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If you are interested in contributing or nominating Realtors for certain stories, please email us at [ml.rauch@realproducersmag.com](mailto:ml.rauch@realproducersmag.com), or call ML at (505) 250-0092.

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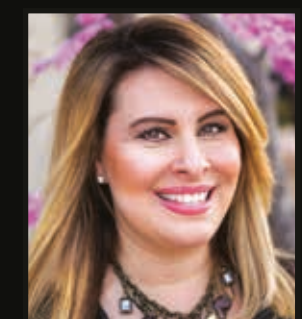
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By Elizabeth McCabe  
Photos by Kate Rodriguez

# BENCO

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“I started in the electrical business because I thought we could provide something that was missing,” says Ben Schroeder, owner of Benco Electric LLC.

Ben, who admits that he has “always had a problem sitting still,” likes the satisfaction of building things and completing tasks. Being an electrician is a rewarding profession for him, especially because he likes to help others. “Almost to a fault,” he clarifies.

Interestingly, being an electrician wasn’t his first choice. “I wanted to be a police officer or a cowboy,” he reflects. “I wanted something action-packed and to always be on the move.” He discovered his career almost by accident. “I kind of fell into it,” he admits. In between high school and college, his brother used to be a journeyman and an electrician. Ben followed in his footsteps.

“I started working as a parts runner at the shop where my brother worked,” he explains. Working his way through college, Ben tried a number of different jobs. He continued pursuing his passion for being an electrician, working for another electrical company and gaining invaluable experience and expertise for nine years. He earned his journeyman license by working for eight thousand hours under a journey for on-the-job training, which he completed in 2014. Then he got his electrical contractor’s license in 2016.



I have strong communication and prompt response. It’s one less thing that REALTORS® have to worry about.



“Then I started my own company,” says Ben proudly. “I have a strong background in commercial, industrial, and residential electricity.” Being an electrician fits perfectly with his natural ability for problem solving. He also excels in keeping a meticulous jobsite, doing top-quality work, and providing affordable pricing. “Everyone deserves that,” he points out.

With his knowledge of real estate, he understands the concerns that Albuquerque top-producing REALTORS® have. “I have strong communication and prompt response,” he explains. “It’s one less thing that REALTORS® have to worry about.”

Best of all, Ben loves his work, taking his clients’ concerns to heart and implementing solutions with his thoughtful approach and custom-tailored solutions. He works with everything from new builds to remodeling.

“I like taking a client’s vision and bringing it to life,” he explains. “If they have a problem, I like being able to solve that problem in the best, safest, most economical and practical way. I get a great sense of satisfaction when I solve issues for my clients.” Issues can be fixed with ease. “The harder issues that take more effort are the ones that you really appreciate the most,” he adds.

#### Family Matters

Ben also appreciates working with his family. His wife, Santana, plays an integral role in the company, handling paperwork and financial matters. Their three-year-old daughter brings joy and inspiration to their lives, reminding them of what truly matters. By creating a positive work-life balance, Ben understands the importance of taking time for family and enjoying the outdoors, whether it’s camping, hunting, or simply cherishing moments together.

“I had a strong feeling that I would enjoy parenthood, but it is above and beyond anything I could have imagined,” he smiles. Pretending to be dinosaurs in the backyard, playing hide and seek, and simply savoring quality time with his daughter is priceless.

#### For More Information

With a passion for problem-solving, a dedication to quality work, and a commitment to customer satisfaction, Ben has established himself as a reliable

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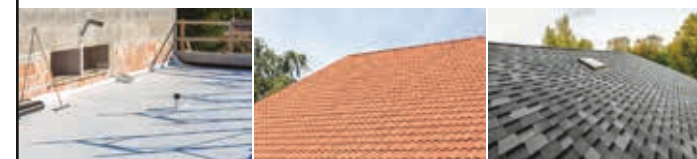


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# CHRIS

## Venegas

By Annie Hagstrom • Photos by Liz Lopez

**Chris Venegas always had full-circle success in the cards—that is one thing he made sure of.**

Growing up in Rio Rancho, Chris' parents created a foundation of support that helped him thrive from a young age. "They were always there for everything I did," he said. Chris participated in football and was the president of the DECA program for Rio Rancho High School. "I learned discipline and how efficient processes work through football," he said.

Always seeking the freedom that being financially stable can provide, Chris developed an entrepreneurial spirit that springboarded him into an action plan he would stick to for years. "I knew I didn't want to go to college, so I would make money buying things and selling them on Facebook Marketplace or Craigslist," he said. "I would flip things—mostly car parts and collectibles." Though he successfully found business through resale, he wanted to delve into something new. For Chris, real estate was that calling.

Because the cost of real estate schooling wasn't something Chris could afford then, being fresh out of high school, he sold everything he had accumulated, like Lego sets and Transformer collectibles. He promised himself he would buy back everything when he

had the means. To stick to this goal, Chris developed a five-year plan. "My goal with real estate has always been to invest in rental properties," he said. "But, to do that, I learned you have to be qualified, and there are a lot of steps to take before you get to that point."

With his end goal in mind, in January 2018, Chris' plan began with a jolt. "I had never studied harder for anything in my life—I was extremely determined to pass," he said, referring to the real estate exam. After passing his exam and entering his first year as a REALTOR®, Chris sustained his momentum and developed a routine where he worked seven days a week building his business. "After my first year, I won the Rookie of the Year award for GAAR," Chris said. He was only 20 when he was honored with the award, which helped kickstart his reputation and network.

Chris approached his work diligently, ensuring he knew who the top-performing agents were in the area, and he met with them to learn their methods of success. "I saw what they were doing and knew I had to do that five times more to be on par with them," he said. Chris is now competing against or working with those same agents. He even mentors new agents, through which he has found REALTORS® to join his team, The Venegas Group.

▶▶ agent on the rise

### The Venegas Group



“

We want to show how capable the younger generation is, and the train we are on is full-speed ahead.





To me, success is staying consistent with your business plan and the timeline you create.

Today, Chris has built a top-producing team and is proud to advertise that he is the oldest member of The Vegenas Group at only 25 years old. "It's a full team of younger people," he said. "We want to show how capable the younger generation is, and the train we are on is full-speed ahead." Chris defines success in several ways, but reaching his original goal is one of the biggest. "I just completed my five-year plan—I checked everything off," he said. "To me, success is staying consistent with your business plan and the timeline you create." Now, Chris has a new goal, but this time around, it's a three-year plan.

"The first five years were about building a fundamental basis, and these next three years will be more of the exciting work," he said. "It feels full circle—the whole point has been to buy rental properties, and now I own five residential homes and a warehouse in Los Ranchos." When he can, Chris dedicates just as much effort toward his life outside of work as he does within it.

"I love to travel to bigger metros and have a fun night out on the weekend with friends," Chris said. His love for cars still stands, which was instilled by his family early on. "I have a Corvette that I get a thrill out of driving," he said. In describing his perfect day, Chris says it would include driving with the top down, listening to music, and spending the evening on the town.

## NOMINATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS!

### NOMINATE YOUR FAVORITE AGENT:

We are always accepting nominations for feature stories! If you know a colleague who is absolutely on fire and deserving of celebration, we would love to feature them in an upcoming edition of ABQ Real Producers magazine! Categories may include Top Producer, Agent on the Rise, Team Leader, Broker, Making a Difference, Flying Solo, etc. To nominate a fellow REALTOR®, simply scan this QR code and follow the prompts. We look forward to receiving your nominations!



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“I do whatever it takes to get to my client’s goal,” says REALTOR® Kim Plummer at Realty One of New Mexico. “No matter the challenge, type of property, price, location. I give the assignment my full attention and energy. The buyer/seller chose me over many folks. I keep a grateful attitude no matter the challenge.”

Her heart for service was instilled at a young age, working at Chuck E. Cheese & Uncle Cliffs as a teenager, then waitressing/bartending through her college years. “I’ve always been in the customer service industry,” she reflects. “I learned how to handle high-stress, fast-moving situations and folks from every walk of life.” Little did she know that these skills would be invaluable in the world of real estate years later.

Kim discovered real estate at 43, after blazing her own trail as a rare female

in the beer distributor industry. “In 1996, I thankfully got an opportunity to work for the Maloof Company Coors Distributor as the marketing assistant. “Finally got to use my Marketing degree ... at least to get my foot in the door! I had never worked in an office. After a few years of learning the day-to-day operations, I got promoted to a coveted full-time sales rep position. I was out in the market handling over 100 bar/restaurant accounts year-round. It was such an incredible experience! Almost 19 years later, I had made great friends, learned ultimate customer service and lessons in business, and made forever connections throughout the city and surrounding area. At that point, I made the very tough decision to take a leap of faith into real estate.”

“It’s all about customer service,” she explained. “Now after 10 years in real estate, absorbing the ups and downs and learning from mistakes and lessons, I have to keep moving forward, kindly, no matter the turbulence. One thing that does not change is how you handle your buyer or seller.”

“

My goal is to stay calm, be kind and compassionate in all circumstances, be a good listener, and be non-judgmental. We all have ‘stuff’ going on in our personal lives. It always works out the way it’s supposed to.

”

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Kim goes to great lengths to stay positive and focused on the end goal in every transaction. Why? “It all comes down to positive word of mouth, good juju between brokers, referrals, repeat clients.” With her commitment, she has built a successful career through hard work, drive and dedication.

That doesn’t mean the road is always easy. One of the challenges that Kim faces is maintaining a healthy work-life balance... aka taking real time off. Recognizing the importance of personal time, she loves to camp, bicycle, hike, and spend time with family and friends. Although she is still a work in progress, every moment of ‘free time’ is used wisely and to the fullest.

“I don’t like to waste time,” she admits. “I excitedly plan for what is next.” Whether it’s a quick camping trip to regenerate energy, a motorcycle ride through Tijeras, or a walk in the foothills with pups... every moment is enjoyed. Time becomes more precious as the years fly by. Her mission is to enjoy this delicious life we’ve been given.

Flying solo in real estate has caused Kim to excel in ways she never thought possible. From hops to homes, this successful real estate professional is living her best life and finding fulfillment in the challenging day-to-day life of a broker. She wouldn’t have it any other way.



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JENNIFER

cover story  
By Elizabeth McCabe  
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WILSON



## JEN WILSON HOME TEAM

### *Exceeding Expectations with Excellence*

“I enjoy what I do,” smiles REALTOR® Jennifer Wilson with RE/MAX Select. She is passionate about her profession as evident by her unwavering commitment to her clients.

Growing up in Houston, she attended Mount Vernon College in Washington D.C. to study Arts, Humanities, and Comparative Cultures. “I liked architecture and looking at houses,” she explains. Little did she know that years later she would have the opportunity to show houses as a REALTOR®.

In 1991, she moved to Albuquerque and got her license in March 1995. “I’ve been a REALTOR® for twenty-eight years,” she reflects. “I love it a little more than when I started. It’s always growing, changing and evolving with practices and different laws.” Fortunately, Jennifer stays on top of the legislative changes for her clients.

She also caters to their needs, eager to put her clients first and help them achieve their real estate goals. Jennifer comments, “My fulfillment comes more from what I’m able to give and do for my clients.” She loves meeting people’s needs, finding solutions that meet their budgets and beyond.

“I love figuring out what a person’s needs are and what their goals are,” she points out.

Meeting those goals is what it is all about for this dedicated and driven real estate professional. Recently, she had someone relocating and eager to put down roots in New Mexico. Jennifer was eager to help her find her forever home, finding a place where she felt comfortable and where she felt she belonged. It’s not about a house to her, but a home. Finding a place where someone can put down roots and establish community and connection comes naturally to her. To date, Jennifer has lived in three different states and has relocated twice across the country by herself. She understands the challenges of moving and finding the right fit.

“I’m a little bit of a matchmaker,” she points out. “I like the emotional aspect of it too.” Moving and relocation can be an adventure. Jennifer is there to help every step of the way. From start to finish, she is there for her clients with her heart of compassion and eagerness to lend a helping hand.



Negotiating also comes easily to her as a savvy and strategic problem solver. She competes with herself and is always pushing herself to be her best. One thing she can't control, however, is the market. "It's my biggest challenge," she says. "It's ever changing. You study it, reinvent yourself, do whatever you need to do for your buyers and sellers." Being aware and being present is essential in real estate with the changes in the market in recent years.

In addition to helping her clients, Jennifer takes joy in helping the community. She explains, "I started a scholarship for women for higher education. I take ten percent of my income and donate it to help women get through college." She started this passion project in 2021.

"It's important for me to give back," she says. "I don't have children. I started with one young woman who has had a lot of challenges, but a lot of passion and intelligence. I felt

drawn to help start a scholarship and continue to do so. I want to help other women achieve their goals."

#### Recharging from Real Estate

When Jennifer isn't working, she loves to garden with her green thumb. "I do mostly veggies and herbs," she shares. Lately, she has taken an interest in succulents with the hot temperatures. Another pastime of Jennifer's is cooking. "I also like jewelry making and design," she adds thoughtfully.

In addition to her gardening and cooking, Jennifer works with an investment group that does flips. When they go into a dilapidated home, they don't see a problem. They see promise and potential. Restoring houses from messes to masterpieces comes easily to them. "I don't think of that as work," reflects Jennifer. "It's just something that I love to do."

To relax, you can find Jennifer swimming, doing yoga, and soaking

in hot springs. "Water is how I relax," she says. "My dream is to buy a piece of land and realize it had a hot spring on it."

She also likes traveling, visiting Houston several times a year. "I also go on sister trips three times a year," she comments. "Two of my sisters are my best friends," she says. "No matter what, we have each other's backs." Dealing with their Mom's aging and care brought them closer together as sisters.

#### Built to Last

Jennifer has stood the test of time in real estate. Her longevity speaks volumes to the level of client satisfaction that she has built over the years. Her work ethic has served her well. As she says, "I'm a keep my head down and work kind of person." She loves her career in real estate, finding fulfillment in helping others. This top producer has helped countless clients in real estate and many more to come.



“  
I'm a keep  
my head  
down and  
work kind  
of person.  
”



“  
I love figuring  
out what a person's  
needs are and what  
their goals are.  
”



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