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20 COVER STORY Jonathan & Megan Lazaro

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Hello, Real Producers!

April rolls in with a different kind of energy. The days stretch longer, and the opportunities multiply as the market heats up—an exciting time for those who lead the way in real estate. As top producers, you set the pace by embracing change and seizing every opportunity that comes your way.

At the core of our success lies a simple yet powerful belief: ***The heartbeat of Real Producers is to elevate the culture of our real estate community by inspiring us to know one another better. When we know one another better, we treat each other better. When we treat each other better, we create a culture of trust, and when we trust one another, doing business together becomes an honor and a privilege.***

In this issue, we bring you compelling stories of top producers and a featured business partner who embody this spirit of connection and excellence. Their journeys remind us that our



industry isn't just about transactions—it's about building lasting relationships that foster trust and mutual respect.

As always, please support our preferred partners, the folks who make this publication possible. Each partner has an ad in each issue and appears on our Preferred Partners listing at the front of the magazine.

As you navigate this dynamic season, remember that our greatest strength lies

in our ability to connect, support, and elevate one another to create a foundation of trust that makes doing business truly meaningful.

Be Blessed,
Betty



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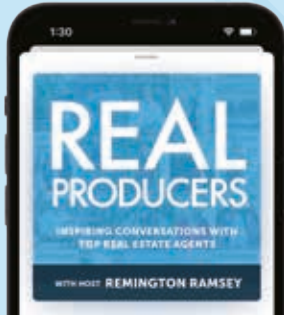
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Appalachian Foundation Services



STORY BY MADDIE PODISH
PHOTOS BY AMBER PERDUE,
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A home's foundation is one of its most critical components, ensuring stability and longevity. For Hunter Crigler, owner of Appalachian Foundation Services, the structural integrity of a house has always been a point of fascination. Rather than focusing on cosmetic details, he is drawn to the framework that holds everything together. With over 20 years in the construction industry, Hunter has transformed this passion into a thriving local business that supports homeowners, real estate agents, and property management companies.

Originally from Radford, VA, Hunter moved to the area in 2010, building a life centered around his family and the outdoors. He and his wife, Brittany, have been married for 12 years and have two children—a 9-year-old son and a 6-year-old daughter. In 2015, Hunter started his business in the foreclosure industry, preserving the bank's assets and ensuring they were safe and presentable for resale. In 2020, his business strategy shifted to focus on foundation repairs and structural restoration.

Appalachian Foundation Services specializes in foundation repairs, structural



restoration for modern and historic homes, and waterproofing solutions for basements and crawl spaces. The company's expertise extends to a full line of foundation repair solutions, mobile home anchoring, deck repair, termite damage repair, and water management solutions.

Many homeowners are unaware of foundation issues until visible symptoms appear or an inspection brings them to light. Problems such as cracks in foundation walls, bulging

or leaning walls caused by water pressure, misaligned doors and windows, and cracks in brick exteriors are all signs that repairs may be needed. Because homeowners rarely inspect their crawl spaces or know what to look for, these issues often go unnoticed for years. "Not everyone goes into their crawl space," Hunter explains. "Sometimes, people don't even know what they should be looking for."

The real estate market plays a significant role in the company's work, as home

inspections frequently uncover foundation concerns that weren't previously on the homeowner's radar. As a result, Appalachian Foundation Services works closely with REALTORS® to address these issues before they escalate.

What sets the company apart is its commitment to integrity. Instead of using fear-based sales tactics, the team provides honest assessments and thorough inspections. If an issue exists, they explain it clearly; if not, they advise homeowners to monitor the situation rather than pushing unnecessary repairs. Their detailed inspection process covers every accessible part of the home, ensuring no hidden problems go unnoticed. "We check every square inch we can access," Hunter says. "Just because a customer calls about a crack on one side of the house doesn't mean there isn't another issue elsewhere that they haven't noticed."

Beyond the work itself, Hunter takes the most pride

in seeing his employees thrive. Watching team members grow, achieve financial stability, and provide for their families drives him. Since launching the company, Hunter has seen an impressive retention rate, with no employees leaving since 2019. His leadership philosophy is simple: Take care of employees, and they will take care of customers. "At the end of the day, I can sleep at night knowing we run an honest business," he remarks.

A home is one of the most significant investments a person can make, and maintaining a strong foundation is essential to its safety and value. Appalachian Foundation Services offers expert guidance and reliable service for homeowners concerned about a crack in the basement or a real estate agent who needs a structural inspection.

In the end, Hunter's work is not just about fixing foundations—it's about protecting homes and giving homeowners peace of mind.



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Liz Pino

eXp Realty

STORY BY
MADDIE PODISH
PHOTOS BY
AMBER PERDUE,
AMBER PERDUE
PHOTOGRAPHY

For Liz Pino, real estate isn't just about buying and selling homes—it's about making an impact. As a REALTOR® with eXp Realty, Liz has spent the past four years building a thriving career by focusing on what truly matters: her clients. With a background in education, business, and entrepreneurship, her journey to real estate has been anything but conventional.



Liz grew up in Delaware, where her entrepreneurial spirit was evident from a young age. Whether running lemonade stands or shoveling driveways, she found joy in serving others. “When I started my own business, it all came full circle,” she recalls.

Recruited to Liberty University for pole vault and track, Liz met her husband, Talloch, during her time there. After graduating, she spent 10 years as a teacher in Lynchburg, VA, and later transitioned to various roles at Liberty University for six more years. Throughout everything, her entrepreneurial drive remained strong, leading her to start Liz's Pampered Pups, a doggy daycare business. Building the business from the ground up, she learned how to brand, market, and grow a company. Although that period was fulfilling, managing multiple jobs was challenging. She knew she wanted a career that connected her love for business, people, and service.

In 2014, Liz took a step toward real estate by working with a small team of REALTORS®. “I learned real estate from the inside out,” she explains. While she loved implementing systems and streamlining operations, she found herself increasingly interested in working directly with clients. “I wanted to be out in the community—helping families has always been my passion,” she comments.



Determined to transition into an agent role, Liz joined a team to gain firsthand experience. After three months of intense learning, she became a solo agent. Her background as a business owner made the transition seamless. “I focused on what matters most—my clients,” she shares.

Liz's approach to real estate is deeply rooted in her past experiences. Drawing on her time as a teacher, she compares managing a classroom to managing transactions. “Navigating different personalities, finding solutions, and educating clients—it's very similar,” she notes.

Her expertise spans a broad clientele, from first-time homebuyers to luxury buyers, but relocation has become a specialty. By connecting with buyers across the country, Liz helps clients relocate with ease. “It takes an enormous amount of trust for a relocation transaction to go smoothly,” she emphasizes. Liz ensures her clients feel included every step of the way, often visiting potential homes multiple times to assess every detail. “I'm their eyes and ears on the ground,” she states.

Her commitment to exceptional service is reflected in her tagline: Your family first. “Their needs, interests, and well-being are my top priority,” she says, adding that after a transaction closes, she encourages clients to reach out. “I want to be their resource for life.” This dedication has led to impressive success—closing nearly 150 homes in four years. Now equipped with expertise in luxury and relocation, Liz is confident in her ability to continue setting and exceeding her goals.

Liz's favorite things outside real estate are traveling and horseback riding, which fuel her need for change and adventure. She recently spent a week in Miami for a real estate conference, embracing opportunities to grow and connect. As an avid equestrian, she frequents multiple barns, a lifelong interest that began during her volunteer work at a stable in Delaware.

Blending her love for real estate with her love for animals, Liz hosts unique client appreciation events. For one memorable event, she rented a barn space where clients enjoyed a petting zoo, horse rides, a bounce house, games, and BBQ. “The biggest hit was the snow cones,” she laughs. One client even tagged her in a heartfelt Facebook post,

“
**THEIR NEEDS,
INTERESTS, AND
WELL-BEING ARE
MY TOP PRIORITY.**

thanking her for making his daughter’s dream of riding a horse come true.

For Liz, real estate is a ministry. “I show up with a warm smile and open heart, ready to serve and give back,” she shares. One of her greatest compliments was from a client who said, “Liz, you’re not here to make a living; you’re here to make a difference.”



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Jonathan & Megan Lazaro

MR REAL ESTATE TEAM

STORY BY MADDIE PODISH • PHOTOS BY KRISTINA ROSE PHOTOGRAPHY

Jonathan and Megan Lazaro, a dynamic duo with the MR Real Estate Team, are redefining the meaning of teamwork in real estate. Jonathan has been in the industry for five years, but his journey began in finance and investments. While helping clients plan their financial futures, he met Jay Mandell, now his broker, who quickly recognized his potential and encouraged him to explore real estate. Jonathan took the leap, and when he approached Megan about making the switch, she didn't hesitate.

"I knew he would kill it," Megan says proudly. However, real estate wasn't new to them—they had already gone through the home-buying process themselves. "I tell people all the time that it is the easiest thing I've ever done because when you're really passionate about what you do, it doesn't feel like work," Jonathan shares.

For Jonathan and Megan, working together was never a question. As a stay-at-home mom, Megan was already a "superhuman" in Jonathan's

eyes, managing their household and raising their children. When his real estate business began taking off, Megan stepped in seamlessly, just as she had done during his time in finance. "We've always been a team, no matter what we are doing," Jonathan explains. Though Megan officially obtained her license in July 2024, she had already been working alongside Jonathan for over a year, naturally gravitating toward the administrative side while Jonathan goes out in the field meeting and serving clients. Megan excels at handling the paperwork side of things. "I like to have everything in order to ensure clients have a smooth experience with the entire process," she notes. But make no mistake—Megan isn't afraid to get her hands dirty, often stepping in to help with manual labor while managing their rental properties.

Their teamwork extends far beyond business. From the beginning, faith and resilience have underscored their relationship. Jonathan recalls praying that the next woman he met would be his wife, and then came Megan, a sweet local girl who stole his heart. Married for 12 years, they left Belize and all they knew to start fresh in the United States.





After experiencing Oregon's damp weather, Jonathan urged Megan to consider a change—this time, a coast-to-coast move from West to East. Through multiple trials, they finally settled in Roanoke, where Jonathan believes their past challenges have strengthened them for anything the future may hold.

Their success in both business and marriage is rooted in open communication. Jonathan acknowledges how easy it is to get caught up in work, so he makes a conscious effort to stay grounded, always reminding himself that he and Megan are on the same team. Megan emphasizes the importance of seeing things from the other person's perspective to resolve conflicts early.

As they continue to grow their business, the Lazaros are establishing themselves in the luxury market while

also serving the Latino community, thanks to Jonathan's bilingual abilities. Regardless of background or budget, every client receives the same level of exceptional service. Jonathan sees it as a privilege to inspire others in their real estate journey, whether buying, selling, or investing. "If we, as a young couple not having grown up in the United States can do it, so can they," he asserts.

Jonathan's real estate success stems from his commitment to service and his unyielding drive to improve. Entering the industry during the chaotic COVID-19 market, he didn't back down. He actively sought feedback from experienced agents, strengthening his relationships within the industry and ensuring the best outcomes for his clients. Transparency remains a cornerstone of their business, always reminding

sons—Fabian (10), Sebastian (7), and Damian (4)—share unique birthday connections within the family. The family enjoys spending time at Smith Mountain Lake, with dreams of owning a getaway home there. The couple also enjoys mountain biking, including rides up to the Star, and cherishes simple moments together, whether over a cup of coffee or a neighborhood walk. Fun fact: They recently started taking dance lessons together and are thoroughly enjoying it.



clients that they are there to support, not push.

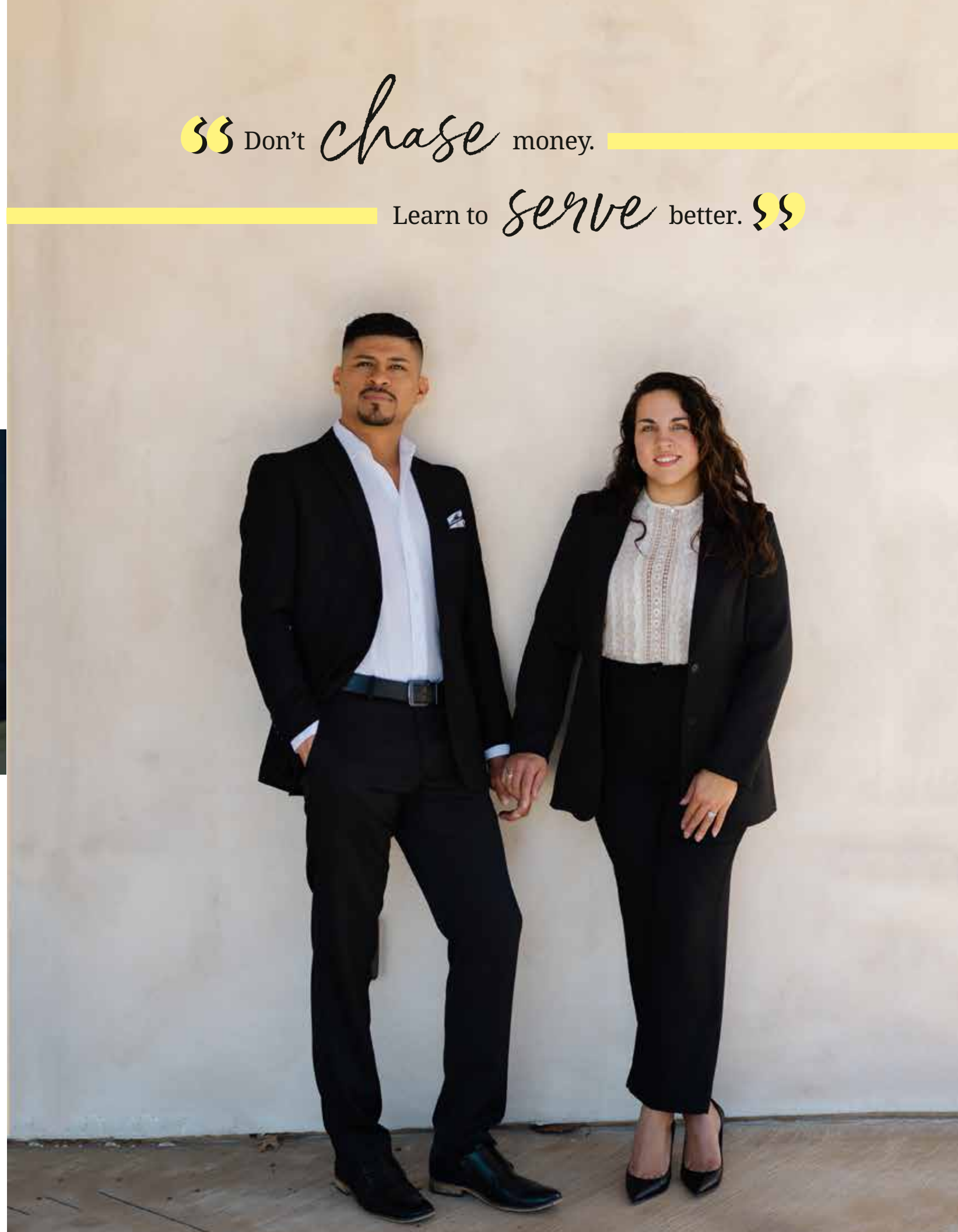
Looking ahead, Jonathan is preparing for his broker's license but isn't in a rush to expand his team. "I don't want to recruit—I want to attract people who want to work like us and have a mindset of continuous learning," he explains.

"Real estate has changed our lives in so many ways," Megan reflects. Despite their busy schedules, family remains their top priority. Their three

As professionals, Jonathan and Megan are committed to providing top-tier service while fostering a culture of collaboration over competition. Their philosophy in business is simple yet profound: "Don't chase money; learn to serve better." Every day, Jonathan's challenge is to be better today than he was yesterday, a mindset that has propelled their success. Their matching wrist tattoos, Megan's "Rise up Queen" and Jonathan's "Rise up King," serve as reminders to rise above the small struggles and focus on the bigger picture.

“Don't *chase* money.”

Learn to *serve* better.”



FAQs



Q: WHO RECEIVES THIS MAGAZINE?

A: The magazine goes to the top 300 real estate agents in Central and Southwest Virginia, based on their sales volume from the previous year, and our preferred partners. With thousands of agents in the region, being part of this elite group is a testament to your hard work, dedication, and success.

Q: WHAT IS THE GOAL OF THIS MAGAZINE?

A: We believe in the power of collaboration and growth through a strong professional network. We bring together the top 300 real estate agents and preferred partners in each market to form an exclusive, high-achieving community. We share their stories, successes, market trends, and upcoming events—anything that will connect, inform, and inspire.

Q: DOES Real Producers HAVE EVENTS?

A: Yes! We host exclusive networking events throughout the year.

Q: WHAT IS THE PROCESS FOR BEING FEATURED IN THIS MAGAZINE?

A: Anyone on the Top 300 list can nominate other real estate agents, businesses, brokers, owners, or themselves. Office leaders can also submit nominations. We review all agents who come to our attention. Since we don't know everyone's story, we rely on your nominations to highlight deserving candidates. While we cannot guarantee a feature, we encourage you to meet with



Betty, support Real Producers, and attend our private events to increase your chances.

Q: WHAT DOES A FEATURE STORY COST?

A: Feature stories are entirely free, so we encourage nominations.

Q: WHO ARE THE PREFERRED PARTNERS?

A: They are the best local businesses in their category, and you can find them in our index at the front of the magazine. We do not select businesses at random or accept all who approach us. Every business featured has been recommended, ensuring credibility and quality. Our team conducts additional vetting to ensure businesses align with our standards and add value to our network. We aim to create a powerhouse network of top real estate agents and trusted companies to strengthen our community.

Q: HOW CAN I RECOMMEND A BUSINESS?

A: To recommend a business that collaborates with top real estate agents, contact Betty Lee at betty.lee@realproducersmag.com | 336-414-3324.

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