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# Celebrating 250 Years of Opportunity

BY ROBERT ORSO, PUBLISHER

As we mark the **250th birthday of the United States of America**, we pause to reflect on a story unlike any other—a story of courage, conviction, faith, and opportunity. Two and a half centuries ago, a group of determined individuals stood on the edge of uncertainty and chose freedom over comfort. They envisioned a nation where people could pursue their lives, their livelihoods, and their beliefs without oppression. That vision gave birth to the greatest experiment in liberty the world has ever known.

The founding of our nation was not accidental. It was deeply rooted in a desire for **freedom—especially religious freedom**. Many of the early settlers crossed an ocean not in search of wealth, but in search of the right to worship God according to their convictions. That principle became woven into the very fabric of our founding documents. The Declaration of Independence acknowledges that our rights are **endowed by our Creator**, and

the Constitution protects the freedom to live out those beliefs without government interference. This foundation has shaped not only our laws, but also our culture, our values, and our sense of responsibility to one another.

Throughout history, America has been a place where faith and freedom have walked hand in hand. While our nation is not perfect—and never has been—there is something powerful about a country that recognizes a higher authority and seeks to protect the God-given dignity of every individual. Honoring God has played a significant role in shaping our communities, our work ethic, and our understanding of right and wrong. It reminds us that true freedom is not just the ability to do whatever we want, but the responsibility to do what is right.

What makes America truly remarkable is the **opportunity it offers**. From the very beginning, this has been a land where hard work, perseverance, and

integrity can open doors that might otherwise remain closed. Generations of immigrants and pioneers have come here with little more than hope and determination, and through their efforts, they have built businesses, communities, and legacies that continue to impact us today.

It is no secret that the United States is the **wealthiest nation in the world**. While there are still individuals and families facing challenges, even those considered to be living in poverty by American standards often have access to resources, opportunities, and freedoms that are unimaginable in many other parts of the world. Access to education, the ability to start a business, freedom of speech, and the right to pursue one's dreams—these are privileges we can sometimes take for granted, yet they remain rare on a global scale.

The American dream is still alive. It may look different for each person, but at its core, it is built on the idea

that your future is not predetermined by your circumstances. It is shaped by your choices, your effort, and your willingness to keep moving forward. In my own work and in the lives of so many I have the privilege to connect with, I see this truth played out every day. People are building businesses, raising families, and creating opportunities not just for themselves, but for others as well.

As we celebrate this milestone anniversary, it is important not only to look back with gratitude but also to look ahead with expectation. The same principles that guided our founding—faith, freedom, hard work, and personal responsibility—are the same principles that will carry us into the future. The opportunities that lie ahead are just as real as those that existed 250 years ago, perhaps even greater.

We are living in a time of incredible possibilities. Technology, innovation, and connection have created avenues for growth and success that previous generations could not have imagined. Yet, the foundation remains the same: a willingness to work hard, to act with integrity, and to honor the values that built this nation.

As we reflect on 250 years of America, let us be grateful for the sacrifices that were made to secure our freedoms. Let us honor the role that faith has played in shaping our nation. And let us embrace the opportunities that still exist for those willing to pursue them with purpose and determination.

The story of America is far from finished. In many ways, we are still writing it—through our businesses, our communities, and our daily lives. The next chapter holds great promise, and the same spirit that built this nation continues to live on in each of us.

Here's to 250 years—and to the opportunities, freedoms, and blessings that lie ahead.

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# COURTNEY COTTON

## Turning Determination into Success

Fueled by family, guided by mentorship, and driven to grow, Courtney Cotton is making her mark on the Gulf Coast real estate community.

PHOTOS BY TRAVIS TANK

There is something special about people who genuinely love helping others. They bring warmth into every conversation, energy into every challenge, and heart into every relationship. That combination is exactly what makes Courtney Cotton a standout Rising Star in the Gulf Coast real estate community.

Before stepping into real estate, Courtney spent years working directly with people in fast-paced industries that demanded excellent communication, patience, and service. She first worked in retail management for eight years before building a successful 14-year career as a cosmetologist in both New Orleans and Gulfport. Those years shaped her ability to connect with people from all walks of life and taught her how important trust and relationships truly are.

“Real estate has always fascinated me,” Courtney shares. “I love to see how each home has a story to tell about the families who live in them.”

That appreciation for people and their stories naturally led her toward real estate. After the birth of her second child, Courtney began taking online real estate courses while still working full-time as a cosmetologist. Balancing motherhood, work, and studying was not easy, but determination has always been one of her strongest qualities.

One conversation ended up changing the direction of her life.

“One of my hair clients recommended that I meet with Bradley Keesee at eAgent Gulf Coast, and the rest is history,” she says with a smile.

Like many successful agents, Courtney quickly discovered that real estate is far more than showing homes and signing contracts. It is a career filled with constant learning, problem-solving, emotions, and challenges that require persistence and resilience. Fortunately, she found herself surrounded by people who believed in her from the very beginning.

“As corny as it sounds, my broker has been my biggest mentor and cheerleader,” Courtney says. “He has taught me so much about real estate and continues to every day. There is no way to know everything about real estate because every day brings new challenges. That’s what I love about it.”

Having a mentor she trusts has been invaluable to her growth and confidence. Courtney openly acknowledges how important guidance is in an industry that can sometimes feel overwhelming, especially for newer agents.

“Brad has always found the positive in all the challenges I’ve encountered in real estate,” she explains. “Without someone leading you in this business that you trust and can rely on, you’re basically walking around blindfolded.”

She also speaks honestly about the demands of the profession.

“This job is not easy. It will wear on you mentally and

physically,” she says. “But when you see the smile on families’ faces after selling or buying their property, it makes it all worth it. It makes you want to do more.”

That mindset has helped Courtney rise quickly within her company. In fact, she was recently ranked #3 in volume for 2025 within the eAgent Franchise—an impressive accomplishment that reflects both her work ethic and commitment to serving her clients well.

When asked what has led to her success, her answer is simple and deeply personal.

“Determination not to fail,” she says. “My family pushes me to keep trying to do better in life and in my job.”

Family sits at the center of Courtney’s world. She and her husband, Drew, are raising two young children: their son, Zarcus, who turns seven in May, and their daughter, August, who is five. Everything Courtney does is fueled by the desire to build a strong future for them and to make them proud.



“MY GOAL EVERY YEAR IS TO BE BETTER THAN I WAS THE YEAR BEFORE.”



“Family is always the biggest motivator for me,” she says. “I want my family to be proud of me and be able to provide for them the way my mother did for me.”

offers practical advice rooted in her own experience.

“Find the right company to work with,” she says. “I am so fortunate that the first company I was hired with fit me like a glove. Never give up

Even amid a busy real estate career, Courtney treasures creating meaningful memories with her children. Some of her favorite moments involve spending time outdoors with family, especially trips to Horn Island.

“My mom is the best captain, and she takes my kids and me out to Horn Island whenever she can,” Courtney says. “Those are some of my fondest memories growing up with my family, and I hope to give the same memories to my children.”

That appreciation for family, relationships, and experiences shines through in the way Courtney approaches her clients. She understands that buying or selling a home is not just a transaction—it is often a major life moment tied to dreams, transitions, and emotions.

For those considering a career in real estate, Courtney



on finding the perfect work family. You need to surround yourself with like-minded people who can push you to strive to be the best agent you can be. That’s what eAgent Gulf Coast has done for me.”

Looking ahead, Courtney’s goals remain grounded and focused.

“My goal every year is to be better than I was the year before.”

That steady commitment to growth, paired with humility, determination, and heart, is exactly why Courtney Cotton is making such an impact so early in her career. As she continues building relationships and helping families across the Gulf Coast, there is little doubt that her story in real estate is only just beginning. ▣

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# KIM

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Success in real estate rarely begins with certainty.  
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For Kim Alexander, real estate was never part of a long-term career plan. In fact, when she first entered the industry in 2019, it happened almost unexpectedly.

“I thought I was losing my job due to the sale of the business where I had worked for 20 years,” Kim recalls. “Real estate was suggested to me, and I said I would most likely starve if I had to live off commission.”

Instead, she discovered something entirely different.

After her first year in real estate, Kim realized not only that she could succeed in the business, but that she was genuinely good at it.

Today, as a solo agent with Century 21 Busch Realty Group, Kim has built a thriving career defined by strong communication, consistency, and an unwavering commitment to her clients. Her production numbers reflect that growth, with \$11.8 million in sales volume in 2025, along with numerous accolades, including Titanium, Platinum, Silver, and Gold Producer awards, as well as ranking #3 in the state among Century 21 brokerages.

But for Kim, the journey has always been about far more than awards.

“Success to me is having a healthy balance between my work and family life while maintaining peace of mind,” she says. “It means being able to provide for my family, grow professionally, and still have the time and mental space to enjoy the people and moments that matter most.”

### **Built on Commitment**

Born in Tuscaloosa—“Roll Tide,” she adds proudly—Kim moved to the Ramsey Springs area of Stone County at age 13. She graduated at the top of her class from Stone High School before attending Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College for a short time.

At the time, however, her priorities were centered on building a family life.

“I wanted to be a wife and mother,” Kim says.

That devotion to family remains one of the defining forces behind everything she does today. Kim and her husband, Kerry, have been together since 1985 and married since 1988. Together they’ve built a

close-knit family that includes daughter Erin, son Blake, daughter-in-law Meghan, future son-in-law Austin, and three beloved grandchildren—Reece, Josie, and AJ—who continue to motivate and inspire her every day.

“My husband, children, and grandchildren are my constant motivation,” she says.

That same loyalty and care naturally extend into her real estate business. Kim describes herself as hands-on throughout every transaction, working hard to ensure her clients feel supported from beginning to end.

“My quick response time, strong communication, and commitment to personally guiding each transaction from start to finish set me apart,” she explains.

In an industry where clients often feel overwhelmed or uncertain, Kim’s calm, responsive approach creates reassurance and trust. She understands that buying or selling a home is deeply personal, and she treats each client relationship with the attention it deserves.

One quote in particular has become part of her mindset both personally and professionally:

“Every NO gets you one step closer to the right YES.”

It’s a perspective rooted in perseverance—one that has helped her navigate uncertainty, embrace opportunity, and continue pushing forward even when success wasn’t guaranteed.

#### **Grounded in Gratitude**

Despite her accomplishments, Kim remains refreshingly grounded. Outside of real estate, she prefers simple joys: spending time with her grandchildren, enjoying quiet moments at home, and occasionally unwinding with true crime shows during rare moments of downtime.

“I don’t have a lot of hobbies other than typing offers and inputting listings,” she jokes.

Still, beneath the humor is someone who genuinely loves what she does.

Kim takes pride not only in helping clients achieve their goals, but also in representing the Gulf Coast real estate community at a high level. Being selected for the July 2026 issue of *Gulf Coast Real Producers* is something she considers especially meaningful. ▾

“  
Every NO gets  
you one step  
closer to the  
right *Yes.*”





# AMERICA AT 250: **WHY THE FOURTH OF JULY** Still Matters

BY ROBERT ORSO

**F**ew holidays capture the spirit of a nation quite like the Fourth of July. Across America, families gather for cookouts, parades fill small-town streets, fireworks light up the night sky, and communities come together to celebrate the freedoms we often take for granted. This year, however, Independence Day carries an even deeper significance as our nation commemorates its 250th anniversary—a milestone known as the Semiquincentennial.

On July 4, 1776, representatives of thirteen colonies adopted the Declaration of Independence, boldly declaring that America would no longer be governed by the British Crown. It was a courageous act that launched a grand experiment in self-government unlike anything the world had ever seen. The men who signed that document risked their fortunes, their reputations, and even their lives for the belief that all people are endowed with certain unalienable rights, including life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

Two hundred and fifty years later, those ideals continue to inspire not only Americans but people around the world.



Families spend time together creating memories that will last a lifetime. The simple joys of summer become intertwined with a deeper appreciation for the sacrifices that secured our freedom.

American Dream. Every day, Realtors, lenders, title professionals, inspectors, builders, and countless others help families achieve the dream of owning a place to call home. The ability to own property, build wealth, and invest in our communities is one of the freedoms that generations of Americans have worked to protect.

The Fourth of July remains one of the most popular holidays in the United States because it celebrates something that transcends politics, geography, and generations. It reminds us that we share a common story. Whether your family arrived on American shores centuries ago or just recently, Independence Day invites all Americans to celebrate the opportunities and freedoms that have made this nation unique.

The 250th anniversary offers an opportunity to reflect on how far America has come. Over the past two and a half centuries, our nation has endured wars, economic hardships, political divisions, and social challenges. Yet through it all, America has remained a beacon of opportunity and innovation. The United States has led the world in entrepreneurship, technological advancement, scientific discovery, and charitable giving. More importantly, it has provided millions of people with the opportunity to pursue their dreams and build better lives for their families.

As we celebrate America's 250th birthday, let us take time to appreciate the blessings we enjoy, honor those who came before us, and recommit ourselves to building strong families, vibrant communities, and a brighter future.

For many, the holiday represents cherished traditions. Neighborhoods gather for barbecues. Veterans are honored for their service. Children wave flags while watching parades.

For those of us in the real estate community, the Fourth of July holds special meaning. Homeownership is one of the most tangible expressions of the

The fireworks will fade, the parades will end, and the holiday weekend will pass. But the ideals that gave birth to America 250 years ago remain as relevant today as they were in 1776.

This Independence Day, may we celebrate not only our nation's history but also the promise of its future. Happy 250th Birthday, America.



# MDH

## FOUNDATION REPAIR



BY DAVE DANIELSON

## STRENGTH TO BUILD ON

**When a foundation is solid, the rest of the home is supported for longevity. When there's an issue with the foundation, you need someone who cares for it as if it was their own ... someone who cares for your clients.**



That's where MDH Foundation Repair excels.

Mike Hayes is owner, president, and general contractor with the company. He has a true passion for the work he and his team carry out for homeowners throughout the region.

"We really do have a passion for foundation repair. It's one of those things that's never planned for," Mike explains.

"It's not one of those exciting things in a home, but if those issues aren't taken care of, the other parts of the home are at risk. We like coming in and solving issues with a home. Our satisfaction comes in knowing we've helped people make an investment in the home."

### Made to Last

As Mike says, current homeowners are the custodians of the home in the time they live in it.

"Our plan is that the work we do extends beyond their time in the home. We're not in it for the quick fix. That goes back to reputation and our impact on the community. We really want to make a difference," Mike emphasizes.

"Not only do we work here, but we live here. We see people around town. We like looking people in the eye and saying we did a solid job."

### Best of Both Worlds

Those who work with MDH Foundation Repair appreciate that they get the best of both worlds.

"We're big enough to take on large projects, but still small enough to care," Mike says.

That spirit of commitment begins with Mike himself. You'll see him on job sites himself with a true, hands-on approach.

As MDH Foundation Repair works to ensure a strong, unyielding foundation is in place for years to come, they offer extremely valuable flexibility when it comes to supporting the real estate deal and all of those involved.

"We recognize that in working with REALTORS® in the home sale process, words you don't want to hear are you have a foundation issue or a moisture issue in your crawl space. When that comes back from an inspector, the clock is ticking. So we will work very closely with the buyer and/or the seller once the issue is identified and we prioritize real estate transactions," Mike says.

"We are willing to offer flexibility as part of the real

estate transaction, as long as we receive confirmation from the lender that we will get payment at the time of closing. We want to do what we can to help with these types of transactions. We know those issues can kill a deal and we want to be a tool that can help REALTORS® close deals and keep everyone happy ... to be a resource."

#### Team Spirit

The teamwork at MDH Foundation Repair is an essential part of the company's success story. The organization boasts a team of 19 professionals, including crew, office staff, and sales team.

Mike looks for three primary qualities in the people who become part of the MDH Foundation Repair team — a close-knit company that prides itself on being a boutique foundation repair firm.



**"WE ARE COMMITTED TO THE HOMEOWNERS IN THIS AREA. WE LIVE HERE AS WELL."**



"We look for those who are humble, hungry, and smart. First, a sense of humility is very important. When we say we want someone who is hungry, we mean we need people who have the passion to support people," Mike points out. "For us, Smart is about the way we treat people and our demeanor."

Local roots are important. With that in mind, Mike has been a Daphne resident for over 25 years. He and his wife live in the community. Plus, as a company, the company has a lot of family and friends extensions across the area.

#### Long-Term Connections

That local connection makes a difference before, during, and after the job is done.

"We are committed to the homeowners in this area. We live here as well. When we pack up the trucks at the end of the job, we're not really leaving," Mike says. "This area is our home. If there is an issue, we're not coming from a neighboring state or another city. We live and work in this community and we are fully vested in supporting the people who call this place home."

When you and your clients need a foundation repair partner you can trust, look no further than MDH Foundation Repair ... with true strength you can build on. ▀



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PHOTOS BY KRISTI HARRIS

# NORMAN TYNER

TYNER PROPERTIES



For many people, success in real estate begins with a license. For Norman Tyner, it began decades earlier—with finance, entrepreneurship, investing, and a relentless drive to build something meaningful.

As the owner of Tyner Properties, Norman brings a level of experience to the industry that few can match. Although he officially entered real estate in 2020, his background in property investing, lending, insurance, accounting, and business ownership has shaped the way he serves clients today.

“I bought my first rental property in 1997 when I was 23,” Norman says. “That’s really where my real estate journey started.”

Born and raised in Poplarville, Norman grew up in a hardworking middle-class family on a small farm. His mother worked as a payroll clerk at the local school, while his father served as maintenance supervisor for the community hospital. From an early age, he learned the value of hard work, consistency, and determination—qualities that would later define his career.

After graduating from Poplarville High School and attending Pearl River Community College for a short time, Norman entered the finance industry at just 20 years old. By 1999, he had opened his own finance company and eventually expanded into multiple business ventures, including mortgage origination, insurance, accounting, and cash advance services.

Over the course of 26 years in finance, Norman developed a practical understanding of nearly every moving part involved in a real estate transaction.

“That experience makes navigating transactions much easier for clients,” he says. “I’ve seen things from several different angles over the years.”

#### Strong Through Storms

One of the defining moments of Norman’s business career came in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Just one year after buying out his senior partner and opening a second finance location in Picayune, the storm created uncertainty unlike anything he had experienced before.

“It was detrimental for a lot of companies,” Norman recalls. “I really had to buckle down and come up with a plan to navigate something we had never faced before.”

What could have become a setback instead became a turning point.

“It ended up making me a stronger operator in the end,” he says.



That same resilience would later carry into his second career in real estate. After selling his final finance and cash advance businesses in 2019, Norman transitioned naturally into the field he had already spent decades investing in personally. In just a few years, he has built an impressive track record, closing 85 transactions totaling \$18.4 million in 2025 alone. His achievements have earned recognition, including Rookie of the Year from the Pearl River County Board of Realtors in 2020 and a place among the Top 100 in GCAR in 2025.

Still, Norman measures success differently than awards or numbers.



“Success is living a good life with people you love and having a career you can be proud of,” he says.

Today, Norman and his wife, Julie—his high school sweetheart of 32 years—operate Tyner Properties together as a husband-and-wife brokerage. Alongside traditional real estate services, they continue growing a portfolio of rental properties, owner-financed properties, storage facilities, and renovation projects.

Their long-term vision is intentional growth: building investment assets for retirement while slowly expanding the brokerage with like-minded agents who share their values and approach to real estate.

#### **Rooted in Relationships**

At the center of Norman’s business philosophy is something simple: communication.

## “THIS IS A BROKERAGE RUN BY A SMALL-TOWN LOCAL GUY WHO KNOWS THE AREA WELL.”

“Communication is the key to real estate sales,” he says. “The top producers in this industry are available to clients and fellow agents.”

That accessibility, paired with his decades of business experience and deep local knowledge, has helped establish Norman as a trusted resource throughout the area. As someone who has lived in Poplarville his entire life, he understands not only the market but also the people who call it home.

“This is a brokerage run by a small-town local guy who knows the area well,” Norman says.

Clients feel that authenticity immediately. Whether helping first-time buyers navigate the process, advising investors, or guiding families through major financial decisions, Norman brings both practical knowledge and genuine care to every interaction.

One of the most rewarding parts of the business for him is watching people achieve homeownership when they once believed it was out of reach.

“I’ve seen new homeowners purchase homes they never thought would be possible,” he says. “That’s probably my favorite part.”

Outside of work, Norman enjoys spending time on the water with family and friends, often aboard the couple’s pontoon boat along the Gulf Coast. He and Julie share two children—

Austin and Cameron—and a Goldendoodle named Henry, affectionately known as their “real estate dog” thanks to his appearances in marketing videos and social media posts.

And while Norman jokes that many people recognize him first for his unmistakable Southern accent, those who know him best recognize something deeper: a lifetime of experience, a strong work ethic, and a commitment to helping others succeed.

For Norman, real estate has never simply been about transactions.

It’s about building a life, serving a community, and creating opportunities that last for generations. ▼



**Q: WHO RECEIVES THIS MAGAZINE?**

A: The top 300 agents in the Gulf Coast Area. We pulled the MLS numbers (by volume) from Jan. 1, 2022, through Dec. 31, 2022, in the MS Gulf Coast market. We cut the list off at number 300, and the distribution was born. For this year's list, the minimum production level for our group is \$5 million in 2022. The list will reset at the end of 2023 for next year and will continue to update annually.

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

A: The process is simple. Every feature you see has first been nominated. You can nominate REALTORS®, agents, affiliates, brokers, owners, or even yourself. Office leaders can also nominate real estate agents. We will consider anyone you bring to our attention because we don't know everyone's story, and we need your help to learn more.

A nomination currently looks like this: Email us at robert.orso@realproducersmag.com with the subject line "Nomination: (Name of Nominee)" and explain why you are nominating the individual. Maybe the person has an amazing story that we need to tell, or perhaps someone overcame extreme obstacles, is an exceptional leader, has the best customer service, or gives back to the community in a big way. The next step is an interview with us to ensure a good fit, and then we put the wheels in motion for our writer to conduct an interview and for our photographer to schedule a photo shoot.

**Q: WHAT IS THE COST TO FEATURE A REALTOR®, AGENT, OR TEAM?**

A: Zero, zilch, zippo, nada, nil. **The feature costs nothing**, my friends, so nominate away! We are not a pay-to-play model. We share real stories of Real Producers.

**Q: WHO ARE THE PREFERRED PARTNERS?**

A: Anyone listed as a preferred partner in the front of the magazine is a part of this community and will have an ad in every issue of the magazine, attend our quarterly events, and be a part of our online community. We don't just find these businesses off the street, nor do we work with all businesses that approach us. One or many of you have recommended every preferred partner you see in this publication. We won't even meet with a business that you have not vetted and stamped for approval, in a sense. Our goal is to create a powerhouse network for the REALTORS® and agents in the area and for the best affiliates so we can grow stronger together.

**Q: HOW CAN I RECOMMEND A PREFERRED PARTNER?**

A: If you have a recommendation for a local business that works with top real estate agents, please let us know. Send an email to robert.orso@realproducersmag.com.

# FAQ

Welcome to *Real Producers!* Some of you may be wondering what this publication is all about, which is why we have created this FAQ page. Here, we will answer the most commonly asked questions from around the country regarding our program. My door is always open to discuss anything regarding this community — this publication is 100% designed to be your voice!

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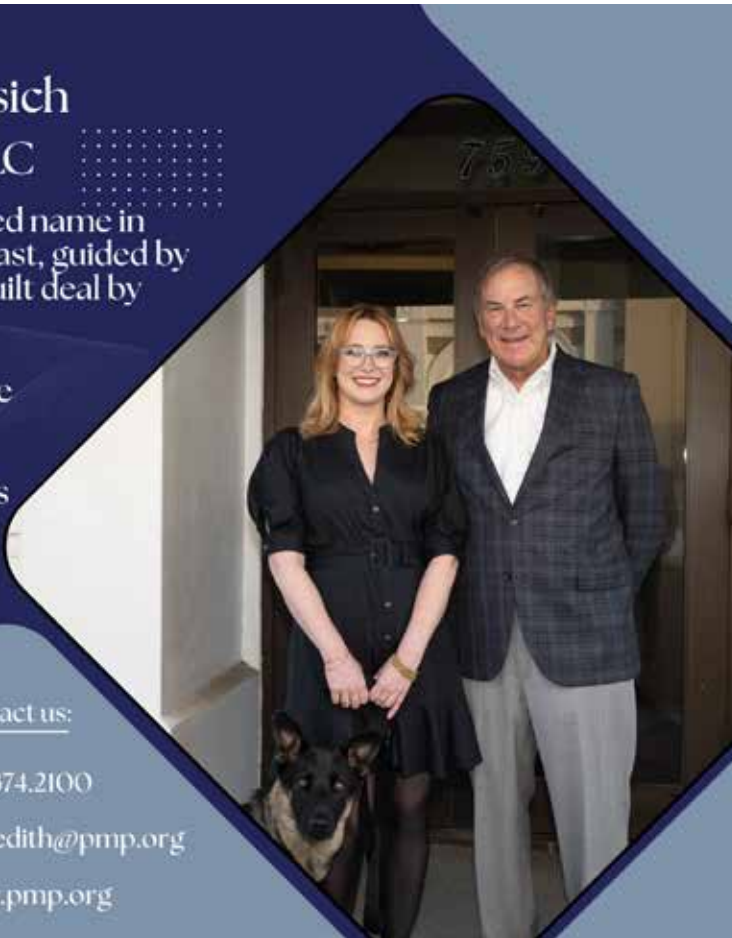
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