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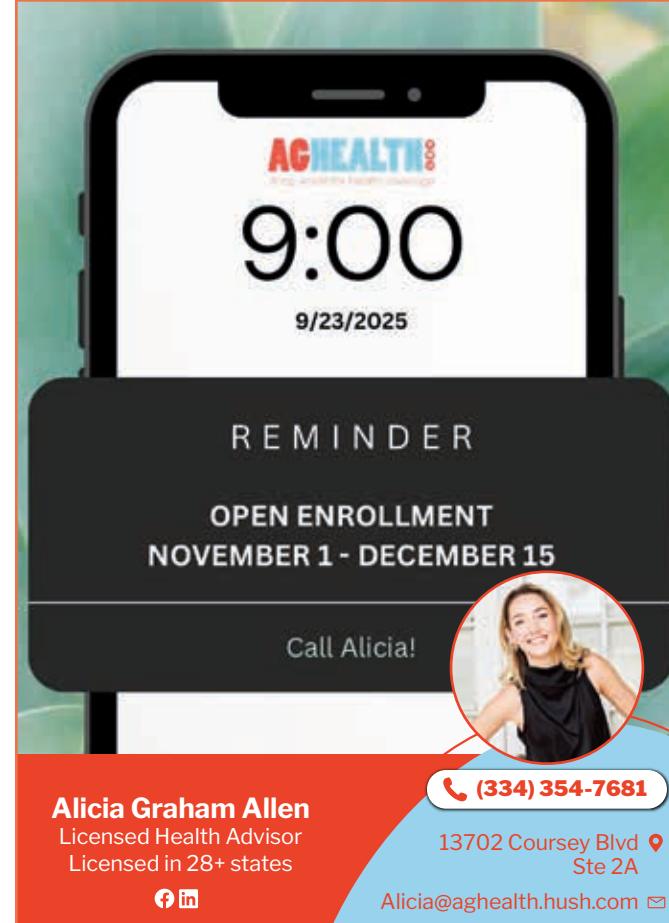
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DOUG BICKLEY

BY LAKEN FOISIE
PHOTOS BY STEVIE LEJEUNE



The Bickley Team at Synergy One Lending

For Doug Bickley, leadership isn't just about results, it's about creating a culture that values people and purpose in equal measures.

For more than two decades, Doug has built a reputation in Baton Rouge for making the mortgage process approachable, personal, and refreshingly transparent. As the leader of the Bickley Team at Synergy One Lending, Doug combines small-town values with big-league resources by offering clients the best of both worlds when it comes to home financing.

Before entering the mortgage industry, Doug was a college student at Southeastern Louisiana University, where his entrepreneurial spirit was already taking shape. "During that time, I owned and operated a lawn and landscaping business with my best friend," he recalled. That early experience taught him the value of hard work, communication, and integrity. These principles continue to define his approach to business.

"Synergy One Lending is a full-service mortgage company," Doug explained. "We offer products to first-time homebuyers, investors, current homeowners, and everything in between. What sets us apart is getting hometown and local service with the speed, ease, and expertise of a nationwide company."

Doug is quick to emphasize that great communication is the foundation of their success. "We usually have three sets of clients on each

transaction; the borrower, the listing agent, and the buyer's agent," he said. "All three need to be included in communication." To make that happen, the team meets at least twice weekly to align production and processing on file progress. "Our loan officers call the listing agent and borrower every week to keep them up to date," Doug said. "Our transaction coordinator sends an email update every Friday to both agents tracking where the file is in our process. Above and beyond these scheduled updates, we make ourselves available to answer any questions that arise during the mortgage process." This structure ensures that everyone involved feels

I ALWAYS SAY THAT I LIKE TO DO BUSINESS WITH PEOPLE WHO DO THE RIGHT THING WHEN NO ONE IS LOOKING."

informed and supported, a hallmark of the Bickley Team's service model.

Doug also points out one of the biggest distinctions between real estate and mortgage work: the difference between calendar days and business days. "Every day can be a business day to a real estate agent, and they use them exceptionally well," he said with a smile. "In our world, there are days we can't count toward signatures, receipt of documents, or disclosures. It changes a 30-day contract to a 20-day working period." By helping agents understand these nuances, he aims to



prevent unnecessary stress and keep transactions running smoothly.

When asked what qualities define his leadership style, Doug says without hesitation, "Great communication, honesty, and transparency." He added, "I always say that I like to do business with people who do the right thing when no one is looking." Those same

qualities extend to his team members, whom he credits as the true engine behind their success. "None of us could accomplish what we do alone," he said. The Bickley Team includes Alisa Eaton, Loan Officer Lead, Ivy Adams, Loan Officer Assistant, Shelby Magee Senior Processor, Laura Tubbe, Transaction Coordinator, and both Lainey Guy and Clayton Wood serving as Loan

Officers. Doug expressed, "They each bring something unique to the table, and together we're stronger for it." Outside of the office, Doug lives by a mantra of "Family, Faith, Football, Fishing, and Fairways." He lights up when he talks about his wife, Brooke, and their children, Bella Jay and Boston. "I am so lucky to be married to Brooke," he said. "She's the

perfect complement to my personality. Her influence makes me a better person, better father, and probably a better leader. She's also an amazing mother to our two children." Their daughter, Bella Jay, is a sophomore at St. Joseph's Academy and part of the school's dance team, while their son, Boston, is a sixth grader at Parkview Baptist School and a dedicated young football player. "I'm really enjoying

watching his progress on the football team this season," Doug added proudly. Community involvement is another cornerstone of Doug's life and work. "The Bella Bowman Foundation is my favorite foundation," he shared. "They do great things for kids here in town." He also supports the Capital Gala benefiting Our Lady of the Lake Cancer Institute. Both causes are close to his heart and aligned with his desire to make a meaningful local impact. After 23 years in the business, Doug continues to see every loan not just as a transaction, but as a relationship. His commitment to transparency and teamwork, both within his team and across

the broader real estate community, has earned him lasting trust and respect.

"We wouldn't be here without the real estate agents who make our success possible," he said sincerely. "I give credit where credit is due...to the agents who continue to partner with us and trust us with their clients. They're the reason we get to do what we love every day."

“

WE WOULDN'T BE HERE WITHOUT THE REAL ESTATE AGENTS WHO MAKE OUR SUCCESS POSSIBLE."



Left to right: Shelby Magee, Doug Bickley, Alisa Eaton, Ivy Adams, Laura Tubbe

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JONATHAN DUHON

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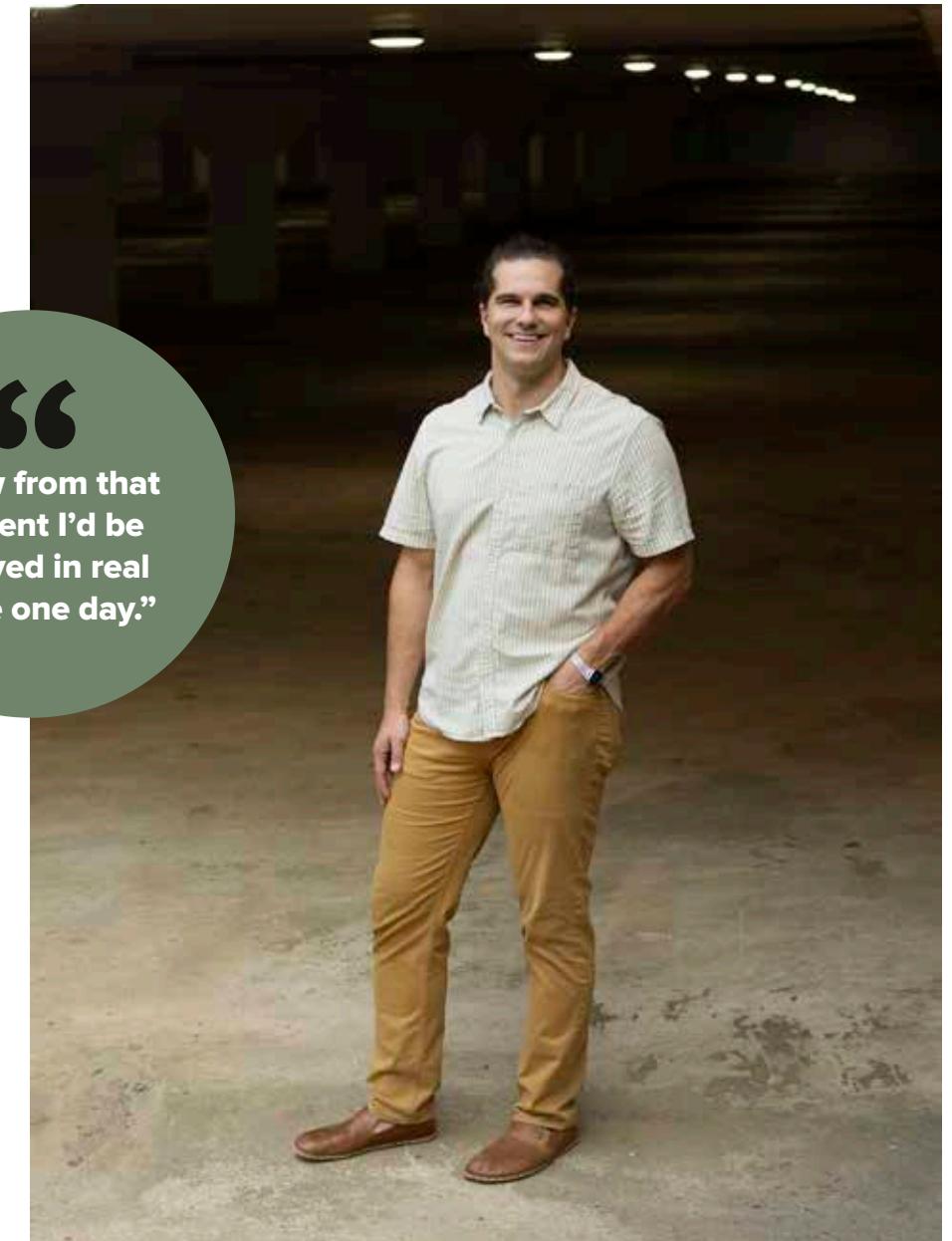
BY LAKEN FOISIE • PHOTOS BY STEVIE LEJEUNE

For Jonathan Duhon, real estate has always been more than a career choice. It has been a calling, a lifelong pursuit rooted in a desire for financial freedom and family connection.

Duhon's journey into the industry began long before he earned his license. He recalls that his interest in real estate started when he was just 13 years old after reading *Rich Dad Poor Dad for Teens*. "I knew from that moment I'd be involved in real estate one day," he said. The book opened his eyes to the idea that wealth and freedom could be built not only through traditional work but through assets that appreciate and generate income. Growing up in a family where money was sometimes scarce, Duhon said he made a promise to himself that he would not repeat the same financial struggles. "I recognized that real estate is one of the most powerful tools available to the common person for creating financial abundance and lifestyle freedom."

That realization became the foundation of a career that would allow him not only to build financial security but also to prioritize what mattered most to him. "In short, I wanted more time with my

“
I knew from that moment I'd be involved in real estate one day.”



future family,” Duhon said. “I wanted to be able to be there for my kids any day of the week. I’m blessed to enjoy that lifestyle now.”

Before entering real estate full time, Duhon developed a wide-ranging skill set that continues to serve him well. His professional background includes experience in new home sales, car sales, project management for Craft Homes, and remodeling contracting. Each role, he explained, added to his understanding of both construction and client relations. “Those years gave me a strong foundation in how homes are built and what buyers truly want,” he said. “It also taught me how to manage teams, timelines and budgets, which directly benefits my clients today.”

Now working independently under Craft Realty, Duhon has built a business that reflects his passion for helping others achieve success through real estate. He describes his approach as both educational and service-driven. “I love helping people by making the process simple,” he said. “I love helping people make money using real estate—by buying personal homes and fixing them up or by buying investment properties.” Duhon’s investment experience gives him an edge that many traditional agents lack. As an active buy-and-hold real estate investor and landlord, he not only advises clients on finding profitable deals but also guides them through the practical steps of improving and managing those properties. “I not only know how to find a good value-add investment, whether it’s a flip or rental, but I can structure creative finance terms to get a complicated deal done,” he said. His background in construction allows him to help clients evaluate renovation potential and connect them with trusted professionals to complete the work. Duhon said that once a project is finished, he enjoys teaching clients how to become effective landlords. “I give them the processes and technology I use to manage my personal portfolio,” he said. This full-circle approach has become one of



the qualities that set him apart in the competitive world of real estate.

He sees his role as more than just helping someone close on a house. For him, it is about building confidence and generational wealth for his clients. “Every time I help a client make a smart investment, I know I’m helping them move closer to financial independence,” Duhon said. “That’s incredibly rewarding.”

Despite his success, Duhon prefers to remain an individual agent rather than joining a team. He values the ability to work closely with each client and maintain control over the service experience from start to finish. “I like being hands-on and ensuring that every client feels supported,” he said. “That personal connection is important to me.” When challenges arise, Duhon said his approach is to stay calm

and focus on problem-solving. He believes that obstacles in real estate are best overcome with transparency and communication. “No transaction goes perfectly,” he said. “But if you’re honest, proactive and keep your clients informed, you can get through anything.” Duhon also offers advice for other agents who are seeking long-term success. “Find what you love about real estate,” he said. “Whether that’s first-

time home buyers, historic properties or relocation, go deep on that. Because the more you do what you love, the easier your work will be.”

His guidance extends beyond technical knowledge to relationship-building as well. “Call everyone you know twice a year to catch up,” Duhon advised. “Don’t be salesy, but make sure people know what you do.

“
I love helping people by making the process simple.”

Have a heart to serve, bring others value, and the business will come.” It is a philosophy that has guided his own success and reflects the authenticity that clients have come to appreciate. “At the end of the day, it’s about making a positive impact,” he said. “Real estate gave me freedom, and I want to help others find that same freedom in their own lives.”

GET TO KNOW OLIVIER

ROUGE PAINTERS

BY HANNAH DAVIS
PHOTOS BY STEVIE LEJEUNE

For the past seven years, Olivier Doin has built Rouge Painters into one of Baton Rouge's most trusted painting companies by focusing on what he believes matters most: quality, communication and customer satisfaction.

Rouge Painters offers both exterior and interior painting, along with cabinet refinishing. The company serves homeowners and real estate professionals who want projects completed with precision and professionalism. Doin said the company's success comes from doing things the right way from the very beginning.

“
OUR BUSINESS
MODEL IS
DESIGNED WITH
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“What sets us apart is service and quality,” Doin said. “We only use premium paint, not contractor grade, and we put a lot of emphasis on communication.”

That focus on detail and service has helped Rouge Painters stand out in a competitive industry. Doin said many people underestimate the level of skill and craftsmanship required for professional painting. One of his biggest goals is to help clients, especially real estate agents, understand the difference between hiring a professional painter and a general handyman.

“There's a big difference,” he said. “This is a professional trade.”

Clear and consistent communication is one of Rouge Painters' strongest assets. Every project is tracked through a customer relationship management system that keeps clients informed from start to finish. “We have a CRM set up to keep customers updated and in communication during the project,” Doin said. “It helps ensure there are no surprises.” Doin shared three qualities that guide every job: communication, reliability and customer satisfaction.

That commitment to openness and reliability defines the company's culture.

When he is not managing projects, Doin spends his time coaching soccer, camping or relaxing at home with his

family. He and his wife have four children, and he said family life has taught him lessons that carry over into his business. "The same values that make a family work, like communication and reliability, are the same ones that make a business work," he said.

As home design trends continue to shift, Doin keeps a close eye on which colors are gaining popularity. For homeowners looking to stay current, he suggests leaning toward natural, earthy shades. "Earthy tones and bold accents are back," he said. "Grays and cool whites are less in demand." While he follows color trends, Doin encourages clients not to feel pressured to constantly update their homes. He said choosing colors that suit the personality of the home and the preferences of the owner is always a better choice than painting for short-term trends. "Trends come and go," he said. "It's better to choose something timeless that you'll still love years from now."

Rouge Painters has also tailored its business model with real estate professionals in mind. Doin understands that agents often face tight deadlines when preparing homes for sale and need reliable partners who can deliver quality work quickly. "Our business model is designed with Realtors needs in mind," he said. That flexibility and responsiveness have made Rouge Painters a preferred partner for real estate agents throughout Baton Rouge. Whether refreshing a kitchen with new cabinet



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Olivier Doin, Owner



**WE HAVE A CRM SET UP TO
KEEP CUSTOMERS UPDATED
AND IN COMMUNICATION
DURING THE PROJECT."**

finishes or repainting an entire home exterior, Doin's team focuses on efficiency without compromising quality.

Looking to the future, Doin said Rouge Painters plans to expand its services while maintaining the same personal approach that has earned the company a loyal following. He believes that even as technology continues to shape customer interactions, personal connection will always be the most important part of doing business.

"At the end of the day, people want to feel heard and respected," he said. "That's what we try to deliver every time."

Rouge Painters may specialize in paint, but its true foundation is built on values that never fade.

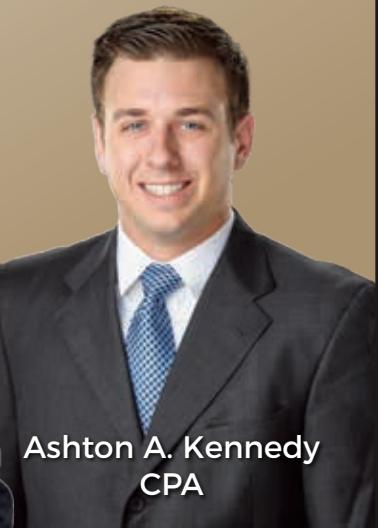


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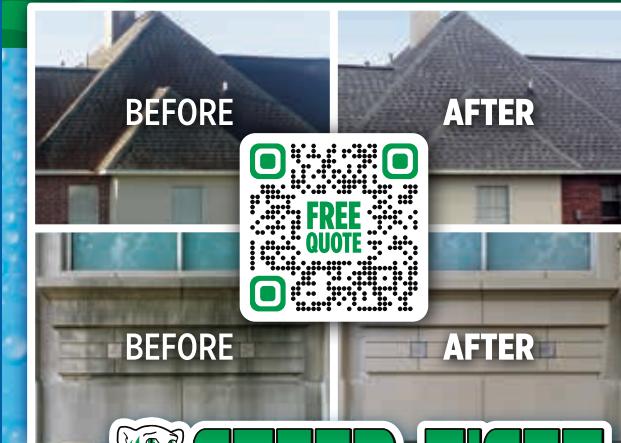
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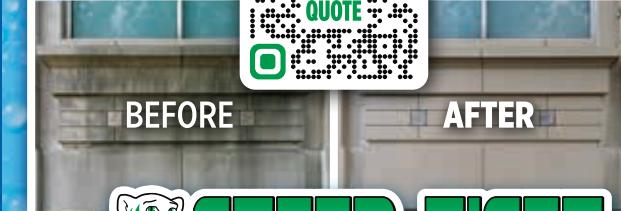
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Rae Didier Broussard

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BY LAKEN FOISIE • PHOTOS BY STEVIE LEJEUNE

As a former high school business teacher and volleyball coach, Rae Didier Broussard has always thrived in environments where leadership, teamwork, and precision collide. Ten years ago, she traded the whistle and whiteboard for contracts and closings. Channeling her reputation for intensity into real estate, Rae is the top-producing team leader of the Rae Broussard Team with Keller Williams Realty First Choice (KWFC), where her drive, organization, and candor have made her one of the area's most respected professionals.

Rae laughs when she recalls how it all began. "My husband went golfing with a KW agent who said I should meet with Tonya Toups," she said. "Once I met Tonya, her positivity and attitude just motivated me. I felt like she believed in me. We had a great conversation, and something just clicked." That simple introduction opened the door to a new career that would ultimately combine Rae's teaching instincts, business acumen, and relentless energy into something powerful.

Though she didn't initially plan to form a team, fate intervened in familiar ways.

"My first boss from my teaching career, Steve Westbrook, was sitting at our KW award gala," Rae said. "I asked what he was doing there, I had no idea he was an agent. The next day I called him just to ask how it was going, and somehow that led to us talking about a team. He's been with me ever since." Rae claims Steve as her most reliable go-to and one of the smartest people she knows.

Today Rae leads a close-knit team that includes Westbrook, Rebecca Didier McGaw, Brianne Babin, Britanie Kernan, Tisha Grimmis, Brynna Baye, Dustin Delaune, and the newest member of the group, Kendrick Roberson. She knows her team well and can define their strengths with appreciation.

"Rebecca, my twin sister, knows more than many Realtors. She makes it all happen," Rae said. "Brianne, my former volleyball player, started as my admin and co-directs my volleyball club; now she's killing it as a young agent." She continued, "Britanie's daughter played volleyball for me. She and Tisha are both breast cancer survivors who inspire everyone with their strength. Brynna was a past student of mine and she and Dustin help with our administrative and marketing." Like someone who knows

“

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what she has is unique, she proudly added, “We even do a team trip every year, it’s so fun. I love our team.”

That loyalty and sense of camaraderie are defining traits of Rae’s leadership. “I can be blunt and straightforward, no fluff, but my team knows my heart,” she said. “My love language is gifts, so they joke that I’m either showing appreciation or apologizing with one.” She smiles when describing

her team’s dynamic. “My volleyball club wasn’t called Intense Volleyball for nothing,” she said. “I’m working on being more sensitive.”

Rae is passionate about helping others grow, both personally and professionally. “I love that I can employ three great people,” she said. “It’s stressful being a business owner, but it’s also amazing to create jobs. No matter how the market is, I’ll do everything I can to make sure my team is taken care of.”

Her commitment to hard work comes from deep roots. “My dad was a teacher with four kids, and my mom stayed home. My grandma put us through private school and as soon as I graduated high school I moved out.” Rae shared that she worked three jobs through college and got her bachelor’s in business and MBA in five years. “I liked work. I liked making my own money and depending on nobody but myself. My parents raised us to be hardworking and honest. So to be here now and do things for others feels really good.”

That work ethic drives not only her business but her community involvement. Rae recently served as a baroness for the Cattle Baron’s Ball, a major fundraiser for the American Cancer Society. “I sponsored a table last year, and a friend nominated me,” she said. “I’ve raised about \$37,141.” Rae stated how much this meant to her because her brother-in-law Richie, passed away at 39 from colon cancer. Rebecca was working with her when it happened. “It allowed her to be with him and their three kids during his seven-month hospital stay. My goal is to make her life easier now. She’s such a hard worker and never takes advantage of being my sister.”

The recognition Rae has earned reflects both her production and her consistency. In January 2022, *Baton Rouge Real Producers* recognized her in the 40 Under 40 issue, and she consistently receives annual awards





from Keller Williams First Choice. "I appreciate it every time," Rae said. "I think KWFC knows I'll always be there for them. I love the owners and admins, they're just great people."

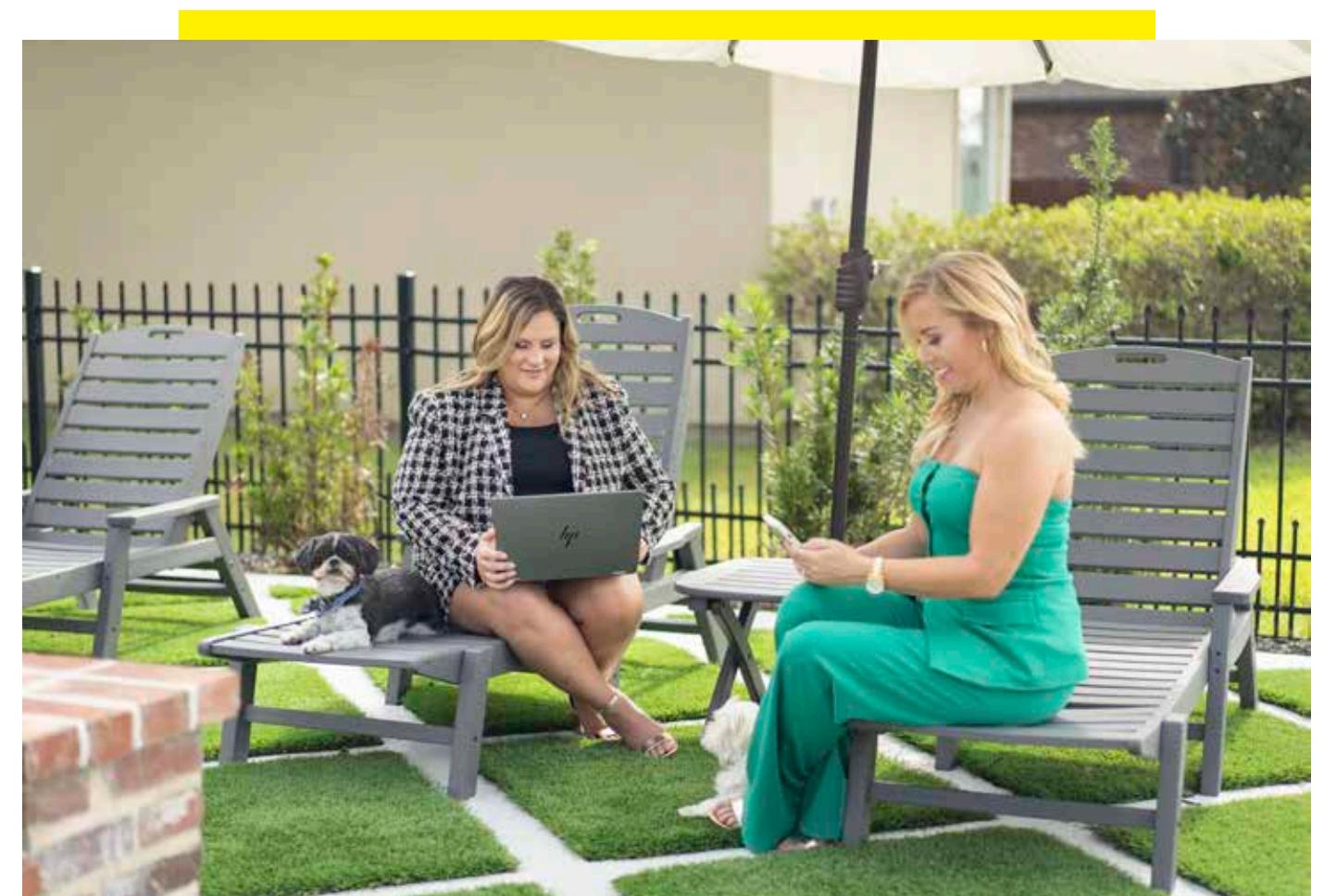
What fuels Rae is not the trophies, but the transformation she gets to witness in her clients' lives. "Helping clients accomplish what they want or need is satisfying," she said. "Because let's be real, it's not always happy moments like buying your first home or your dream house. Sometimes it's a divorce, a death, financial stress, downsizing, or empty nesting. Being there for them through that and making it as pleasant and stress-free as possible is what I want to do."

When it comes to business philosophy, Rae credits one book with changing her mindset, *The One Thing*. "It taught me to delegate everything that someone else can do and focus on the things only I can do," she said. "Once I started doing that, everything changed. I hired an admin early, even when someone told me it was too soon. But I knew if I wanted to get where I wanted to be, I needed that person then, not later." Rae also gives credit to her husband, "He was the one on board with me quitting my job, not knowing what I would do, supporting me when I wanted to focus on the ONE thing, and of course he plans our entire team trip and does so much more!" She added, "I couldn't do this without BB."

When asked for her best advice to aspiring Realtors, Rae doesn't hesitate. "Stop asking what everyone else is doing," she said. "Put your head down and work. Follow KW's guide, they give you all the tools you need. It takes time, but it'll happen."

In the end, Rae's story is one of transformation without pretense, a teacher turned top producer who still finds joy in helping others grow, both in business and in life. "I never thought this is where I'd be," she said. "But I'm proud of the life I've built and the people who've helped me build it. That's what makes all the hard work worth it."

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KNOWS MORE THAN MANY REALTORS...
SHE MAKES IT ALL HAPPEN.”



► NEW CONSTRUCTION

Another Case of BR Being Insulated From The National Headlines

BY BRANDON RICHOUX



It's easy to assume that builders everywhere are pulling back or panicking, especially if you've read national headlines about declining housing starts. But here in Baton Rouge, Livingston, and Ascension, our new construction market is holding up better than many expected, even if the dynamics have shifted.

From January through the end of September this year, 1,269 new construction homes were sold across our market. During the same time period last year, that number was 1,407, a noticeable 9.8% dip. The median sales price has actually increased slightly from \$300,383 to \$303,263 (1%). For comparison, resale homes during that same period have seen median prices rise from \$247,000 to \$254,173 (4%).

So what does that tell us?

Builders are still building, and buyers are still buying. But it's not business as usual. Builders are adjusting and new construction listings have declined slightly, from 1,568 during that same January-to-September window in 2024 to 1,537 in 2025, and 1,624 in 2023. Homes are also taking longer to sell, which is pushing builders to adjust their strategies.

Every local builder I've talked to is feeling the pinch of extended marketing timelines, higher holding costs, and increased material expenses. But our market has two things going for it: we didn't overinflate during the pandemic years, and the demand for newer, turnkey homes in desirable areas remains steady, especially when paired with incentives.

That being said, the presale market continues to be strong competition for builders. When buyers can choose between a new home at \$300,000+ or a well-kept presale home with more space, a bigger yard, and a lower price, they're weighing their options carefully. Builders have had to get more creative with offers like closing cost assistance, rate buydowns, and upgraded finishes to stay competitive.

Looking ahead to 2026, I think we'll continue to see a stable but selective new construction market. Builders will have to be cautious not to price themselves out of competing with presale homes. The demand is there, but buyers are watching value more closely than ever.

Our market may not be booming, but it's still building.

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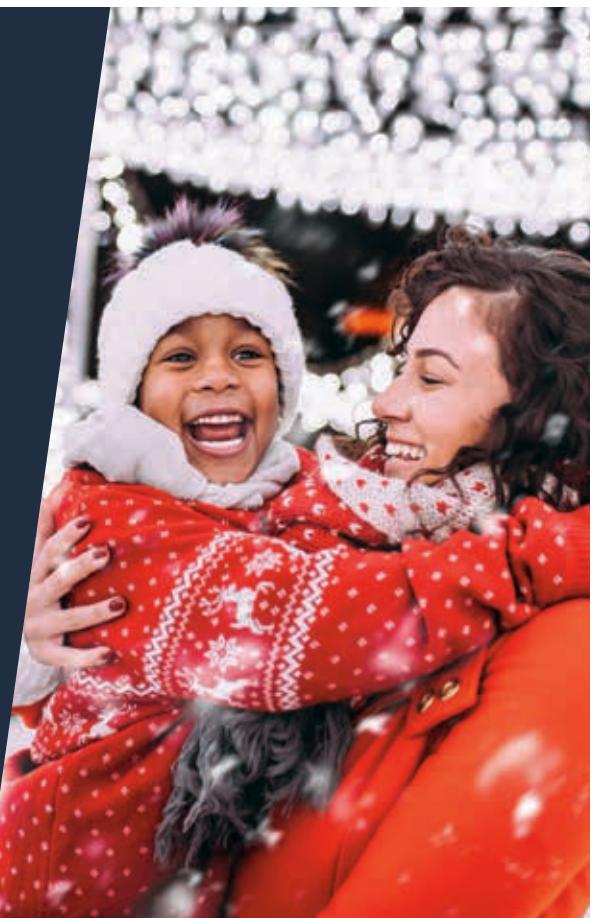
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From the beginning, Red Stick Partners was built for agents, by agents—professionals who see serving their clients not just as a job, but as a calling. “Our purpose has always been to act in our clients’ best interests,” says Johnette Champagne. “That’s our *raison d'être*—the reason we do what we do.”

At the heart of our success is the Keller Williams culture, which calls us to think big, act with integrity, and serve others first. Our guiding principles, known as W4C2TES, remind us that “Win-Win or No Deal”, “Integrity-



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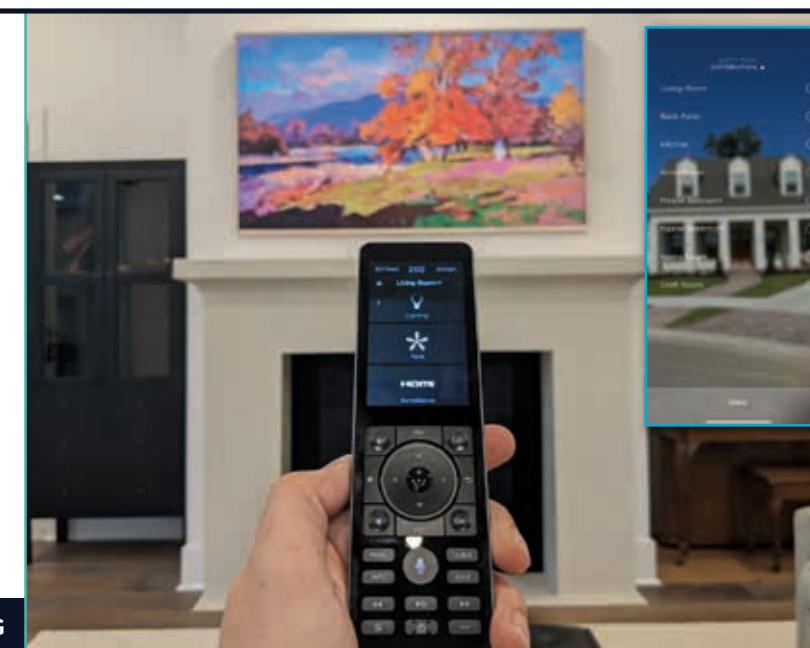
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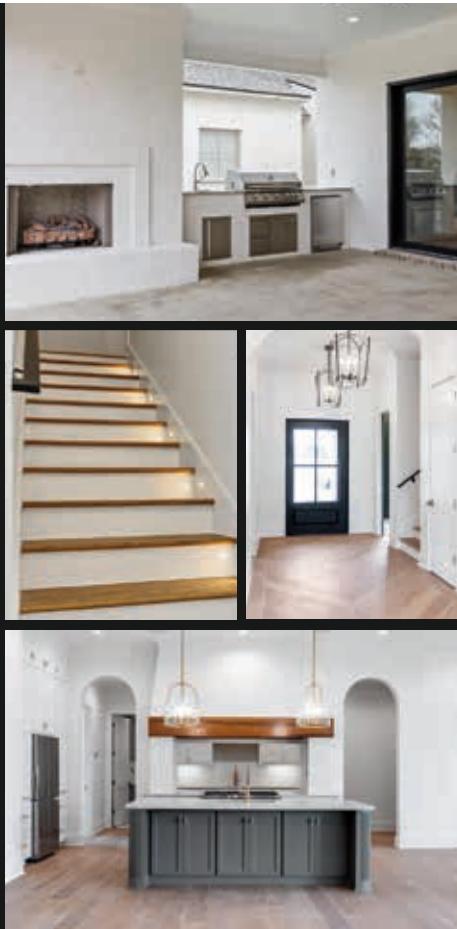
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