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FEATURED REALTOR[®]

Tess Hernandez

PARTNER SPOTLIGHTS

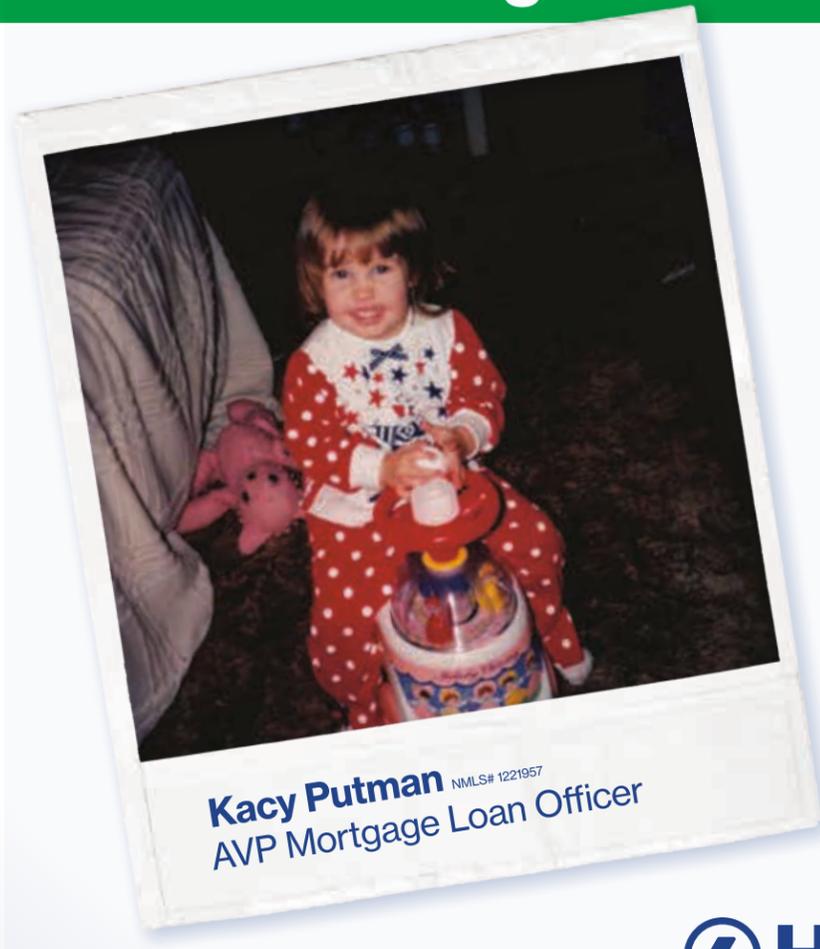
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Partner Spotlight



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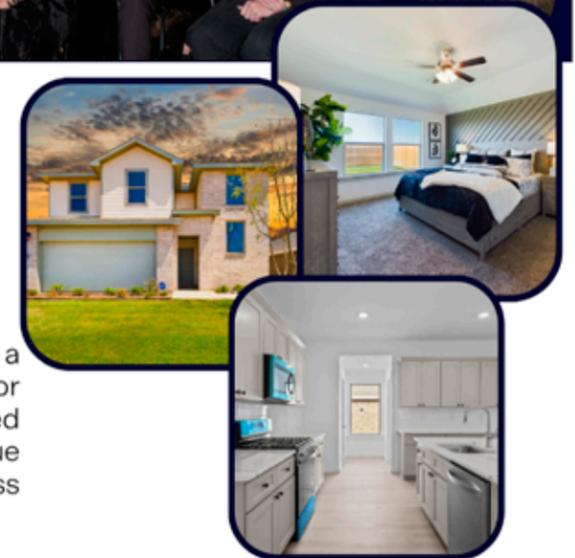
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Whitney

Pendergrass

Keller Williams

STORY BY KAELEA PENA
PHOTOS BY ALICEA MULLINS, ALICEA JARE PHOTOGRAPHY
(UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED)
WHITNEY DRESSED BY J. HOFFMAN'S



TOP PRODUCER

Whitney's love for homes began at a young age. She was surrounded by the excitement of her parents building new homes. Moving every four years to different areas around Lubbock sparked Whitney's curiosity about the process. As she got older, she took a hands-on approach, eagerly helping her mom select finishes and discussing every detail of the floor plan, fostering a deep appreciation for the intricacies of home design.

In 2019, while living in Fort Worth, she and her husband, Alex, decided they wanted to start investing in real estate and knew that Lubbock was the perfect place for their venture. They contacted a trusted friend and REALTOR®, Melissa Brouillette, and quickly purchased their first investment property. The smooth and stress-free process left a lasting impression on Whitney. Inspired by the ease of the experience, Whitney became determined to get her real estate license and pursue this new path professionally.

Before venturing into real estate, she took a unique route that equipped her with valuable skills and a strong work ethic. After graduating from Frenship High School in 2010, she moved to College Station to attend Texas A&M, where she earned a degree in industrial distribution. This foundation led her to a career in the business world; she first worked at Sewell Automotive in Dallas, followed by a role selling John Deere construction equipment in Fort Worth. The job required grit, hustle, and the ability to build a strong network of connections—a challenge Whitney embraced fully.

Despite working full-time, Whitney was determined to pursue her passion and began the process of getting her real estate license. After several months of balancing both careers, Whitney and Alex decided to move back to Lubbock, where Whitney finally obtained her real estate license, marking the beginning of her new career path.

When Whitney first earned her real estate license, she met with multiple brokerages, searching for a place that offered top-tier training, a supportive environment, and a culture where she felt valued. Keller Williams, a dynamic brokerage filled with passionate, knowledgeable professionals dedicated to their clients and community, proved the perfect fit.



Whitney has been fortunate to learn from incredible mentors and leaders throughout her career. She deeply values being part of a strong team because, as she believes, teamwork truly makes the dream work. Having Jeremy Steen as her team leader at Steen Realty Group has been invaluable. His knowledge, market insights, and commitment to coaching—whether on trends, global influences, or negotiation strategies—have strengthened her confidence. His guidance has empowered her to serve her clients at the highest level while successfully navigating the ever-evolving real estate market.

In 2024, Whitney expanded her reach by co-launching Elevated Stays, a short-term rental property management company in Lubbock, with Katie Jo Schafer and Courtney Henson. She finds great fulfillment in helping investors build wealth and create passive income through carefully selected properties. Her work in real estate and property management is driven by a commitment to positively impacting people's lives and building lasting relationships.

Outside of work, Whitney's greatest joy comes from the life she's built with her husband. Their love story began in Dallas in 2016 and led to their wedding in 2019. Now, their world revolves around their two wonderful children—Barrett, an adventurous nearly 4-year-old, and Davis, their sweet 1-year-old—and their two energetic Boxer pups, Harper and Finley.

Family time is Whitney's happy place. Whether they're strolling through the neighborhood with the dogs (or being walked by them), grilling out, watching Barrett dig away in the sandbox, or pushing Davis in her patio swing, these simple moments mean everything. "I am blessed beyond measure, and I stay grateful for it every day," she says with a smile.

When Whitney isn't working, you'll find her making memories with her family, catching up with friends, or setting off on her next adventure. She and her family love escaping to the lake, relaxing on the beach and, most recently, retreating to Ruidoso to breathe in the crisp mountain air. "Nothing brings me more joy than watching my children experience new places and create lasting memories. It's what truly fills my heart," Whitney shares. Whether it's sandy toes, boat rides, or mountain sunsets, every trip is a new chapter in their family's story.

"Nothing brings me more joy than watching my children experience new places and create lasting memories."

It's what truly fills my heart."



Photo by Vestal Ventures Photography

Whitney has already achieved a major milestone this year by being selected for Leadership Lubbock, one of the city's premier and highly competitive leadership programs for business professionals. This opportunity will deepen her connection to the community that shaped her while allowing her to collaborate with leaders from diverse backgrounds. "I will take these learnings back to my businesses to grow my team and make a greater impact on our community," Whitney shares.

For Whitney, real estate is more than just buying and selling homes—it's about building lifelong relationships. Whether her clients started as family, friends, or strangers, many have become lasting connections. "I believe in staying in touch—checking in on their home, their family, and even their pets," she says with a smile.

From a quick phone call to a thoughtful holiday card or a friendly visit, Whitney knows that small gestures go a long way in nurturing those bonds. "Real estate isn't just about transactions—it's about people, and I want to be their go-to resource for years to come," she affirms.

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MICHAEL HUTTON

WEST SAGE REALTY

SUBMITTED BY MICHAEL HUTTON • PHOTOS BY ROWDIE RICHARDSON, ROWDIE BRIGHT PHOTOGRAPHY

When did you start your career in real estate?

In 2009, I began reading and took the necessary classes to obtain my real estate license. I was an active REALTOR® by August 31, 2009, thanks to John Walton.

What did you do before real estate? I am from Lubbock and attended Texas Tech. After graduation, I followed the Lord in the calling of ministry.

Share the life events that led you to real estate. In 2007, while serving with my wife, Tammy, in Sydney, Nova Scotia, I received a call from my parents that my sister had been killed by her husband. In shock, Tammy and I traveled home to Lubbock for the funeral and to help my parents who suddenly became the wards for her four sons. During the following year, I felt a heavy burden to move back to Lubbock to support my parents in their mission to raise the boys. In June 2008, we moved across the continent to start our young family's life in Lubbock. I was not in any shape to continue to live the "fish bowl" life of ministry, so I worked part-time in a small United Methodist Church in Lubbock and tried to determine what would be next. In 2008-2009 I found my way into a career as a REALTOR® under John and Wayne Walton's tutelage.

What do you find most fulfilling about your work? Aiding those who are transitioning from their current home to dream home or from family home to empty nest. Helping others is a calling and a passion. I may not work in ministry as a vocation, but God has given me a pastor's heart to do my part to see others along the path to meet their goals.

How did you choose your current brokerage? I started West Sage on January 8, 2020, with my business partner, Chase Head, with the dream of running a brokerage and creating an environment that is REALTOR®-centric for agents. I have a King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table approach. We all have input and a voice.





“
I FELL OFF A
CLIFFSIDE AT
CAPROCK
CANYON WHILE
IN COLLEGE,
WHICH
EXPLAINS A
LOT FOR THOSE
WHO KNOW
ME.”

What drives you on tough days?
Tough days are like storms that will pass. The goodness of life and the positivity of hard and consistent work will overcome the difficulties. Just wait a minute, and difficult times will pass. It takes character to endure these times, and I believe God has given me the ability to persevere.

Who are your mentors or people you look up to? John and Wayne Walton; Ruan Samuels, who helped me as a young agent; Cade Fowler, who has helped me grow in working and leading within our Lubbock Association; my leadership colleagues, Teresa Smith, Rich Eberhardt, Donna Sue Clements, Andrea Sturdivant, Colby Norris, and Tracy Thomason; and Scott Kesner, a broker in El Paso and current TREC Commissioner Chairman.

What are you most passionate about in real estate? I am passionate about participating in local, state, and national REALTOR® associations. I need to learn

constantly, contribute globally, and connect intentionally around our state, strengthening what I can do for my clientele and licensees.

Please share a story about a memorable client or agent experience. My first few deals were with true, respected Lubbock REALTOR® vets. John Walton, Sarah Thornbury, and Winn Sikes were agents on the other sides of my first three deals.

Tell us about your family. Tammy Stonehouse Hutton is my wife, and we have four children: Cat, 23, who works in my office; Laura, 21, in nursing school (with our first grandchild on the way); Graham, 20, a sophomore at Tech in music education (Oboist), and Heidi, 18, graduating from Monterey High School and heading to TAMU this fall. We have three dogs, one cat, and a bearded dragon. We love being together.

How do you define success? Loving the Lord, my God, with all my heart, soul,

strength, and mind. Also, loving my neighbor as myself.

What are you most grateful for? An amazing set of parents who adopted me as an infant, a wonderful wife who has been a God-send and truly completes me, and our four kids. Also, I have another set of (biological) parents and two full sisters I met in 2018 when I was 47 years old. I am grateful for a community of friends and family who surround me and make me a better man.

What is something that not many people know about you? I fell off a cliffside at Caprock Canyon while in college, which explains a lot for those who know me.

Anything else? I love music. I am not musical, but I love to listen and emote. 80s music rules! Irish music is a close second. U2 is probably my favorite band.

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RYAN KENNEDY

Action Electric

STORY BY KAELEA PENA • PHOTOS BY ALICEA MULLINS, ALICEA JARE PHOTOGRAPHY

In the fast-paced world of real estate, a dependable and skilled electrician can make all the difference—bringing confidence and clarity to both agents and buyers. That’s where Action Electric stands out. A family-owned, family-oriented business, Action Electric is led by Lubbock native Ryan Kennedy, who is redefining electrical services across West Texas with a fresh, customer-first approach. His mission? To deliver top-tier, professional electrical work without unnecessary upsells or inflated costs—just honest service tailored to your needs. Whatever your electrical needs, Action Electric has the expertise and integrity to get the job done right.

Ryan Kennedy’s journey in the electrical world started early. At just 15, he spent his summers working for one of his dad’s customers at Amco Electric. His path took a detour when he joined the Army in 2008. He was deployed and served his country before returning home to Lubbock in 2015. Back in Texas, Ryan took on the role of Safety Director at Jarvis Metals, where fate brought him to Action Electric. Recognizing an exciting opportunity, he stepped in as Operations Officer in 2022 and hasn’t looked back since.

Today, Ryan proudly runs Action Electric alongside his younger brother, Brady. They form a powerhouse duo built on trust, hard work, and family values. “I have the great privilege of running Action Electric with my younger brother, Brady, and I couldn’t ask for a better team!” Ryan shares.

Action Electric takes a personalized, customer-first approach, handling every project with care, precision, and transparency. From clear communication and upfront pricing (with no hidden fees) to a commitment to punctuality and reliability, the business sets the standard for exceptional service.

What truly sets Action Electric apart?

Its team of highly skilled electricians, each bringing years of hands-on experience to every job. Known for lightning-fast response times to urgent electrical issues and cost-effective solutions tailored to each client’s needs and budget, Action Electric is the go-to choice for dependable service. Beyond just fixing problems, they build lasting relationships, earning the trust of repeat customers and businesses who know they can count on Action Electric time and time again. “I cannot recommend Action Electric more highly,” says Phyllis Underwood, a valued customer. “They are timely, efficient, friendly, and very knowledgeable. If they say they will arrive at 1:30, they will arrive at 1:30! You will not be disappointed.”

Ryan and his team are grateful for the opportunity to make Lubbock better and brighter, literally and figuratively.

Advice for Agents

“Always get second opinions and never take inspection reports at face value.”



As a full-service electrical contractor, Action Electric handles everything from repairs, troubleshooting, and installations to rewiring, emergency services, generators, and large-scale commercial and residential projects.

Defining success as a balance between professional growth and personal fulfillment, Ryan carves out quality time to create lasting memories with his family. Ryan is living his dream, and at the heart of it all is his high school sweetheart and love of his life, Tiffany. This August, they'll celebrate 10 years of marriage, a milestone made even sweeter by the life they've built together. Their hands (and hearts) are full with their three adventurous boys—Griffin (6), Parker (4), and Davis (2), who keep them on their toes. As a true lake-loving family, they spend every chance they get soaking up the sun at Lake Alan Henry, making memories that last a lifetime. “Any free time outside of work is poured into my family,” Ryan shares. “I'm truly blessed every day to be living out my dreams as reality.”

Ryan emphasizes, “Action Electric is more than just a business; we want to make you a part of our village because at the end of the day, we are all in this together.”

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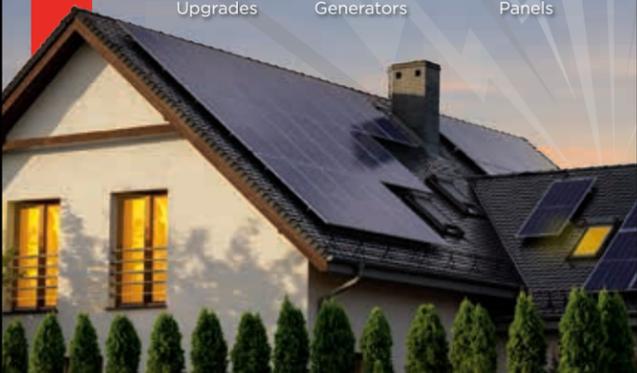
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TESS Hernandez

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STORY BY KAELEA PENA
PHOTOS BY ALICEA MULLINS, ALICEA JARE PHOTOGRAPHY
TESS DRESSED BY J. HOFFMAN'S

TESS HERNANDEZ is an entrepreneur with a talent for turning opportunities into success. From running a thriving cookie business to building a real estate career in Lubbock, Tess approaches every venture with creativity, determination, and a passion for helping others.

When COVID-19 disrupted her world, Tess found solace in yoga. However, a ligament injury in her elbow forced her to rethink her cookie business. While she taught herself to decorate with her left hand, the passion wasn't the same. Tess eventually turned her hobby of driving through neighborhoods and browsing properties into a career.

When Suzanne Scott reached out to Tess for a chat, she scheduled a time—fully intending to cancel the day before. Tess's husband reminded her that she wasn't happy where she was at, so that phone call had to be a God thing—"Don't cancel the meeting."

Tess met with Suzanne. "I never had any intention of spending time in the office, other than team meetings, but there was something about the people there that let me be myself, and I was comfortable," Tess expresses.

Tess was born for this role. One of her first transactions came from a social media DM when she first got her license. "A lady and her wife trusted me enough as a brand new agent to help them find a home," Tess recalls. "It took almost two years to get everything in order and close, but we never gave up on each other." She takes pride in finding properties and building meaningful relationships with her clients and peers. "People trust me because I love what I do, which reflects in my work," Tess shares.

At home, Tess is equally dedicated. She and her husband Josh, married for 19 years, are raising their three kids: Journee (19), Jacksyn (15), and Jordan (8). Surprisingly, her kids love exploring vacant listings with her, trying to guess each home's listing price. Her oldest is passionate about photography, and Tess hopes to one day have her join the team as the photographer for her listings and videos. Her son plays baseball, so they have spent countless hours driving to games—and, of course, checking out cool houses in other towns along the way.

Tess's creativity extends to her professional projects. She collaborates with two REALTOR® friends weekly to produce educational, often goofy, videos





“People trust me because I love what I do, which reflects in my work.”

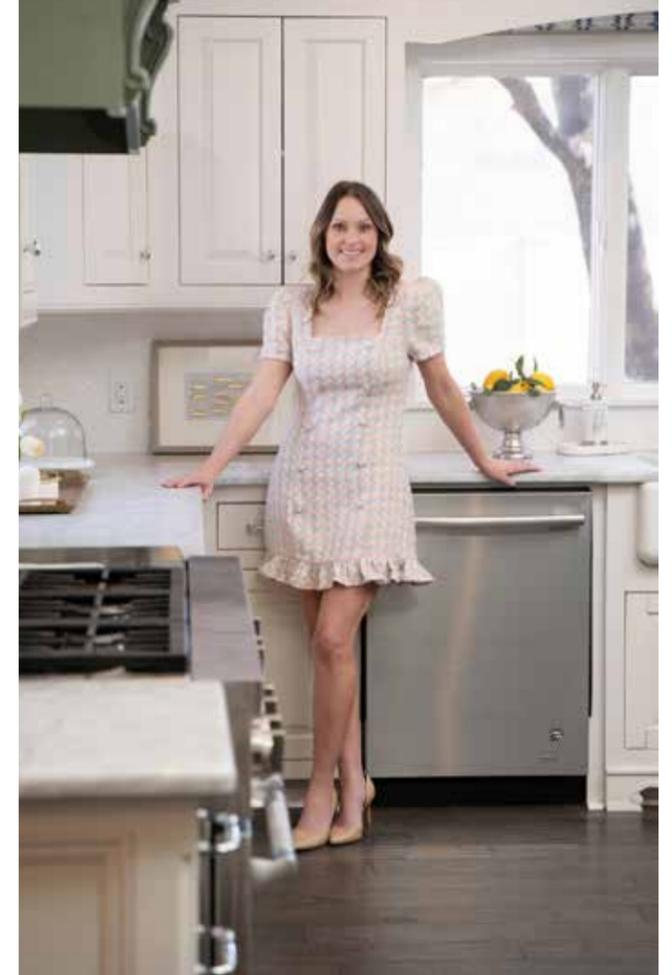
that simplify the buying and selling process. “I’d rather people learn from us than rely on search engine results,” she explains. She has even started a year-long Buyer’s Boot Camp course to help those who want to buy but need credit assistance and education on securing those keys.

“As silly as it may sound to those who wouldn’t understand, real estate gave me a deep sense of self-worth,” Tess highlights. She was no longer just the substitute teacher or the lady who made cookies—she became the person people trusted with the biggest transaction they could make.

Looking ahead, Tess plans to start a team—a small group of like-minded, driven ladies (sorry, guys). At some point, she’d also like to publish a book. Tess remains as excited about the future of real estate as she was when she first committed to the industry. With a creative spirit and a servant’s heart, she is poised to make the Lubbock market bright.

“As silly as it may sound to those who wouldn’t understand, real estate gave me a deep sense of self-worth.”

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April's Promise: Growth, Renewal, and New Beginnings

From pastel-painted Easter eggs to the soft blooms of wildflowers, many associate this month with gentle hues of renewal. Here in Lubbock, April also brings shifting skies, one moment calm and clear, the next rolling with thunderstorms and dramatic lightning. But with every spring storm comes the promise of growth, fresh possibilities, and new opportunities. *April showers bring May flowers*, and sometimes, the best things come after the storm.

In the same way, change in our industry, while sometimes challenging, lays the foundation for progress. I want to take this opportunity to check in. It's been a few months now—how



BY 2025 LAR
PRESIDENT ANDREA
STURDIVANT

is everyone adjusting to FlexMLS? Are you adopting all the new forms and negotiating your buyer's agent commission with success and confidence? Our industry continues to evolve, so I encourage you to remain flexible and keep on top of new information. We're all in this together, learning and adapting as we go. LAR is here to support you with continued training and resources designed to help you confidently sharpen your skills and transact real estate. Now is the perfect time to get involved, sign up for a class, connect with your peers, and ensure you have the knowledge and tools to thrive. The more we engage with this change, the stronger and more prepared we will

be as an Association of professionals. REALTORS® are invaluable assets to the local, state, and national marketplace economy.

We're already seeing signs of seasonal change all around us: longer days, greener plains, and the spring real estate market beginning to bloom. Lubbock REALTORS® are gearing up for a busy season, ready to connect buyers with homes, help the commercial industry expand, and create opportunities for our clients. Lubbock's strong housing demand, affordability, and expanding developments continue to make it a desirable place to plant roots. Like nature, real estate moves in cycles, and this season is filled with potential! I hope you take advantage of every opportunity this spring real estate season offers you.

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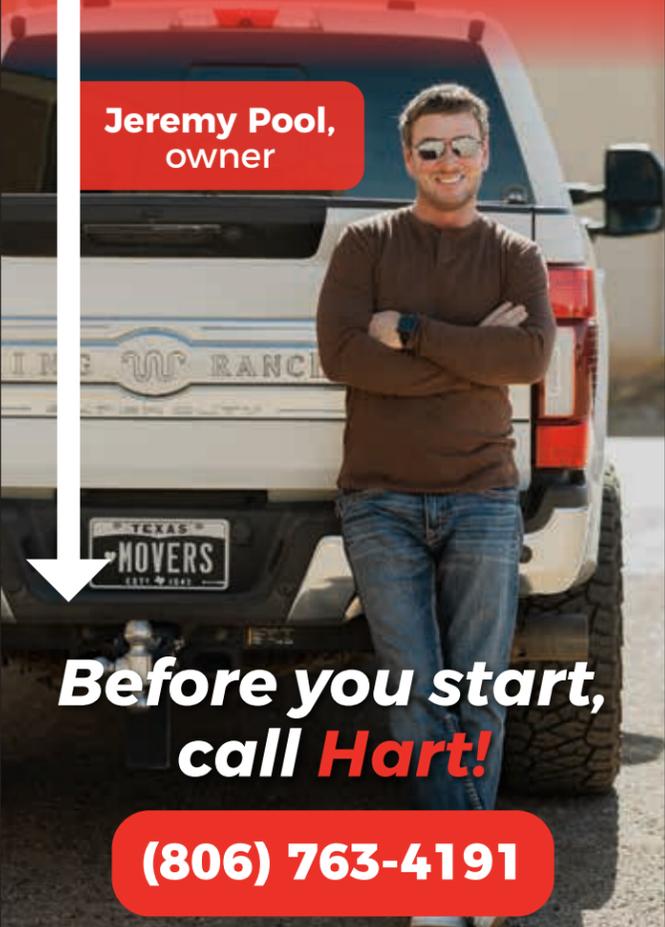
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The Heart of Carpet Tech

The People Behind the Clean

STORY BY STEPHANIE FOX, CARPET TECH CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER
PHOTOS BY ROWDIE RICHARDSON, ROWDIE BRIGHT PHOTOGRAPHY

At Carpet Tech, cleaning isn't just about spotless floors or clean air ducts—it's about trust, care, and commitment to the communities the team serves. For nearly three decades, Carpet Tech has built more than a reputation for exceptional service; they've built relationships, earning the trust of homeowners, businesses, and real estate professionals.



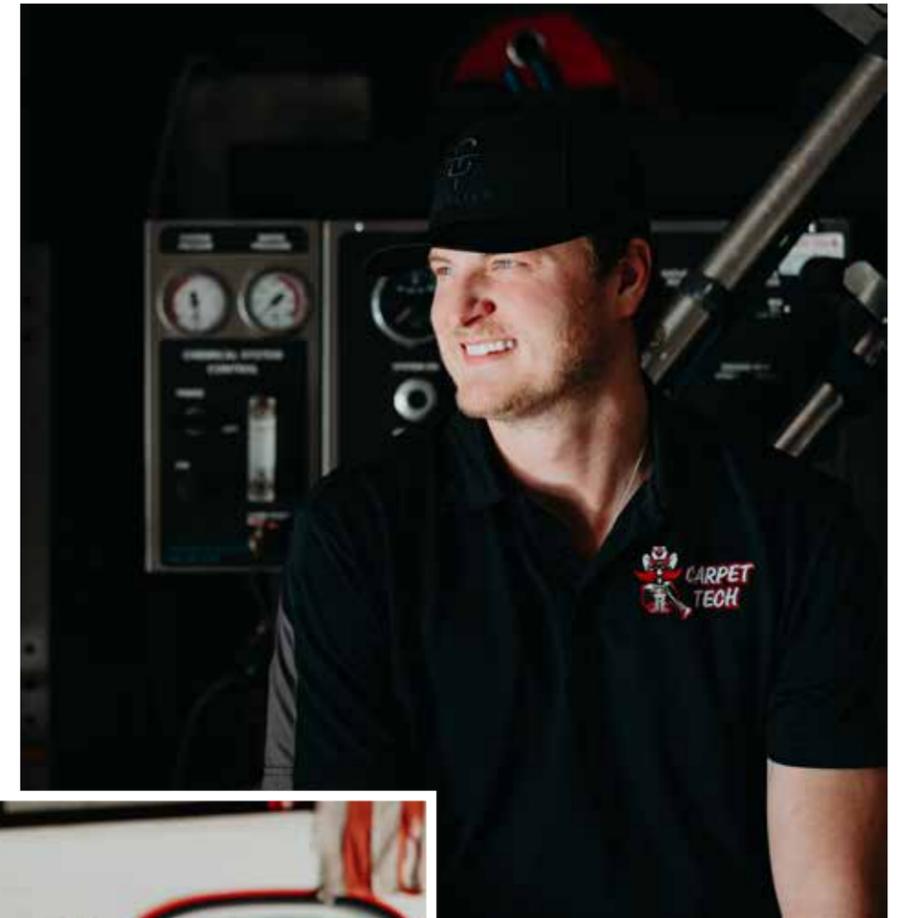
Carpet Tech combines expertise with a personal touch, offering carpet and tile cleaning, emergency restoration, air duct cleaning, and specialty flooring projects. Behind every service is a team of dedicated professionals who take pride in their craft and the impact they make.

Meet the Technicians Who Make It Happen

The Carpet Tech culture breeds individuals who bring care, precision, and a commitment to excellence to every job. Crew chiefs like Dayton, Nick, Jerid, and Dakota, with years of experience and dedication, have helped thousands of homes and businesses.

Dayton Fisher, Crew Chief: 5 Years

For Dayton, the best part of his job is making a difference for customers. "Working at Carpet Tech is not just a



Dayton Fisher



Nick Zajicek

job," Dayton says. "I've matured while working here. Carpet Tech has taught me how to present myself, maintain my appearance, and keep my truck clean, which reflects the work I do and the person I want to be."

Dayton believes professionalism starts with the details—being prepared, well-dressed, and working with the best equipment. "That's how I want to start each day—to be at my best and reflect the quality of my work," he explains.

Nick Zajicek, Crew Chief: 14 Years
Nick has seen Carpet Tech grow significantly since he started. He enjoys meeting new people every day and values the relationships he builds along the way. "You see people at their highest and lowest moments when you're invited into their homes to clean," he shares. "I'm grateful to be able to offer reassurance and a solution when people experience loss due to a flood or fire."

For Nick, his role is about more than the work—it's about the team, the inner squad of crew chiefs. "Working with people you enjoy is great," he remarks. "These are the people who have become my best friends."

Jerid Pridmore, Crew Chief: 20 Years

Jerid has been a part of Carpet Tech for two decades and remains passionate about the job. "Our work ethic and core values are constant at Carpet Tech," he comments. "We lead and work with integrity—doing the right thing, even when no one is watching."

Raised on the belief that hard work pays off, Jerid takes pride in giving his best effort every day. "I love that our customers see and appreciate our hard work," he notes. "When I leave a customer's home or business, I want them to know I gave them my very best—that I didn't hold back." Jerid's dedication was recently recognized when he was named Crew Chief of the Year for 2024.



Jerid Pridmore



Dakota Neis

Dakota Neis, Crew Chief: 6 Years

For Dakota, working at Carpet Tech is about taking ownership of his craft and providing for his family. "I operate every day like I'm running my own business—caring for each customer and keeping my truck clean and well-maintained," he describes. He values the culture of accountability and growth at Carpet Tech. "The leadership here does a great job of getting the very best out of you," he expresses. "Since I started, I've seen myself more positively."

Above all, Dakota appreciates the people he meets. "I meet people who remind me of my grandparents or who make me grateful to live in West Texas, where people are genuine, show hospitality, and appreciate your efforts," he states.

More Than a Service, A Commitment to Care

Carpet Tech's mission extends beyond cleaning to building trust and delivering a personal experience. This dedication is reflected in the company's core values:

- Integrity
- Service
- Quality
- Passion

For the Carpet Tech team, every job is an opportunity to make a difference—one home, one business, one customer at a time. And that's what keeps them showing up, day after day, ready to serve.

"I operate every day like I'm running my own business—caring for each customer and keeping my truck clean and well-maintained."

– Dakota Neis

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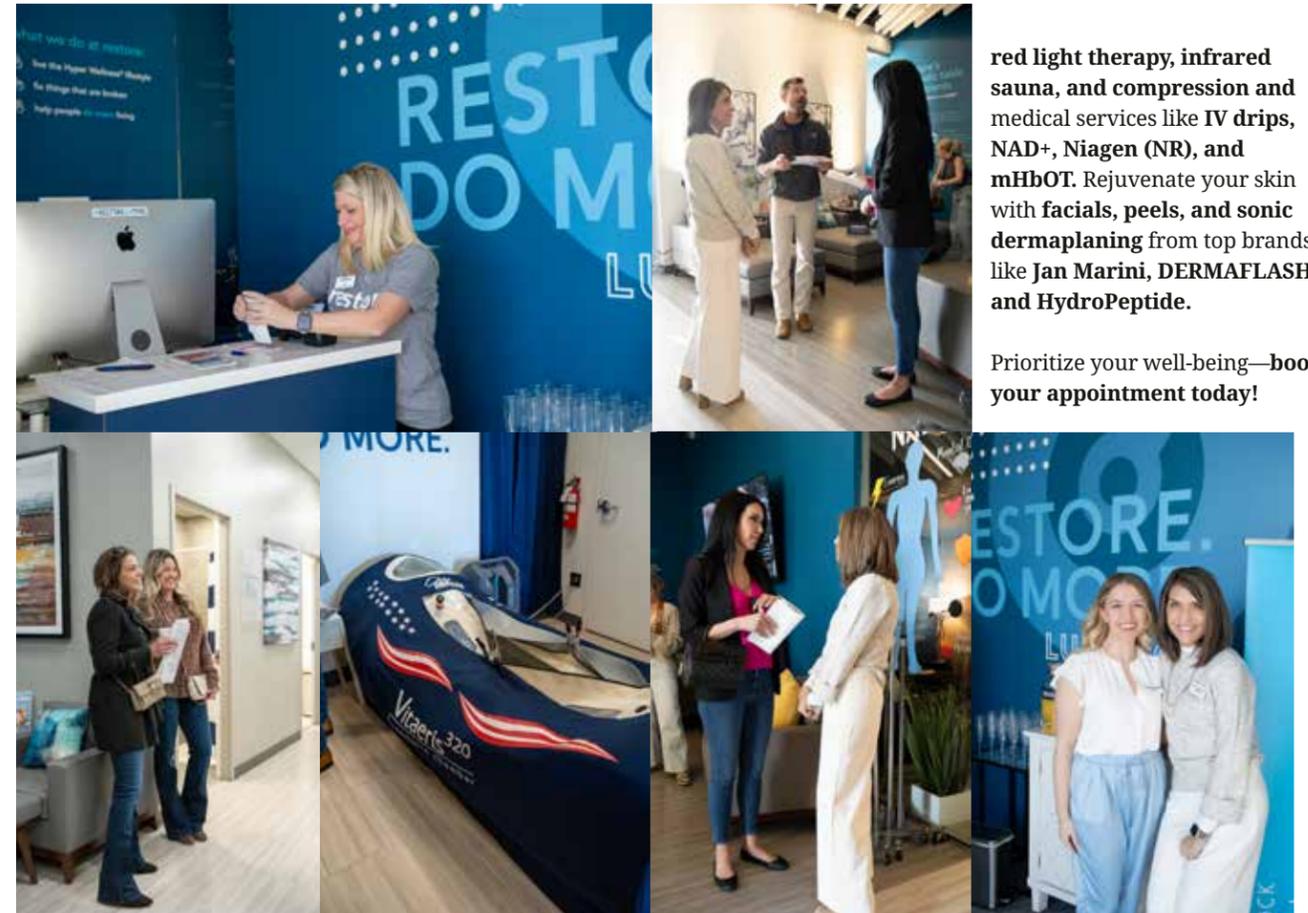
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Attendees **toured the facility and sampled a variety of wellness services**, experiencing firsthand the innovative offerings that make Restore Hyper Wellness a go-to destination for revitalization. From cutting-edge treatments to personalized care, the event showcased ways to enhance well-being in a fast-paced world.

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SELL SMARTER: The Hidden Advantage of Clean Air Ducts

When preparing a home for sale, Realtors often focus on aesthetics—clean floors, fresh paint, and clutter-free spaces. But one aspect of a home that's just as important, though less visible, is the quality of its indoor air.

- **Allergen Reduction:** Homes free of dust and allergens are a relief for sensitive buyers or families with children.
- **Efficiency:** Clean ducts improve HVAC performance, a feature buyers value for energy savings.

According to the EPA, indoor air pollutants can be 2-5 times higher than outdoor levels, and air ducts play a major role in circulating these contaminants. Jeremy Diaz, a certified Air Systems Cleaning Specialist with Carpet Tech, explains how clean air ducts contribute to a healthier and more appealing home.

Diaz notes some common signs of dirty air ducts: mold around vent covers, visible dirt in air returns, or unusually high energy bills compared to previous years. While homeowners may try to clean ducts themselves, Diaz warns that professional cleaning ensures thorough removal of contaminants and proper handling of HVAC systems.

"Air ducts accumulate dust, allergens, and even mold over time," Diaz says. "These contaminants can recirculate through the vents, affecting the air quality and contributing to respiratory issues like asthma and allergies."

THE PROCESS BEHIND CLEAN AIR DUCTS

Carpet Tech uses advanced equipment to remove buildup from air ducts. Their truck-mounted vacuum system ensures 100% of contaminants are taken outside the home, while specialized air tools clean the entire ductwork from registers to the furnace. A pre- and post-cleaning inspection gives homeowners a clear view of the results.

For homes with pets, smokers, or recent remodeling, the buildup can be even more significant, requiring regular cleaning to maintain optimal air quality. The National Air Duct Cleaners Association (NADCA) recommends cleaning air ducts every 3 to 6 years, but factors like these may necessitate more frequent attention.

"Seeing the before-and-after images of the ducts is always eye-opening," says Diaz. "It's rewarding to know the air is cleaner, and the home feels healthier."



HOW AIR DUCTS AFFECT A HOME'S MARKETABILITY

- **Air Quality:** Buyers notice if a home smells fresh or musty, and clean air ducts can prevent lingering odors.

For Realtors, understanding the benefits of clean air ducts can add value to the services offered to clients. Whether it's ensuring a home smells fresh for showings or highlighting a recent air duct cleaning as part of the home's appeal, this often-overlooked detail can make a big difference.

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