the man I am today and I'm forever thankful for having him as my brother.



MOLLY FLORY
Old Republic Home Protection

The most influential people in my life are my mom, dad and stepdad. They have instilled in me faith, love, and to always help others. They show me by the daily examples they practice. After my dad passed, my mother was lucky to find my stepdad, who shared the very same values. They continue to inspire me and our family daily with their love and faith.



SAM NASSAR Compass

My father has been one of the strongest motivators in my life, imparting his values and work ethic to me — teaching me how to think before I act. His influence has strengthened my resolve and given me direction towards achieving success.



CHRISTAL JOHNSON Keller Williams Realty

My dad, Lenwood A. Johnson Sr. He has always guided me with wisdom and love.



ANNIE TEK
MBH Settlement Group

The most influential people in my life are my grandparents. They came to America from Cambodia not knowing the culture or language and persevered. Having to overcome countless obstacles, they never gave up and started a very successful dessert business. Although they aren't with us today, I'm in awe of their resilience and tenacity every day.



SETH HURLBERT
Hurlbert Home Inspection

It may sound simplistic, but it is my wife, Mary. This is because she has always supported me in my life decisions. She supported me in deciding to make a major life change, move to Northern Virginia, and become a home inspector. She supported me in getting my business started. She has helped me with marketing decisions and what direction the company should take. She keeps me organized. I would not be here without her.



MELISSA JAKES
Rescue Event Planning

My mother.



CHRISTINE RICHARDSON Weichert, REALTORS®

Without a doubt, the most influential person in my life was my mother. I was lucky enough to be raised by a loving, thoughtful, selfless, and brilliant mom. She and my father had been married for 58 years when she died in 2014. Mom honestly never raised her voice and almost never said an unkind word about anyone. She saw good in everyone and in every situation. And she loved to laugh and make people smile. I miss her every day!



BLAKE DAVENPORT RLAH Real Estate Tom Ferry.



JOHN LYTLE
Pearson Smith Realty

My biggest influence would have to be my faith.



JOYCE WADLE Long & Foster Real Estate

The most influential person in my life has been my mom, and she continues to be still today. As a single mom of three, she worked hard, put her kids and family first, and was the perfect example of pushing through with heart and true grit. That dedication to family and toughness is what sustained me during many years of being a military spouse and mother of three myself. I leaned on her faith and unconditional love during deployments and separation while my husband was at war. Her support is what led me to become a Realtor, and her work ethic and compassion instilled in me is what I strive to bring to all my clients. She is a breast cancer survivor, a woman of faith, and the bravest lady I know. She is my biggest cheerleader, and I am proud to be her daughter.



GAIL ROMANSKY Pearson Smith Realty

The most influential person in my life has always been my cousin, with whom I have always been extremely close. I look to her as my big sister — who I can confide in, as well as discuss any topic. She is an advocate and activist for those less fortunate, and has worked both in the political and private sector to end the stigma of mental illness in our country, while also bringing awareness of the need for affordable mental health care. She is a champion for those less fortunate, for women's causes, the rights of the LGBTQ community, as well as the betterment of our children. My cousin is also a photographer, and through her photographs of America's homeless, she has helped inform the public of the welfare of our homeless population and reducing homelessness. Through her advocacy, my cousin ingrained in me the need to give back to society and be an activist for what you believe in.



SUE SMITH Compass

My father, Frank W. Grant, is the most influential person in my life. Marine jet pilot, retired FBI agent, fisherman, father of seven, husband to my deceased mother, Bonnie Grant, and husband to Candace Luhr Grant. Patriotic, family oriented, spiritual, religious, community contributor and connector. Dad will be 90 years of age in August 2023, where his family will be celebrating with him in his "special place" — The Klondike II in Grayling, Michigan. My father is the main reason that I entered the real estate profession. I left a corporate career after my two children, Bryan and Krissy, were born, and was looking for an enduring career where I could balance career, family and community service. My father said "You'd be great at real estate" and so I jumped in and never looked back. That was 35 years ago. My dad is one of my biggest cheerleaders and supporters to this day. Thank you, Dad, I love you.

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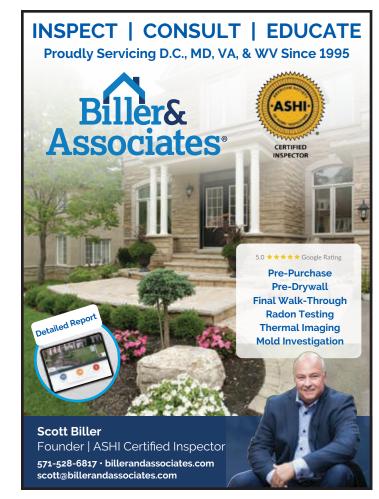
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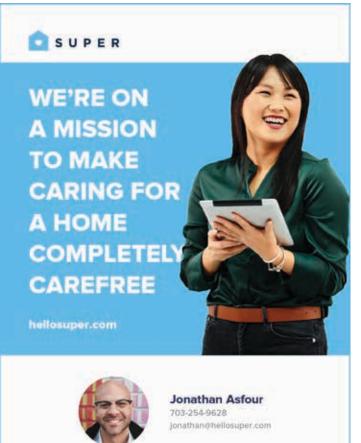
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If you have been looking for homes on the MLS lately, it's kind of crickets when it comes to homes entering the market. There are many reasons why we are stagnating in house inventory, from lack of builders building to homeowners loving their interest rate and much more. We are now in a market where the REALTORS® need to actively create additional inventory to supply homes to the flurry of homebuyers in the market. Where do you spend your time, effort, and energy to find these likely home sellers? Your sphere of influence and past clients are the starting point and most obvious, but after that ... who is the most likely target audience?

Condo Absentee Owners

Condos are the first properties to appreciate, and the first to depreciate. The other issues with condos are the high HOA fees that you don't get back and, as an absentee owner, you may be dealing with property managers, which comes with a 7 percent to 10 percent management fee. With a property that

is just holding value, dealing with tenants, and fees that you don't get back, now may be the right time to sell that investment condo. Not sure if you have ever owned investment property, especially living in a different state ... but it isn't always a fun time. This is a fantastic time to reach out to these homeowners and see if they want to list their property to "cash out" in the Spring Market.

Downsizers in Good School Districts

Another great target audience to capture listing opportunities are homeowners who have lived in their homes for a very long time, and kids who have moved out and no longer need the space. The "pro tip" is to target these homeowners in school districts that are highly rated. If you are like me and have small children, I would be seeking my next home not only in a great location but in the right school district. Think about who you might know in your database that would fit into this category, potentially invite them to your next market update seminar, and send them a CMA of their current home value. Many of these potential sellers might struggle with the transition of moving out of a home they have lived in for so long, so if you can articulate your value of how to assist in solving that problem, more listing opportunities will come your way.

Who Bought Your Listings?

Many agents market to their database, which is people they know. What about the homeowners who bought your listings from 2019 and beyond? Are those homeowners in your database? Are you marketing back to them to potentially list their home with you? You sold it once, which means you can surely sell the home again. Several of my Realtor clients have communicated to me they have sold the same house more than once. Don't discount the homeowners on the other side of your transactions. They can be a great source for repeat and referral business.

In our current market environment, where we will be in an inventory-depressed market, being strategic to increase the number of homes entering the market is important. Good luck!

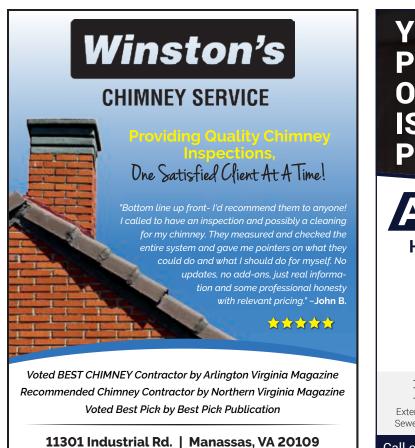


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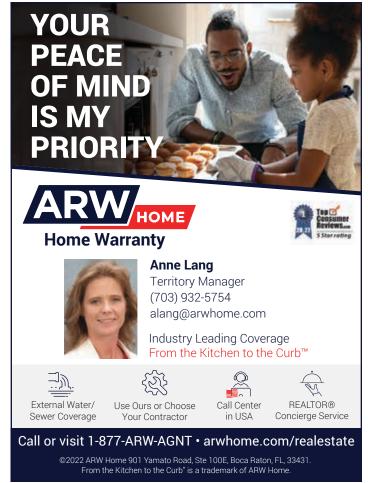


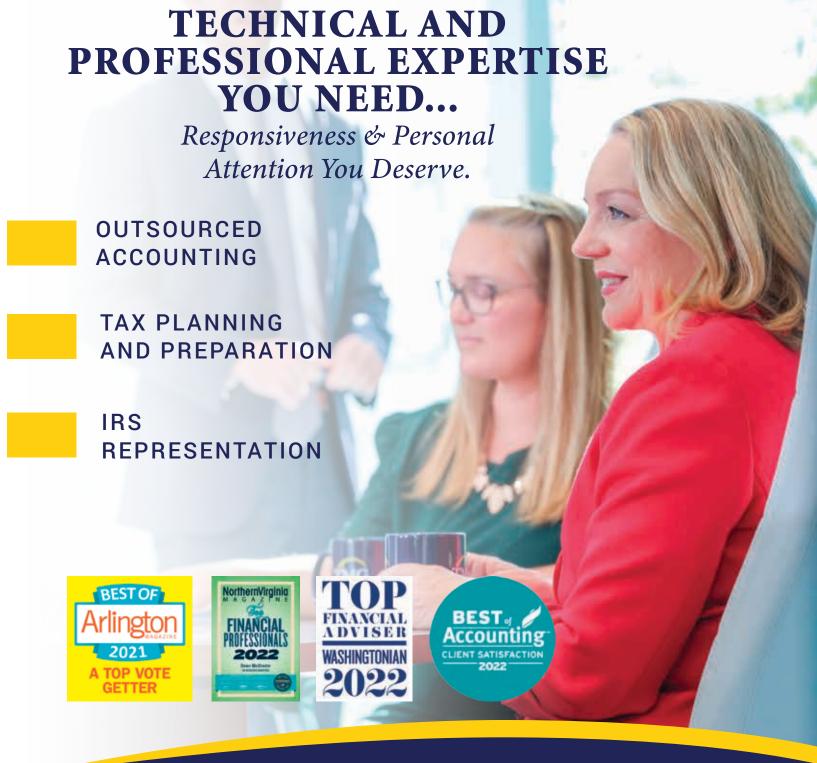




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FRAUD

Red Flags in Real Estate Transactions

Real estate agents are tasked with the difficult job of providing the first line of defense against fraudulent transactions. Given the frequent request of clients to utilize remote, online notaries, a power of attorney, or a quick closing, this can be a challenging undertaking. Recently, the Fairfax County Police department reported four cases of attempted fraudulent sales activity within a seven-day time period. Scams are not confined to a single jurisdiction, and a prudent agent is cognizant that attempted sham transactions are on the rise.

Experts in the real estate and law enforcement industries have developed a list of fact patterns that should raise red flags in residential real estate transactions. If a sale involves 1) vacant or uninhabited land, or 2) elderly or out-of-town owners, it is important to carefully scrutinize the potential conveyance. Furthermore, if a transaction contains any of the following situations, it is important to engage in a heightened inspection. First, when there is no face-to-face interaction with the seller, further inquiry is warranted. Second, if the

Seller insists that the communication be limited to emails, it is important to further evaluate the potential for fraud. Third, if the property appears to be under market value, be alert. Fourth, if the reported Seller is difficult to reach, even by phone, take notice of the pattern. Fifth, if the agent does not know the client, investigate further. Sixth, if the Seller is looking for a quick settlement, particularly all cash, heightened inquiry should be utilized. Being familiar with common scenarios used in scams protects bona fide Sellers and real estate agents.

The above factors may appear obvious; however, what to do when you see red flags may not be as clear. Here are some concrete steps which you can utilize once your instincts tell you to be cautious. The first involves checking the county tax records for the current address of the owners. This approach should be utilized in every potential transaction. Double-check if you see any discrepancies or warning signs. Specifically, the Seller's name should be verified and precisely match the individual(s) that represent that they are the rightful owner of the property. If you have any doubt, additional steps should be taken. At a minimum, after you have verified the owner's address, mail a letter confirming your prior

conversations. Alert the Seller that you are doing this as a part of your "fraud protection program" and ask them to verify receipt. As a less desirable alternative, independently look up the contact information for the Seller online and contact them via phone.

The best course of action is to insist that the Seller meet in person with someone in the transaction who you know. The meeting should take place either in the real estate agent's office or with the attorney preparing the deed. However, in an area as transient as Greater Washington, this is not always possible. Therefore, if a remote online notary (RON) is requested, utilize a platform that

requires knowledge-based question procedures as proof of identity.

Do not ignore warning signs with a real estate transaction. Be vigilant and proceed with caution when you have any concern about fraudulent activity. When in doubt, alert the brokers, settlement agent, and legal counsel involved in the transaction to obtain further guidance. It is also critical to establish a rapport with the settlement company so they can partner with you to protect you and your clients. Utilizing the settlement services of a firm like MBH Settlement Group ensures that you have an educated partner that will assist you with this process.

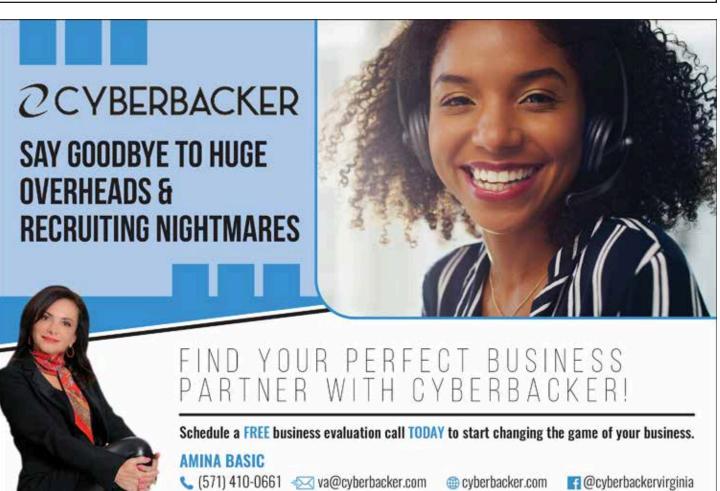


Colleen Sweeney is currently a managing attorney at MBH Settlement Group. Colleen has 20-plus years of legal experience ranging from drafting complex contracts and litigation to conducting real estate closings. Colleen has represented clients in cases in the trial courts through litigation in both the Supreme Court of the United States and the Commonwealth of Virginia. She is an active member of the legal community and a lifelong resident of Northern Virginia.



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REAL PRODUCERS. PRESENTS Story Inspired

WORDS OF WISDOM FROM THIS MONTH'S FEATURES



JIN (CHEN) WICKIRE
The Wickwire Group
eXp Realty

"I think it's important to not compare yourself to the Realtors around you. I think people should stay true to who they are and what works for them. Focus on your own work and systems."



DESIREE REJEILI
Desiree Sells Homes

Samson Properties

"I believe that you have to take chances if you want to get somewhere in life. You have to feel uncomfortable to get comfortable."

"The real estate industry is very com-

petitive and can be quite daunting, especially with the current economic downturn... I'm always sharing my knowledge with the real estate market to keep followers updated on the latest changes in the market."

A Word from Our Preferred Partners:



TOM PARMENTIER MaxHousePrice

"In many homes, real estate agents highly recommend that clients complete some pre-list renovations so that they can get top dollar for their home at the sale. That being said, many homeowners don't have the funds for the renovations or

they already have their money tied up in a new home... Great news, that's no problem here at MaxHousePrice! That's because MaxHousePrice pays for and manages pre-list renovations and they don't get paid until the closing."



TONY FERNANDEZ-SARDINA

 ${\bf Rn\ HomeTech\ Home\ Inspection\ Services}$

"We are very thorough. We are detail-oriented, and train and study to improve our knowledge base. We are punctual and professional. We believe it benefits everyone involved if we take the time to explain everything to

the buyer during the inspection and thus avoid calls with questions that should have been addressed at the home inspection. We also have the most detailed home inspection reports on the market, bar none!"



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An Essential Renovation Resource

partner spotlight

By Dave Danielson

The process of getting a home prepared for the market can be quite challenging. Especially when real estate agents and their clients are aiming to maximize a home's potential to sell for top dollar, there can be both obstacles and financial burdens associated with the pre-list process. For this reason, it's so important to have an experienced and trusted company to collectively walk through the pre-list renovation process with both the real estate agent and their clients to make sure all the pieces work together to benefit the homeowners.

That's where the collective expertise of Tom Parmentier, CEO and co-founder of MaxHousePrice, and Bryan Felder, co-founder, created a trustworthy and honest company to efficiently walk through this process.

"Selling a home can be stressful and challenging no matter how well a

home has been maintained during ownership. Sometimes, to top off these standard challenges, clients can have stressful life circumstances that make the pre-list preparations even more difficult. Well, thanks to MaxHousePrice, that's no longer the case. Now there is a qualified team that should be contacted to walk through and manage the entire prelist renovation process," Tom says. "In many homes, real estate agents highly recommend that clients complete some pre-list renovations so that they can get top dollar for their home at the sale. That being said, many homeowners don't have the funds for the renovations or they already have their money tied up in a new home... Great news, that's no problem here at MaxHousePrice! That's because MaxHousePrice pays for and manages pre-list renovations and they don't get paid until



Tom Parmentier, co-founder and CEO of MaxHousePrice



Bryan Felder, co-founder of MaxHousePrice



The MaxHousePrice team (Photo by Ryan Corvello)

"In addition to being a resource for the renovations, sometimes there are other individualized needs a client may have. MaxHousePrice has that covered too. Sometimes, it is help with junk removal, other times it is temporary housing during the renovation; in some situations, it includes help with their mortgage ... and, other times, it's something else we can help with. The most important thing to remember is that MaxHousePrice is an important resource because we are here to serve real estate agents and their clients with a very customized process because we know that no two situations are exactly the same," Tom explains.

Meant to Be

Tom remembers how MaxHousePrice came into being.

"In 2018, I was meeting with my now business partner, Bryan Felder, who had been

a business contact of mine for many, many years. I told him I was looking for a new business opportunity (I had worked with the area's largest pro home-flipping company prior to starting MaxHousePrice). With the exciting ideas I had for Bryan's real estate team, he was ecstatic and wanted me to help him take his team to new levels," Tom remembers.

"Bryan and I attended a conference, and one business discussion led to another. He was telling me about a client who needed to sell a home but needed to complete some pre-list updates to the house. Bryan said to the client, 'I'll take care of it with contractors I know. Just pay me back when we sell your home.' It worked out, and the client sold for more money! I said, 'Bryan, that's a business right there!' Based on that

model, we brainstormed and turned that idea of paying for prelist renovations into our business, MaxHousePrice."

Fueled by Creating Success

Today, five years later, MaxHousePrice continues to build success for real estate partners and their clients alike. The concept and approach are very straightforward. "We're here as a partner for real estate agents and their clients to help walk through pre-list renovations of all sizes. We partner together so that, ultimately, the home sells for more money and the homeowner walks away with more than they would have selling the home as-is," Tom says. "We only recommend high-ROI improvements, in collaboration with their real estate agent,





BEFORE

to help their homes to look more desirable, sell faster, and for more money."

Consulting with Creativity

It is a consultative approach that Tom and his team take with real estate agents and their clients, collectively sharing thoughts and ideas. The MaxHousePrice team has a call with the agent or the homeowner, then schedules a consultation where they meet with the agent and client to discuss different options and ideas. The MaxHousePrice team is always here to listen and available to hear the wishes and desires from the real estate agent and their client. From these discussions, MaxHousePrice then develops a line-by-line estimate for the agent and their clients to review and discuss.

"Every consultation is an individualized process. In some cases, it may make sense to do a more cosmetic refresh rather than a kitchen remodel.



AFTER

In other cases, a full home renovation may be warranted to help the clients to sell for so much more! We help determine the best scope of home improvements that will provide the highest ROI. The market has definitely shifted! It is a vital time to have MaxHousePrice as an additional resource for real estate agents," Tom says.

Homes listed for sale may be sitting on the market longer. Currently, a lot more effort is necessary to sell a home for top dollar. For this reason, real estate agents and their clients need to put their "best foot forward." It's a known fact that renovated homes sell much faster than those homes attempting to be sold "as-is."

MJ Fraizer, a Realtor with Pearson Smith Realty, licensed in Virginia and D.C., is also an investor. MaxHousePrice and MJ have partnered together on six home renovation projects to date. MJ understands the value and benefit of getting pre-list renovations completed so that his clients net more money at the sale of the home. When asked what he likes most about working with MaxHousePrice, MJ states, "I love the honesty and transparency of working with the MaxHousePrice team. I know I can count on them to effectively manage any project that I partner with them on."



MaxHousePrice team members with MJ Frazier (far right). (Photo by Ryan Corvello)



Team Excellence

Today, MaxHousePrice is currently a team of 10 superstars to efficiently manage pre-sale renovations. With an amazing operations team comprising a director of construction, project manager, and design consultant who are supported by a sales team who answer agent/client questions, they walk through homes, remain a reliable point of contact throughout the entire process, and create those line-by-line estimates for review. Then, there is the efficient management team who oversees all the behind-the-scenes tasks and responsibilities. The MaxHousePrice team is even looking to expand with additional team members.

As Tom says, "Our entire company is guided by our core values, including family first, decisive, all-in, and lead by example."

Those who've had the opportunity to work with MaxHousePrice attest to seeing the tangible value and experiencing the sincere care they receive throughout the entire process, from start to finish.

"Our job isn't done until our clients are satisfied. With our core values always guiding our actions and business, we always aim to make things right. With any construction process, we are human, and, at times, there can be unforeseen circumstances and unforeseen scope items that can't be projected until we get behind walls, etc. Especially with larger-scope renovations, it can be challenging to fully predict things until you are further into the project and need to adjust accordingly," Tom points out.

You can count on MaxHousePrice to take care of your clients. "We do everything we can to keep change orders at a minimum. That being said, we can't predict them all. By being thorough and having our process of frequent team walk-throughs and line-by-line estimates, we strive hard to always be responsible stewards of clients' equity," Tom says.

"Here at MaxHousePrice, we want all our clients happy with the finished product. We go above and beyond. We truly value the relationship with the real estate agent and their clients! It can be very humbling just to know how absolutely essential MaxHousePrice and our team can be to an agent's business. We love to be a necessary resource for all real estate agents and we love to see them have tremendous success!"

Call 703-215-2144 or email info@ maxhouseprice.com for a free estimate, or visit MaxHousePrice.com to learn more.



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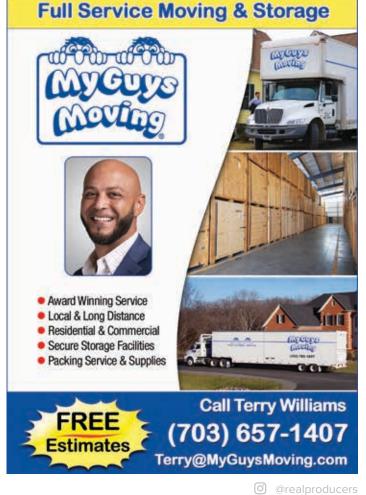
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Desire Rejection

Home Is Where the Heart Is

"Home is where your story begins, and I'll help you get there!"

This is Desiree Rejelli's famous tagline. She has a passion for helping people find their perfect homes, and as a top REALTOR® who knows the ins and outs of the housing market, she has worked with buyers and sellers for more than 15 years as Desiree Sells Homes LLC, powered by Samson Properties.

Originally of Lebanese descent, Desiree was born in Trinidad and Tobago in the Caribbean, where she grew up watching her parents work hard to provide for their family. Her father owned a hardware store, and this is where Desiree learned to interact with people from a young age. Later, Desiree relocated to London, England, and then Dubai, before settling in Northern Virginia, where she has been residing since 2008.



A Leap of Faith

Desiree began her career in the U.S. as a bank teller. She quickly rose through the ranks to branch manager and was awarded "Branch Manager of the Year" three times. "If there is one thing you will quickly learn about me, I never put in just 100 percent," Desiree says with a laugh. "I will always put in double or triple the effort."

While working in the banking industry, however, Desiree always had the feeling that something was missing. It was her mother, Issaaf, who works as a Realtor in Lebanon, who encouraged Desiree to take the leap into real estate — which she eventually did in 2009. "I believe that you have to take chances if you want to get somewhere in life. You have to feel uncomfortable to get comfortable," she notes. Working with Donny Samson and the team of over 5,000 agents at Samson Properties is where she says she found her second home.

Today, with 15 years of experience in real estate, Desiree is one of the most

sought-after agents in Northern Virginia, with exceptional knowledge of the market and an unparalleled commitment to her clients. She has worked with clients from all over the world, and her international background allows her to understand the diverse needs and concerns of different cultures.

Helping Secure the Best Deal

"Real estate is a great industry to be in and there's so much satisfaction to be had from helping people find their perfect home,"

Desiree says. "It is my passion to help my clients wherever I can. I love being able to match people with the right property and see the joy on their faces when the deal is closed. It's a wonderful feeling knowing that you've helped someone secure the best deal."

Desiree's hard work, dedication, and determination has certainly paid off. She was featured in NOVA Real Producers magazine in 2019 as a top producer in Northern Virginia. Her other achievements include a Samson Award Diamond in 2021 and 2022, NOVA Real Producers Badges 2018 through 2022, NVAR Platinum Producer and Prestigious Top Producer's President's Club from 2018 to 2022. Desiree is also a proud member of the National Association



of REALTORS® and ranks in the Top 500 out of over 40,000 agents in NOVA and in the top 5 percent of Realtors nationwide.

Sharing Her Success

Desiree says she believes in giving back to her community and making a difference. "I'm driven by a strong sense of purpose and am constantly looking for ways to give back," she says.

One such occasion was when Desiree had the honor of assisting a school teacher with the purchase of a new



home. The teacher was in a difficult financial situation, but Desiree understood how important it was for her to have a safe and comfortable place to call home. With this in mind, she made the selfless decision to forego her commission and help the teacher achieve financial security and peace of mind. This act of kindness is just one example of how Desiree uses her success to make a difference in the lives of others, demonstrating her unwavering dedication to those in need.

Desiree notes she is also very active on social media. "I'm always sharing my knowledge with the real estate market to keep followers updated on the latest changes in the market." She adds, "The real estate industry is very competitive and can be quite daunting, especially with the current economic downturn."

For Desiree, positive reviews from clients are essential to taking her

business to the next level. In addition to growing her business even more in the residential market, Desiree was recently afforded an opportunity to spread her wings and break new ground in commercial real estate.

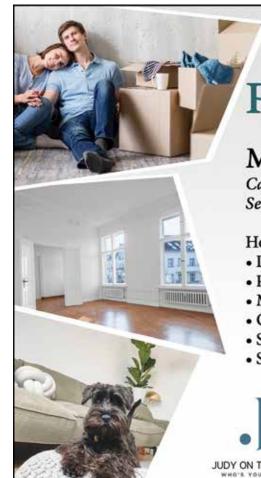
At Home with Desiree

Despite her demanding career, Desiree never loses sight of the importance of family. Desiree adores her grandchildren, Elyas (3), Juleen (2), and granddaughter Gianna (expected in April 2023), just in time for the release of this issue of NOVA Real Producers.

Desiree loves to spend time with her family, including son, Nick, and daughter-in-law, Dareen. Her favorite is creating delicious meals inspired by Lebanese cuisine. To Desiree, there is nothing more fulfilling that seeing her family and friends savor her food and enjoy time together.



Desiree Rejeili is also mom to her two Westies, Chloe (7) and Charly (1). Her beloved Westie, Oliver, who was featured in her last photo shoot with NOVA Real Producers in 2019, sadly passed away at the age of 7 in March 2021. It was a devastating loss for Desiree, and she wants to honor him in this issue.



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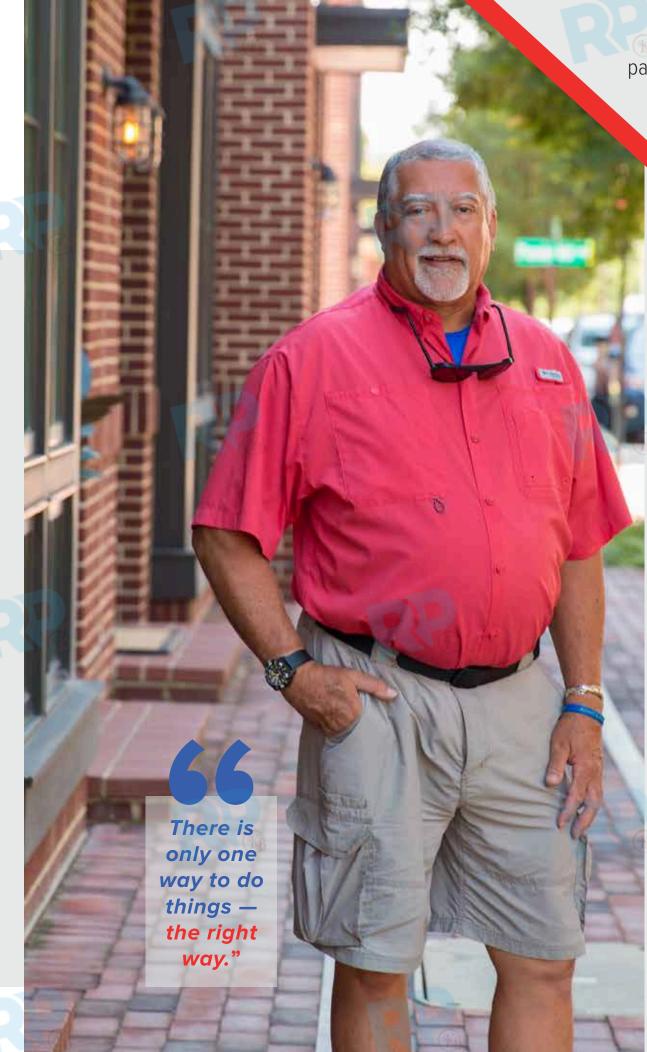
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FERNANDEZ-SARDINA

A Passion for People

Tony Fernandez-Sardina has always had a passion for two things amongst many others: people and architecture. "Human beings have always fascinated me," he says. "I love observing human behavior and interactions ... people watching and, above all, working with people."



partner spotlight

By **Zachary Cohen** Photos by **Ryan Corvello**

These interests led Tony first into the travel industry, where his very first job was as a tour guide, then a travel agent, international tour operator, working in airlines, rental agencies and, later, in hotels, where he worked his way from activities director to general manager of all-inclusive resort hotels in various Caribbean destinations. As a hotelier, his interest in building resulted in a period as part of an opening team supervising the final stages of hotel construction and openings.

After returning to the U.S. in 2004,
Tony was managing restaurants when he discovered home inspections in 2007 ... and he hasn't looked back since. First, with a local company, and later, as owner-operator of his own firm,
Rn HomeTech Home Inspection Services
LLC, Tony has



Tony Sardina-Fernandez is owner of home inspection company Rn HomeTech.

conducted well over 5,000 home inspections and related services for clients in Maryland, Virginia, and Washington, D.C.

Living by the Golden Rule

Tony was raised to believe in the Golden Rule: "Do unto others as you would have others do unto you."

"I was brought up to hold the conviction that every human being has a moral obligation to help others — not for my own benefit, but because it helps others and, just as importantly, it helps society, in general," he clarifies. Tony says he was raised to respect each and every individual as an equal, regardless of "categorization." "My parents taught me and my siblings that we are all one people — that we are all equal, that we all deserve respect and to be treated with dignity, and that the *only* time we should look down on a fellow human being is when we stoop to extend a helping hand."

Putting People First

"Making the switch to the home inspection industry was actually not as different from hotels as one would imagine. Both require extensive knowledge and supervision of the physical infrastructure and systems," Tony says.

He has been able to take the people skills he cultivated in the hospitality industry and apply them to the home inspection business. He's well-versed in customer service and, as a result, can understand the needs of both homebuyers and real estate agents in a way that many home inspectors cannot. "Having been a sales and marketing director at various points in my career gives me deep insight into what REALTORS®' roles are as well," Tony says. "Working with people ... it is what I've done all my life. I am fond of saying that what I really know, more than hotels or home inspections, is people."

Rn HomeTech: A Complete Solution

At Rn HomeTech, Tony and his team conduct detailed, thorough home inspections. Their services include radon testing, termite inspections, mold inspections and testing, infrared imaging services, and more. Tony utilizes the latest equipment and most up-to-date technology available, ensuring his clients have the most detailed and accurate information.

"Our inspectors wear a tool belt with over 15 different tools, including, but not limited to, infrared thermometers, moisture meters, laser measuring devices, high-tech flashlights, GFCI and voltage testers, and more," Tony says. "We take over 300 high-resolution digital pictures per home inspection with state-of-the-art digital cameras."

people feel that and respond accordingly.

Tony's approach to home inspection is "truth without sensationalism." He believes it's his responsibility to deliver accurate, transparent results while avoiding fear-inducing language and conclusions. "We operate in the knowledge that it is possible to be honest about the issues we may find in a home without the need to exaggerate or blow them out of proportion," he says.

Tony doesn't exaggerate findings because he has no desire to be a hero. Instead, he intends to be an honest, straightforward piece of the homebuying puzzle. "We are very thorough. We are detail-oriented, and train and study to improve our knowledge base. We are punctual and professional. We believe it benefits everyone involved if we take the time to explain everything to the buyer during the inspection and thus avoid calls with questions that should have been addressed at the home inspection. We also have the most detailed home inspection reports on the market, bar none!"

The Importance of Home Inspections

"Over the past two years, the real estate market, in general, and the MD/VA/DC market, in particular, went bananas. Sales were through the roof, inventory through the floor, and many, if not most, buyers were compelled to forgo their home inspections, buying their homes essentially in the dark as to their condition," Tony points out. "It is concerning that buyers were often unable to find out the condition of, for many, their single largest investment and the place their families

are now living. A great many post-purchase inspections have revealed costly conditions, which they now have to absorb the repair costs of."

"While the reduction of home inspections has certainly affected home inspectors, for me, personally, it goes against the concept of fair play and treating others as one would be treated by them. It all goes back to the Golden Rule," says Tony.

Tony is a father of three grown children living in various countries around the world and loves to spend time with them.

In his free time, Tony volunteers as an adaptive ski instructor with Two Top Adaptive Sports Foundation, a nonprofit dedicated to teaching skiing, snowboarding, cycling, waterskiing, and wakeboarding to people with differing abilities, including wounded veterans. Tony is also a golfer and a hiker, and loves reading and music.

For more information, call 301-221-0357 or visit RnHomeTech.com.

46 · April 2023 NOVA Real Producers • 47







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RISING TO THE TOP

The last time *Real Producers* sat down with Jin Wickwire, she was featured as a NOVA Rising Star. Four years later, she has the honor of gracing the cover of the magazine — a testament to her continued growth in the real estate business.

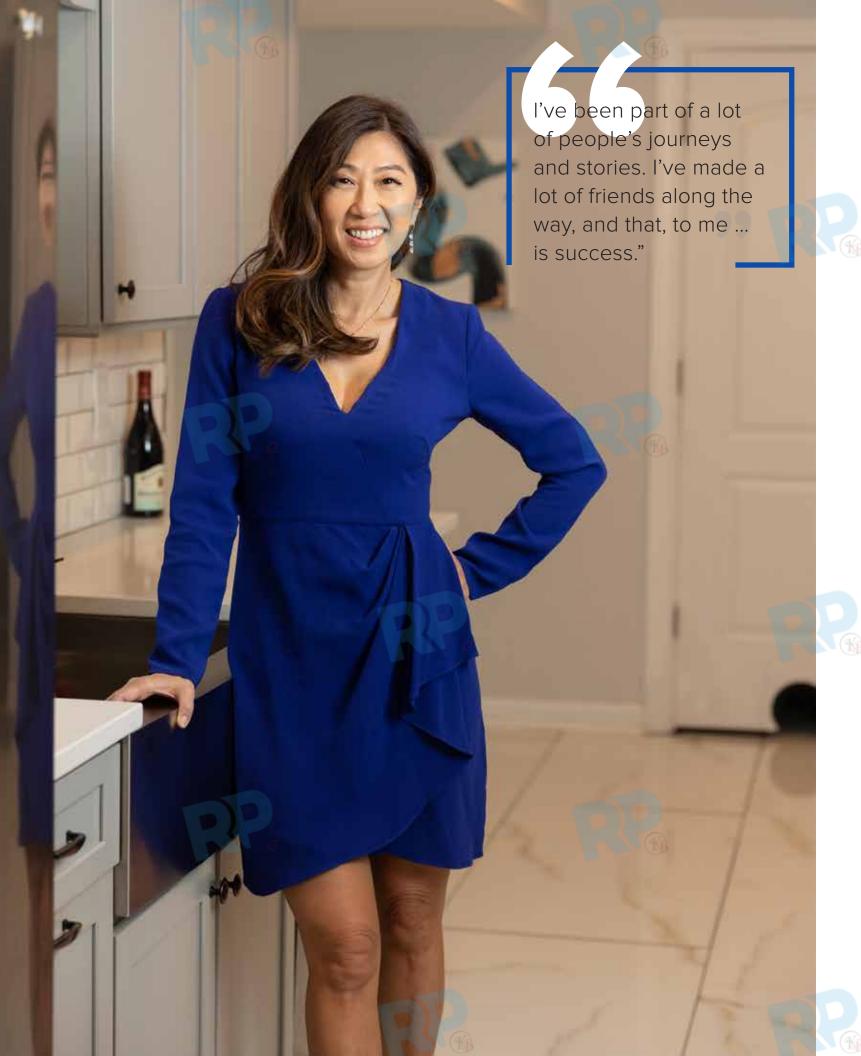
"This is huge for me," Jin smiles. "It means, to me, that all my hard work has paid off. It's not been easy, but it also means I've helped an incredible number of families achieve their real estate goals and dreams. I've been part of a lot of people's journeys and stories. I've made a lot of friends along theway, which feels very rewarding. That, to me, is success."

CHASING SUCCESS

A feeling of fulfillment has long been something Jin has sought. Initially, her quest for fulfillment through service led her into social work. Before her real estate career, Jin spent 16 years as a social worker, including 12 years with the Loudoun County Public Schools.



NOVA Real Producers • 51





"I always had a desire to help people. That's where my personality, interests, and talents leaned: to listen, to be patient. That's naturally who I am," Jin explains.

After 16 years in social work, however, Jin needed a change. Her work was surprisingly unrewarding, and all too often, she didn't have the opportunity to celebrate success with her students.

"It was nice to know I was making an impact on someone's life, being part of their journey, but the challenges were that sometimes people didn't change the way I hoped. Plus, I rarely felt appreciated. Over time, I was making this lower salary, giving of myself, and feeling unappreciated. It wore on me."

REAL ESTATE CALLS

Jin turned to real estate in 2015, originally as an investor. She never imagined that she'd be a REALTOR® full-time or that her work would be as rewarding as it has been.

"I decided to take a real estate class just to learn more about real estate investing. Then, I figured I could get my license and sell some real estate on the side. I never intended on being a full-time real estate agent," Jin offers.

By year two, Jin's real estate income exceeded her social work income, and feeling burnt out, she decided to move into real estate full-time. Her transition into real estate was a difficult decision but has paid immense dividends. She's more successful, and more fulfilled, than she's ever been.

"It's been a wild ride," she beams.

"More so than I could have imagined or hoped for."

realproducersmag.com NOVA Real Producers • 53



RISING TO THE TOP

Today, Jin's real estate business is thriving. She closed 55 homes for \$43 million in 2022, the same year she founded The Wickwire Group with eXp Realty. Her husband, David, is also a licensed Realtor; he assists with transaction coordination and inside sales.

"I take real estate very personally," Jin says. "It impacts me when someone says 'Thank you.' I'm professional, but I approach the business in a friendly, personable, and warm manner."

Jin's success has been due to many of the same qualities that made her a good social worker. She's patient, empathetic, and responsive. She has a passion for serving others.

As Jin looks ahead, she plans to continue growing her business and serving her community. She's not looking to create the largest team or become the number one agent in her area, but rather, maintain a steady business that allows her to live a life of joy and fulfillment.

"My goal is to work hard every day and complete the tasks I need to complete to be successful, and to be of assistance to others. I think I'm going to do real estate for as long as I can, but I'm not into the rat race. I don't want to work until I die. That's not my goal. My goal is to do my best every day and find a work-life balance, and that life balance includes spending time with my wonderful husband, two dogs, family, and friends. That's part of my feeling of success and fulfillment.

Jin Wickwire has a love for travel and food. "I travel both domestically and internationally, but still, my favorite place is Hawaii. Food-wise, my favorite is Asian food, and my second favorite is Mexican. I also love to take pictures of my food,"

she smiles.

"But for now, I'm plugging away. I don't typically set transaction-number or gross-volume goals for myself. I just take it as it comes. I work hard, focus on my clients, and focus on the work in front of me. I've done better than I've ever expected because I never expected anything from the beginning. It's all been a wonderful and rewarding surprise. I'm very thankful."



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healthy living

GROUND YOURSELF

in Nature This Spring

Bridge the gap between your body and the natural world through springtime mindfulness.

By Shauna Bryant, National Editor

As T.S. Eliot reminded readers in 1922, "April is the cruellest month." Here, the famed modernist poet refers to, among other things, the liminal state between the cold and starkness of the landscape during winter and the promise of renewal and fruitfulness in spring, particularly for yesteryear's agrarian societies. However, the transitional nature of April remains difficult over a century later; the lingering pall of winter still chills our days, and serotonin and vitamin levels struggle, while the earth begins to warm and transform, impacting expectations and rhythms. How can we navigate the changing seasons in harmony with our bodies and minds? Try one of the following therapeutic techniques this month.

Forest bathing: Originating in Japan, forest bathing encourages connection to nature through our senses. Don't worry, no actual bathing is involved — rath-

er, a slow, mindful walk in nature allows the bather to focus deliberately on their surroundings, tethered to the sights and sounds of the present moment. This practice has been linked to lower blood pressure, heart rate and levels of cortisol, depression, fatigue and anxiety.

Grounding: Also called "earthing," grounding is the practice of realigning our energy with the earth's natural electric charge, supporting the body's ability to heal and regulate itself. This technique involves direct skin contact with the earth's surface (e.g., walking barefoot, lying on the sand, swimming in natural bodies of water). Grounding has been shown to reduce inflammation and chronic pain and improve blood flow, energy levels, sleep and mood.

This year, celebrate Earth Day — April 22 — by getting your feet on the earth and your head in the forest. Your health will thank you!







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Teams and Individuals Closed Data from Jan. 1 to Feb. 28, 2023

RANK NAME OFFICE SELLING SELLING \$ BUYING BUYING \$ SALES TOTAL \$ RANK NAME OFFICE SELLING SELLING \$ BUY- BUYING \$ SALES TOTAL # ING #



Teams and Individuals Closed Data from Jan. 1 to Feb. 28, 2023

SELL-**SELLING \$** ING#

Disclaimer: Information based on MLS closed data as of March 7, 2023, for residential sales from January 1, 2023, to February 28, 2023, in Virginia, Marylandand Washington, D.C., by agents licensed in our Northern Virginia service area, including Alexandria City, Arlington, Fairfax City, Fairfax County, Falls Church City, Loudoun County and Prince William County. Numbers not reported to the MLS by the date the information is retrieved are not included. MLS is not responsible for submitting this data. Some teams may report each agent individually.



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Teams and Individuals Closed Data from Jan. 1 to Feb. 28, 2023

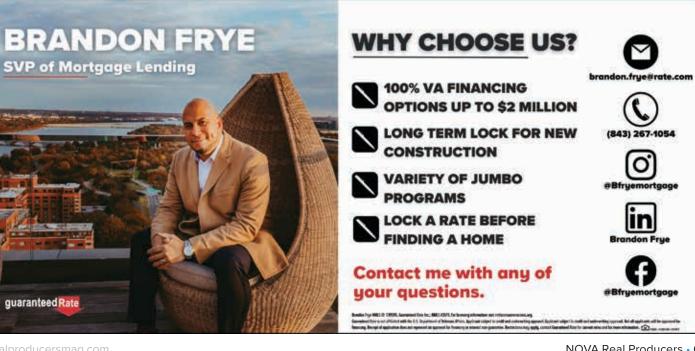
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Teams and Individuals Closed Data from Jan. 1 to Feb. 28, 2023

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