

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- Welcome New Members pg 3
- Message from the President pg 4
- Notes from Your Association Executive pg 5
- Expanding Horizons: A Closer Look at our Newest Committees pg 6-7
- Advocacy Update pg 8-9
- RPAC Contributors & Investors pg 10
- PA REALTOR® Day on the Hill pg 10
- State & National Association Advocacy at Work pg 11
- City of Reading Clears Path for Adaptive Reuse in Downtown Districts pg 12
- Around the County: Headlines You Should Know About pg 12
- DEI Corner pg 14
- DEI Committee Spotlight: Community Connections pg 14-15
- Upcoming Bright MLS Training pg 16
- Level Up: AI for Real Estate Professionals with Rajeev Sajja pg 16
- PAR Updates pg 18
- NAR Updates pg 19
- 5K Run for Shelter pg 20-21
- Outreach Committee Spotlight: Giving Back in Big Ways pg 22
- A Legacy of Leadership: 2026 Scholarship Recipients pg 23
- Recognizing Our Affiliate Partners pg 24-25
- 1 in 5 Targeted: How to Prepare for Rising Scam Threats pg 28-29
- From Market Trends to Main Streets: A Look at Recent CIC Events pg 30-31
- Protect Your Mental Health to Protect Your Business pg 32-33
- Summer Kickoff Recap - Good Food, Fun Games, & Philly Vibes pg 33
- Community Corner pg 35

STAFF



ALI COLUMBUS
Association Executive



LAURA CULP
Membership &
Events Director



COURTNEY DOMBROWSKI
Marketing &
Communications Director



MARK MOHN
Government Affairs
Director

IMPORTANT NUMBERS

National Association of REALTORS® (NAR)
1-800-874-6500 www.nar.realtor

Pennsylvania Association REALTORS® (PAR)
1-800-555-3390 www.parealtors.org

PAR Legal Hotline (MEMBER ONLY BENEFIT)
1-800-727-5345

PA State Real Estate Commission
1-833-367-2762 www.pals.pa.gov

Bright MLS Support Center
1-844-522-7444 BrightMLS.com/Support

PROPERTY LINES

An Official Publication of the
READING-BERKS ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®, INC.
2201 Ridgewood Road, Berkshire Commons, Suite 350
Wyomissing, PA 19610
Phone: 610-375-8458
Fax: 610-375-3298
Email: Info@RealEstateInBerks.com
Website: www.RealEstateInBerks.com

WELCOME

Orientation & Induction Class - March 16th, 2026



- Arlette Salazar** - Atlas Land and Homes
- Jose Nero** - Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Homesale Realty
- Suzy Lugones, Patacia Pierre** - Century 21 Gold
- Amanda Bentzel, Jenna Walton** - Coldwell Banker Realty
- Nicholas Riegel** - Keller Williams Platinum Realty
- Steve Helgeson** - Pagoda Realty
- Zach Myers** - Ramus Realty Group
- Nel Walborn** - RE/MAX of Reading
- Rainely De Los Santos** - Realty One Group Alliance

Orientation & Induction Class - May 18th, 2026



- Crystal Ruiz** - Atlas Land and Homes
- Marilyn Singlar** - Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Homesale Realty
- Faith Gruber** - Century 21 Gold
- Christelle Claude** - Coldwell Banker Realty
- Dominic Mallozzi, Jason Schneider** - EXP Realty
- Courtney Richie** - Hometown Property Sales
- Amber Moyer, Chris Posch** - Iron Valley Real Estate
- Charles Arrington, Tabitha Franqui, Lucia Franta, Kim Hershberger Yeager, Valerie Rivera-Garcia, Brenda Velasquez, Olga Zhunio, Matt Decembrino** - Keller Williams Platinum Realty
- David Thomas** - Pagoda Realty
- Peter Bubel** - Pana Realty LLC
- Tobie Fisher** - Prime Home Real Estate LLC

*Office as of orientation date for each member

Message from the President

As we look around the real estate landscape in Berks County, one thing is clear: the market continues to evolve. Over the last several years, we have experienced shifting inventory levels, changing interest rates, affordability conversations, consumer expectations, technology advancements, and new challenges—and opportunities—for both REALTORS® and the clients we serve.

The landscape of real estate looks different today than it did just a short time ago. Buyers and sellers are navigating a market that requires flexibility, knowledge, creativity, and trusted guidance. Through it all, one thing remains constant: the important role REALTORS® play in helping consumers confidently navigate one of life's biggest decisions.

During times of change, the value of a strong professional community becomes even more important. That is where the Reading-Berks Association of REALTORS® continues to stand strong.

No matter what changes occur in the market, our commitment to our members remains unwavering. R-BAR exists to support you through education, advocacy, outreach, professionalism, and opportunities to connect with one another. Whether through training, networking, government affairs efforts, or community engagement, our goal is to ensure that our members have the resources and support needed to thrive in today's environment.

As your association, we also believe that staying connected matters. Real estate is a relationship business, and some of the best ideas, encouragement, and professional growth happen when we come together. That is why we are excited for the events ahead—including our upcoming Mini Golf at Schell's event! We hope you will join us for an opportunity to reconnect, celebrate the season, and enjoy time with fellow REALTORS® and industry partners. Events like this are about more than fun (although there will certainly be plenty of that!); they are about strengthening relationships, sharing ideas, and building an even stronger professional community.

And this is just the beginning. We have more educational opportunities, engagement initiatives, networking events, and exciting experiences on the horizon designed to help our members grow, connect, and succeed.

While the real estate landscape may continue to change, one thing you can count on is this: R-BAR is here, R-BAR is engaged, and R-BAR is committed to supporting our members every step of the way.

Stay connected, stay involved, and stay tuned—because there are more great things ahead!

Melissa Fox
2026 R-BAR President

Notes from Your Association Executive



As we reach the year's midpoint, it's a great time to reflect on how we are connecting with and supporting you - our members. Strengthening member engagement remains a top priority, because, as we all know, there is strength in numbers. Our association exists to bring all real estate professionals together - so that we can make a meaningful impact, advocate for our industry and private property rights, and continue learning and growing to better serve clients.

Where We Began

At the start of the year, we recognized the importance of not only increasing participation, but also ensuring that every interaction - whether through events, committees, or communications - delivers real value to your membership experience. And that question, "Does it add value?" continues to serve as our north star.

Mid-Year Progress

Therefore, we have been working diligently to stay ahead of industry trends and address current challenges by offering timely, relevant programming. We continue to invest in important partnerships throughout our community and at the state and national levels, ensuring that our voice is both trusted and influential when

advocating on your behalf. Additionally, we are focused on tailoring communication - delivering the right information, at the right time, to the right audience.

Looking Ahead

As we move into the second half of the year, we are excited to build on this momentum. Our commitment remains strong to further personalize communications and interactions, strengthen key relationships, and provide beneficial and timely insights.

And we encourage you to take full advantage of the opportunities available as they are designed for your benefit - your learning, your business, and your success. Attend an event, join a committee, or share your feedback - we'd love to hear from you!

Your involvement plays a vital role in shaping our direction and amplifying our impact.

Thank you for your continued engagement and membership!

Sincerely,
Ali Columbus

Make an Impact
Join a Committee or Plan an Event
for YOUR Association!

- Advocacy
- Commercial & Industrial Council
- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
- Education & Professional Development
- FUN-raising
- Get Connected!
- Outreach
- RPAC

READING BERKS ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®

SCAN TO SIGN UP!

MORTGAGE AMERICA Berks County's Top Lender since 1999.

Chris Nein NMLS #128621
Senior Loan Officer
CNein@MortgageBankAmerica.com
Cell | 610.334.0633

Emily Nein NMLS #2416270
Senior Loan Officer
ENein@MyMortgageAmerica.com
Cell | 484.557.0335

CALL US TODAY FOR A FREE APPROVAL!

1100 Berkshire Blvd,
Suite 120
Wyomissing, PA 19610
610-376-1755

More than A LENDER.
We work alongside you to help buyers purchase their dream home.

LETS WORK TOGETHER
MEMBERS1ST.ORG/MORTGAGE

Federally Insured by NCUA.

Expanding Horizons: A Closer Look at Our Newest Committees

As part of our ongoing commitment to member engagement and the fulfillment of our strategic plan, R-BAR has created and adapted the following committees to better serve our community and drive our mission forward. Below, you'll find a breakdown of each committee, its purpose, and events they are currently working on. Interested in joining one of our committees? [CLICK HERE](#) to sign up!

Advocacy Committee

Advocacy Committee – Formerly Government Affairs, we changed the name to better suite the committee's mission. We will continue to have a Government Affairs Director position at R-BAR, and that person will continue to be the liaison for the committee. But, the Advocacy Committee is focused on building stronger connections with elected officials and community leaders across Berks County through guest speakers and meaningful discussion on local issues affecting your business. They currently conduct bi-monthly meetings, with guest speakers throughout the year.

On June 10th, Senator Judy Schwank will be at our meeting to talk with us about the recent resolution to review the Municipal Planning Code, workforce housing and other housing needs throughout Berks, & her thoughts on the Imagine Berks Comprehensive Plan. No registration necessary, just show up!

**A CONVERSATION WITH
SENATOR JUDY SCHWANK**

**JUNE 10TH, 2026
1:00 P.M. - 2:30 P.M.
R-BAR OFFICE**

NO REGISTRATION, JUST SHOW UP!
EMAIL MARK@REALESTATEINBERKS.COM WITH QUESTIONS

**READING BERKS
ASSOCIATION OF
REALTORS®**

Get Connected! Committee

A revitalized committee dedicated to building resources and opportunities for our newer members, geared toward those with five years or less in the industry — but of course, all are welcome! Our goal is to help you meet people, feel more comfortable jumping into events, and start building your network early. Our plan is to begin inviting folks early to events, such as lunch and learns, so that you have a chance to connect and find a familiar face before arriving. Down the road, we're planning to create events specifically geared toward this group to provide you with the skills you need to set you up for success. Stay tuned for more to come!

FUN-raising Committee

The FUN-raising Committee is dedicated to planning and implementing fun activities, while supporting R-BAR initiatives. They currently meet monthly as they plan fun events!

- The committee sponsored the Lucky Key Challenge at the Summer Kickoff, which was a great success!
- The first official event for the committee is "Fore the Whole Family at Schell's." Join us for a night out with friends or celebrate the end of school with the kids! All tickets include an ice cream cone! Enjoy fun opportunities to win prizes along the way and enjoy an evening out with R-BAR!
- In September, the committee has also organized a bus trip to a Phillies game!

NEW EVENT!

**Fore the Whole Family
at Schell's**

**Individual
\$15**

- 1 round of mini golf
- 1 ice cream cone

**June 11
5:00 p.m.**

**Foursome
\$50 for 4 players**

- 4 rounds of mini golf
- 4 ice cream cones
- 4 raffle tickets

QR CODE

imms.realestateinberks.com

**PHILADELPHIA
PHILLIES
BUS TRIP**

**SAT., SEPT. 26TH
6:05 P.M.
FIRST PITCH**

**JOIN US AS THE PHILLIES TAKE ON THE
TAMPA BAY RAYS DURING THEIR LAST
REGULAR SEASON HOMESTAND OF THE YEAR!**

**\$110 PER TICKET BEFORE 7/1/26
\$120 PER TICKET AFTER 7/1/26**

**THERE ARE ONLY 56 TICKETS AVAILABLE!
DEADLINE FOR TICKET SALES IS 8/1/26**

NO REFUNDS ONCE TICKETS ARE PURCHASED

QR CODE

RPAC Committee

RPAC now has its own space for discussion during the RPAC Committee meeting, happening bi-monthly. Here, we will discuss ways in which to impactfully promote RPAC and fundraise to meet goals.

- Anyone who makes a RPAC contribution of \$15+ from April 1 - June 30 is entered to win a \$100 Amazon gift card!
- Our biggest RPAC fundraiser of the year is coming up: Grand Slam! While the R-Phils are away playing in Altoona, R-BAR has rented out the whole FirstEnergy Stadium for our members. We have games to play on the field, including a home run derby where you get to hit off up-and-coming pitchers & toss-a-ball that anyone can do!

RPAC SWEEPSTAKES

**Invest \$15 in RPAC between
April 1 and June 30
and be entered to win a
\$100 GIFT CARD**

QR CODE

INVEST HERE

**7th Annual
RPAC
GRAND SLAM
Fundraiser**

**REGISTER
HERE**

QR CODE

JUNE 25 • 5 PM • FIRSTENERGY STADIUM

\$40 GENERAL ADMISSION
All-You-Can-Eat Food
Non-Alcoholic Beverages

\$100 VIP TICKET
2 Drink Tickets
Exclusive Sweepstakes Entry
2 Fightin' Phils Tickets

ADVOCACY UPDATE

By Mark Mohn, R-BAR Government Affairs Director

construction startups in price ranges that workforce members of our community (nurses, teachers, etc) can actually afford. Supply and demand, and the imbalance between them that we've been facing for years, require creative solutions supported by our local, county, state and federal governments.

Imagine Berks Meetings

I've also been working with the Berks County Planning Commission, and other partners (such as Berks IDA, Greater Reading Chamber Alliance (GRCA), Berks Workforce Development, and Berks County Department of Agriculture) traveling around 7 different regions of Berks County to promote the Imagine Berks Comprehensive Plan. We just finished our last presentation, and we are encouraging the local municipalities to work in concert with County Planning to make sure that the overall Comprehensive Plan is in alignment with the forward looking plans of the local communities.

Anyone familiar with zoning or planning should understand how crucial it is for local municipalities to know what potential growth opportunity is available, and to identify what a municipality will look like in the future. And to consider new ways of addressing old issues.

During my portion of the presentation, I shared the realities of our current housing market in Berks County, including that in 2025, the median sale price was \$290,000 vs what the median household income could afford, \$225,000. I also shared that folks with great jobs, like a teacher or a nurse, can't afford the median sold homes in most regions, let alone the new construction offering available. I further went on to talk about the opportunities the local decision makers have to address housing affordability. Not just by allowing apartments to come in, but by encouraging condo complexes and higher density townhomes. Things where the residents have ownership, and can begin building on pride of place and community.

I encouraged them to talk to younger folks about what they want in housing, as it is very different than what boomers or Gen X'ers want. Accessory dwelling units, manufactured and modular housing, even 3D printed

homes are all options to consider. If you want younger, professional people living in your community, you have to build things they can afford. And as REALTORS®, we promote homeownership for all.

I shared similar information at Neighborhood Housing Service's Luminary Awards held in April as well.

Additionally, I continue meeting with folks in Community Development in the City of Reading, helping them to address their housing issues, and

providing insight and feedback on proposed changes and rules. I encourage you to check out pg 12's article "City of Reading Clears Path for Adaptive Reuse in Downtown District."

To that end, your input and expertise is invaluable, let us know if you have experiences (good or bad) that we need to share.

Enjoy the Summer and Rock On,
Mark

Howdy!

Quick recap for you on the many Advocacy related things that have been happening here at R-BAR, and out and about in Berks County. Make sure to check out all the events coming up, specifically the **RPAC Grand Slam on June 25 at FirstEnergy Stadium!** [REGISTER HERE](#)

Primary Elections

We just made it through Primary Election season and the results are in:

- Senator Chris Gebhard defeated Clovis Crane in a contentious race. Sen. Gebhard will likely retain the seat in the fall.
- In the open seat race created when Representative Maloney announced his retirement, Melissa Brewer defeated Mitch Michale. Given the districts strong Republican ties, it is likely Brewer will be the new Representative next year.
- Incumbents Representatives Jacklyn Rusnock and Mark Gillen both secured comfortable primary wins, though each faces a general election challenger — meaning the campaigns are far from over heading into November.
- One race I would urge everyone to keep an eye on is the race for Senate District 24, currently served by Senator Tracy Pennycuik. This race is garnering a lot of Statewide and National attention, as the Democrats have this as their number one target to potentially flip. There is going to be an incredible amount of money spent in that race, so be prepared for all the ads, commercials, mailers, texts and robo calls...

As a reminder, the General Election will take place on November 3, 2026.

HUD Meeting

Shifting away from the elections, I've spent a good amount of time advocating on behalf of your clients and our industry lately. I spoke at a recent U.S. HUD meeting in Reading on our attainable and available housing inventory crisis across all price points. I pointed out to the Assistant Deputy Secretary of the Office of Field Policy and Management that while interest rates are a concern, the greater issue locally is the lack of new



R-BAR Advocacy Committee Meeting with City of Reading Representatives.



Mark presented on housing in Berks at various Imagine Berks meetings throughout the month of May.

Mark provided housing stats at the NHS Luminary Awards.



Mark's Collage of Advocacy Meetings

Mark represented REALTOR® interests at an important meeting with HUD representatives.





THANK YOU

2026 Contributors & Investors

<p>\$5,000 Sustain: \$2,000</p> <p>Jason Burkholder</p>	<p>\$500 - \$999.99 annual minimum</p> <p>Scott Jaraczewski Sharon Kehres David Mattes</p> <p>Noelle Seaton Victoria Venezia</p>	<p>\$250 - \$499.99 annual minimum</p> <p>David DeTurck Kevin Snyder</p> <p>Brad Weisman</p>
<p>\$99 - \$249.99 annual minimum</p> <p>Jen Barkman, Tom Bellairs, Katie Broskey, Judy Brown, Jerry Buffa, Pete Champagne, Sue Colon, Jeffrey Crosby, Laura Feick, Ron Flowers, Melissa Fox, Jack Fry, Brandon Lesagonicz, Diane Longacre, Donald Longacre, Phil Macaronis, Jose Manzueta, Mel Mattes, Michael McDevitt, Jaelyn Mitten, Mark Mohn, Dan O'Brien, Jean Pedersen, Jill Saunders, Todd Sell</p>	<p>SCAN HERE TO MAKE YOUR RPAC INVESTMENT TODAY!</p> <p><small>Contributions are not deductible for income tax purposes. Contributions to RPAC are voluntary and are used for political purposes. The amount suggested is merely a guideline and you may contribute more or less than the suggested amount. You may refuse to contribute without reprisal and the National Association of REALTORS® or any of its state associations or local boards will not favor or disfavor any member because of the amount contributed. 70% of each contribution is used by PA RPAC to support state and local political candidates. Until PA RPAC reaches its RPAC goal 30% is sent to National RPAC to support federal candidates and is charged against your limits under 52 U.S.C. § 30116. After PA RPAC reaches its RPAC goal it may elect to retain your entire contribution for use in supporting state and local candidates. Under federal law only personal contributions (checks not drawn from corporate accounts) can be donated to RPAC. If you wish to pay with corporate funds, 100% of your contribution up to \$999 will be directed to the PA RPAC administrative fund, which utilizes the funds to engage in other political activities. 30% of corporate investments \$1,000 or more will be directed to NAR's Political Advocacy Fund, which utilizes the funds to engage in other federal political activities, and the state RPAC administrative fund will retain 70%.</small></p>	



On June 3rd, members of our Association were in Harrisburg for PA REALTOR® Day on the Hill to advocate for three key pieces of legislation related to homeownership and real estate: SB 838 - Private Licensed School Act Amendment; HB 1095 - Sealing of Eviction Records; & SB 907 Licensure of Home Inspectors.

We're grateful to the legislators who took the time to meet with us — whether through scheduled appointments or impromptu conversations in the lobby: Senator Gebhard, Representative Barton, Representative Weaknecht, Senator Schwank's Office, Senator Pennycuick, Representative Guzman, Representative Rusnock, & Representative Maloney.

Advocacy is one of the most important things we do on behalf of our members and the communities we serve. Thank you to everyone who showed up and made their voices heard!

State Association Advocacy at Work



PAR Advocacy Webinars

Sept. 9th at 10 a.m.
Grassroots Advocacy & Getting Involved at the Local Level
 Gain tools to engage in grassroots advocacy and get involved at the local level. Learn how to effectively champion and shape policies that impact the real estate industry.

[REGISTER HERE](#)

PAR Secures Key Changes to Rental Application Fee Legislation

House Bill 558 is an Act amending the act of April 6, 1951, known as The Landlord and Tenant Act of 1951, in creation of leases, statute of frauds and mortgaging of leaseholds, providing for rental applications.

This bill ensures that rental application fees are limited to the cost of processing, helping to remove barriers to affordable housing.

National Association Advocacy at Work

ASK THE ECONOMIST
 Stay ahead of the market with NAR's quick-hit video series delivering timely, research-backed insights from Chief Economist Dr. Lawrence Yun and Deputy Chief Economist Dr. Jessica Lautz. Each episode tackles pressing questions on mortgage rates, housing supply, economic policy, and more—helping you make informed decisions, support your clients with confidence, and strengthen your expertise.

[CHECK IT OUT HERE.](#)

21st Century ROAD to Housing Act
 An updated version of the 21st Century ROAD to Housing Act, a bipartisan housing package aimed at boosting supply and improving affordability, passed in the House of Representatives on Wednesday, May 20th by a vote of 396–13.

National Association of REALTORS® President Kevin Brown sent a [letter](#) to Congressional leadership, urging them to swiftly support this measure and move it to the Senate.

[READ MORE HERE](#)

Clarification of Independent Contractor Rules

The National Association of REALTORS® is voicing strong support for a proposed federal rule that could bring greater clarity and consistency to how real estate professionals are classified. [In a letter](#) to the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), NAR backed a new independent contractor framework issued by the DOL, calling it a step toward a more predictable standard for workers across industries, including real estate.

[READ MORE HERE](#)

City of Reading Clears Path for Adaptive Reuse in Downtown Districts

Information Provided by David Barr, Director, Community Development, City of Reading & [WFMZ](#)

Good news for members working in the City of Reading — a zoning change you've been asking for is now official.

Reading City Council recently voted to amend the city's zoning ordinance to allow adaptive reuse for residential purposes as a "by-right" use in two key districts: the Commercial Core (C-C) and Manufacturing Commercial (M-C). Previously, property owners seeking to convert vacant or underutilized buildings into residential or mixed-use spaces were required to go through a special exception process — a costly and time-consuming hurdle that had discouraged investment and left many properties sitting idle.

Under the updated ordinance, developers can now move forward with residential conversions without needing to seek special approval, putting Reading more in line with surrounding municipalities that have already adopted similar by-right policies.

The change is particularly significant for the city's aging industrial building stock. Reading's legacy manufacturing structures — long vacant since the decline of the railroad and textile industries — represent a real opportunity for housing development and economic revitalization. The new zoning framework is designed to unlock that potential by reducing bureaucratic barriers and making the City more competitive for development investment.

This is a positive development for REALTORS® active in the City of Reading. More flexible zoning means more listings, more transactions, and more opportunities to help clients — both investors and residents — find value in downtown properties. Stay tuned for further updates as the City continues its revitalization efforts.

For more details, read [WFMZ's coverage here](#).

Around the County Headlines You Should Know About

There has been quite a bit happening in the City of Reading and around the county. Here are a few of the important real estate-related headlines you should be aware of:

[Berks Plans to Purchase Former Wells Fargo Penn Street Building for Government Center - Reading Eagle](#)

[Reading Ramps Up Code Enforcement, Calls for Neighborhood Pride - Reading Eagle](#)

[Ethosource, Wyatt Seating Announce \\$6.5 Million Redevelopment Project in Reading - Berks Weekly](#)

[Reading Launches Downtown Housing Grant Program - Reading Eagle](#)

[Northeast Berks Road to Be Closed for Months for Route 222 Roundabout Construction - Reading Eagle](#)

[Berks County Commissioner Michael Rivera Says He Will Not Seek Re-Election - WFMZ](#)

[Gov. Josh Shapiro Visits West Reading to Announce Main Street Matters Investments - Reading Eagle](#)

THE NEW COMMON LEVEL RATIO (CLR) is

32.1%



JUNE IS NATIONAL HOMEOWNERSHIP MONTH

MAKE YOUR MOVE ADVOCATING FOR SMART POLICIES THAT EXPAND HOMEOWNERSHIP

DEI CORNER

June

- LGBTQ+ Pride Month
- Caribbean American Heritage Month
- 6/14 Flag Day
- 6/19 Juneteenth
- 6/20 World Refugee Day
- 6/21 Father's Day
- 6/21 Summer Solstice

July

- French American Heritage Month
- 7/4 Fourth of July
- 7/14 Bastille Day
- 7/26 Americans with Disabilities Act Anniversary

August

- 8/9 International Day of the World's Indigenous People
- 8/26 Women's Equality Day

**The above list is not meant to be all inclusive, but rather, a sampling of cultural holidays, happenings, & celebrations.*

DEI Committee Spotlight: Community Connections

Courtney Dombrowski, R-BAR DEI Committee Staff Liaison

LGBT Center Tour

Our DEI committee recently had the privilege of touring the LGBT Center, a visit that left a lasting impression. Despite facing significant government funding cuts, the Center remains steadfast in its commitment to providing a safe, welcoming space — not just for members of the LGBTQ+ community, but for anyone in the broader community who needs it. In fact, the Center is one of the only local places where individuals can come simply to take a shower, a reminder of just how essential this organization is to our neighbors in need. The Center also offers various programs and provides a warm meal once a month to any community member who needs one.

Ways You Can Help:

- Shop the Center's [Amazon Wish List](#)
- Support them through [Amazon Smile Associates](#)
- Attend their upcoming fundraiser: [Sip, Sashay & Support](#)

Stay tuned — our DEI committee is actively exploring ways to formally support this incredible organization in the near future!

Meeting with Alex Civil — Bring the Change

Our committee also had the pleasure of connecting with Alex Civil, founder of Bring the Change, whose mission is “to educate, equip, and empower all people equitably to be agents of change for the advancement of their communities.” The organization pursues this mission through three key initiatives:

- [Berks Cultural Diversity Festival](#) — Mark your calendars for September 26th!
- Bring the Convo — Facilitated conversations on diversity and inclusion
- Agents of Change Leadership Program — Providing high school students with access to meaningful leadership training

Interested in Getting Involved?

- Financial contributions are always welcomed and appreciated
- Volunteer your time and expertise by serving as a mentor for students in the leadership program, chaperoning trips, or supporting administrative

and event-day logistics for the Berks Cultural Diversity Festival

- In-kind donations are also a great way to make an impact

Run for Dreamers

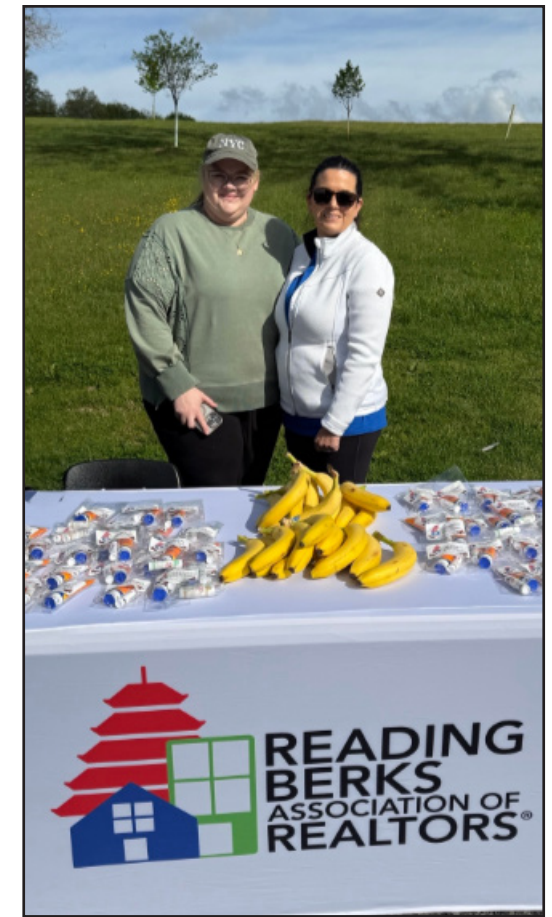
Our DEI Committee was proud to sponsor and table at the Run for Dreamers on May 2nd, made possible with the generous assistance of Melissa Fox and Norstar Mortgage Services Inc. A special thank you to Julia Curry and Melissa Fox for volunteering their time at the event!

The 5K was a tremendous success, drawing 94 participants and 129 registrations, with event sponsorships raising an impressive \$13,844. All proceeds benefited the Greater Reading Immigration Project, which distributed scholarships to 14 deserving students who are charting incredible paths forward:

- 1 student entering sophomore year at Lehigh University
- 1 student pursuing a Master's in Library Science at Kutztown University
- 1 student completing their senior year in Education at Kutztown University
- 5 students continuing their education at RACC
- 6 students beginning their educational journey at RACC

What an inspiring event and an incredible group of students to celebrate. We are proud to have played a part in supporting their futures!

Interested in joining the DEI Committee? [CLICK HERE](#) to sign up!



Pictured from left to right: DEI Committee Members Julia Curry & Melissa Fox represent the Association at the Greater Reading Immigration Project 5K Run for Dreamers, sponsored by the DEI Committee.

Join us as we meet with the leaders of

VETERANS MAKING A DIFFERENCE

August 6th | 1 - 2 p.m.
Veteran Social Center
645 N. 6th Street, Reading



Pictured from left to right: R-BAR Staff Courtney Dombrowski, LGBT Center Executive Director Laura Biancone, R-BAR Members - Diona Lovejoy, Dave Mattes, Ron Weaver, Donna Bagenstose, Doug Metcalfe, Odette Gacet, Dianna Alpini

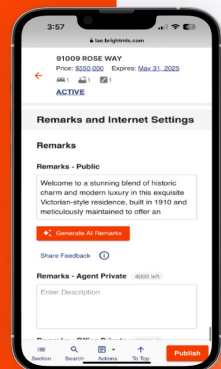
brightTM MLS

Training for R-BAR Members

Bright MLS Buyer Tools 6/18 @ 2 pm

Learn the various ways to effectively work with your buyers through Bright MLS. We will review setting up Contacts, Searching, various ways of sharing your results and how to track your client's activity.

CLICK HERE TO REGISTER



LAUNCH LISTINGS AT LIGHTNING SPEED

Go from draft to live in minutes with Bright's AI-enhanced Listing Management, your main platform this spring.



bright
MLS

Help Your Clients with the Home of Their Dreams

We have solutions.

We're committed to great products, convenient service, and making a positive impact in Berks County.

Ask about our variety of mortgage options, secure homeowners insurance, and more.

Chat with representatives in English or Spanish at **800.242.2120**, find your local office at visionsfcu.org/locations, or scan the QR code for more information.



VISIONS
FEDERAL CREDIT UNION

Membership requires \$1 minimum deposit; restrictions apply, ask for details. Federally insured by NCUA.



SAVE THE DATE LEVEL UP

AI for Real Estate Professionals

Featured Speaker



RAJEEV SAJJA

Chief AI & Product Office,
Bright MLS & Host of Real
Estate AI Flash Podcast

Networking
Hour

Head shots

Resource Fair

Catered
Lunch

AUG 18, 11 AM - 2 PM

KRARAS HALL

REGISTRATION & MORE
* DETAILS TO COME!



Polley ASSOCIATES SCHOOL OF REAL ESTATE

Educating Real Estate and Appraisal Professionals for Over 50 Years!

At Polley, we KNOW the real estate and appraisal educational requirements. As an approved education provider in PA and NJ, we offer real estate sales and broker licensing, and appraisal trainee licensing courses. Additionally, we are focused on continuing education in support of real estate and appraisal licenses. **Basically, we serve real estate and appraisal professionals at all stages of their careers!**

With offices headquartered in Newtown Square, PA, we offer our courses and seminars at many locations across PA and NJ, **including right here in Wyomissing at the Reading Berks Association of REALTORS®.**



Connect with us to learn more about our live in-classroom courses, livestream option on Zoom and online self-paced education classes.



Scan here
for more
information.

Let us help you reach your real estate goals!
Toll-Free: 800-220-2789 | Office Direct: 610-353-6776
polley@polleyassociates.com

PolleyAssociates.com



Upcoming Trainings

MONTHLY WEBINAR SERIES:
NAVIGATING THE INTERSECTION OF RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE
June 11 at 10 a.m.

FREDRICK BUEHLER
Elite Advantage Real Estate Academy Executive Director

DAVID DEAN
2026 PAR President

Expand your business by understanding the intersection of residential and commercial real estate. Whether you're new to commercial or looking to diversify your portfolio, this webinar will provide you with tools and insights to navigate the resimercial market.

Frederick Buehler, executive director for Elite Advantage Real Estate Academy and an NAR/REBAC educator, will discuss with PAR President David Dean how to leverage your residential skills to tap into new opportunities and income. [REGISTER HERE](#)

MONTHLY WEBINAR SERIES:
MID-YEAR HOUSING MARKET UPDATE

LISA STURTEVANT

DAVID DEAN
2026 PAR President

What housing market trends are showing in the first half of 2026? Join Dr. Lisa Sturtevant, chief economist with Bright MLS, and PAR President David Dean for a mid-year housing market update with insights on current market conditions, interest rates and consumer spending. Learn what the market predictions are for the next six months.

Sturtevant has been involved in research on economic, demographic and housing market issues for more than 20 years. Prior to her position at Bright MLS, she was the chief economist with Virginia Realtors®. [REGISTER HERE](#)

Annual Awards

Realtor® of the Year Award

Lifetime Achievement Award

Realtor® Active in Politics Award

Each year, three awards are presented to recognize members' unique contributions to the profession and to the organization. Winners are announced at the Fall Business Meetings. The PAR Board of Directors establishes and updates the award criteria.

The deadline for nominations is July 1 of each year.

For more information or to nominate someone, please [CLICK HERE](#)

NAR Director Applications Open

Members interested in applying to serve as a Pennsylvania National Association of Realtors® Director should submit their interest no later than June 30, 2026 [HERE](#).

Candidate applications will be reviewed and voted on at a PAR Executive Committee meeting. Candidates will be invited to address the committee during that meeting.

PAR has at-large and medium board seats available for the 2027 NAR Board of Directors.

NAR Director Requirements

NAR directors must complete the following programs as a performance expectation:

- At Home With Diversity
- Bias Override: Overcoming Barriers to Fair Housing
- Fairhaven

[View NAR Director Requirments Here](#)



DID YOU KNOW? NAR provides numerous Consumer Guides that you can utilize, and they are in Spanish as well! [CLICK HERE](#) to access these amazing resource guides for consumers and for REALTORS®.

2025 PROFILE OF HOME BUYERS AND SELLERS

HISTORIC NUMBERS

FIRST-TIME BUYERS

- 21%** SHARE OF **FIRST-TIME BUYERS** *all-time low*
- 40** MEDIAN AGE OF **FIRST-TIME BUYERS** *all-time high*
- 10%** DOWN PAYMENT OF **FIRST-TIME BUYERS** *all-time high since 1989*

REPEAT BUYERS

- 62** MEDIAN AGE OF **REPEAT BUYERS** *all-time high*
- 23%** DOWN PAYMENT OF **REPEAT BUYERS** *all-time high since 2003*

ALL BUYERS

- 24%** SHARE OF **ALL BUYERS** WITH CHILDREN UNDER 18 *all-time low*

SELLERS

- 11** TENURE OF HOME IN YEARS BEFORE SELLING *all-time high*

Scan the QR code for the full report.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®

REALTORS® are members of the National Association of REALTORS®.

If you haven't checked it out, the Home Buyers and Sellers Generational Trends Report is available now! This report provides insights into differences and similarities across generations of home buyers and sellers. Check it out [HERE](#)



7th Annual

5K RUN for shelter 2026



2026 Sponsorship Opportunities

Sponsorship Coordinator: Courtney Dombrowski
Courtney@RealEstateInBerks.com | 610-375-8458 | www.realestateinberks.com/5K

The Reading-Berks Association of REALTORS® (R-BAR) is proud to present the 7th Annual 5K Run for Shelter, taking place Saturday, October 3rd, 2026, at Gring's Mill Recreation Area! This energizing community event raises vital funds for two outstanding local organizations — Habitat for Humanity of Berks County (Habitat) and Neighborhood Housing Services of Greater Berks (NHS), Inc. — both committed to strengthening neighborhoods, expanding access to housing, and building brighter futures for families across our region.

Every dollar counts — here's how your support helps:

- Donations benefiting NHS go directly toward closing cost assistance grants for low-income homebuyers, helping remove one of the biggest barriers to homeownership.
• Donations benefiting Habitat fund the creation of affordable homeownership opportunities for moderate-income families right here in Berks County.

When you become a sponsor, you're not just backing a race — you're helping to open doors and change lives. Your investment in this event helps transform our community, one family at a time.

We warmly invite you to be part of a day that celebrates local progress, active living, and the power of neighbors helping neighbors. Please take a moment to review the enclosed sponsorship tiers and the meaningful recognition opportunities each level offers.

Let's cross this finish line together — and make a real difference in Berks County! For questions or to confirm your sponsorship, please contact 5K Run for Shelter Sponsorship Coordinator Courtney Dombrowski at Courtney@RealEstateInBerks.com, or Event Coordinator Laura Culp at Laura@RealEstateInBerks.com, or by phone at 610-375-8458.

We are grateful for your generosity and partnership!

Darren Kostival
Chair
5K Run for Shelter Taskforce
Reading-Berks
Association of REALTORS®

Melissa Fox
2026 President
Reading-Berks
Association of REALTORS®

Timothy J. Daley
Executive Director
Habitat For Humanity
Of Berks County

Stephen Geringer
CEO
Neighborhood Housing Services
of Greater Berks, Inc.

Proceeds Benefit:



Gring's Mill Recreation Area

October 3rd, 9 a.m.

www.realestateinberks.com/5K



Outreach Committee Spotlight: Giving Back in Big Ways

Laura Culp, R-BAR Outreach Committee Staff Liaison

Easter Baskets for Berks

What an incredible effort! Our membership filled 451 Easter baskets for community members in need! Completed baskets were delivered to Mary's Shelter, Opportunity House, One Luv Outreach, and Safe Berks — organizations on the front lines of serving our neighbors every day.



Thank you to the following for sponsoring this great event:

- Todd Umbenhauer
- Riverfront FCU
- Goosehead Insurance
- Fulton Mortgage Company
- NextHome Legacy

Participating Offices & Companies:

- Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Homesale Realty
- Century 21 Gold
- Coldwell Banker Realty
- Daryl Tillman Realty Group
- Diamond Credit Union
- First National Bank
- Fulton Mortgage Company
- Hometown Property Sales
- Iron Valley Real Estate
- Keller Williams Platinum Realty
- Pagoda Realty
- R-BAR Staff
- RE/MAX of Reading
- Realty One Group Alliance
- Realty One Group Exclusive - Kutztown
- Riverfront Federal Credit Union
- Stewart Abstract of Berks County
- Truist Bank Mortgage Lending

Thank you to everyone who made this initiative such a success!

Habitat for Humanity Birdhouse Challenge

This year's Birdhouse Challenge brought some truly creative craftsmanship to the table! REALTOR® Sam Kalbach handcrafted two unique beer barrel birdhouses for R-BAR's donation, which were then beautifully painted by Laura Culp in honor of Reading Beer and Sunshine Beer. The one-of-a-kind birdhouses caught the eye of a collector of Reading Beer and Sunshine Beer memorabilia, ultimately raising \$280 for Habitat for Humanity!

A huge shout-out to Sam, Laura, and everyone who participated in this event — this is exactly the kind of creativity and community spirit that makes the Birdhouse Challenge such a standout event year after year!

Baseballtown Dream League

Our committee showed up in a big way for the Baseballtown Charities Dream League, with 16 volunteers coming out for a fantastic night of baseball! The Dream League gives individuals with physical and intellectual challenges the opportunity to enjoy America's favorite pastime on a custom-designed turf field built to accommodate wheelchairs and other assistive devices — ensuring that everyone gets a chance to play ball.

The night was filled with excitement, great energy, and yes — even some out-of-the-park home runs! Moments like these are a perfect reminder of why we do what we do. What an awesome night!



A Legacy of Leadership: 2026 Scholarship Recipients

The Reading-Berks Association of REALTORS® Scholarship Fund

Established in 2003, the Reading-Berks Association of REALTORS® Scholarship Fund honors the legacies of two late leaders who left an enduring mark on the Berks County real estate community — Herbert Bellairs, a REALTOR® for more than 50 years who served as president of both the Reading-Berks and Pennsylvania Associations of REALTORS®, and Christos Vardaxis, Jr., a rising star in the profession whose record of achievement and leadership inspired all who knew him.

The scholarship recognizes outstanding Berks County high school seniors who demonstrate entrepreneurial spirit, business aptitude, leadership, and a commitment to community service — and who plan to continue their education in a business program.

Since its founding, the fund has awarded 72 scholarships to 72 Berks County students, totaling \$35,300 in support of the next generation of business leaders. This year, we are proud to announce that two seniors were each awarded a \$500 scholarship. Congratulations to our 2026 recipients!

Brianna Fraley | Twin Valley High School

Brianna is the very definition of an entrepreneurial spirit. She is the Founder and Owner of *Paws by Brianna*, a student marketing intern at Fraley Construction Marketing, and a finance intern at the O'Pake Institute at Alvernia University — all while serving as captain of both her club and school lacrosse teams. Her involvement doesn't stop there; Brianna has also dedicated her time to High School Heroes, Mini-Thon, Student Council, and National Honor Society. She plans to pursue a degree in Business/Economics at the University of Miami, and if her track record is any indication, there is no doubt she will continue to make her mark wherever she lands!

Brenton Feathers | Exeter Township Senior High School

Brenton embodies the entrepreneurial legacy this scholarship was built to honor. As the Founder and Owner of *ClearWave Washing*, a self-started pressure washing business, Brenton has already proven he has the drive and initiative to build something from the ground up. A National Honor Society member and multi-sport athlete in baseball, soccer, and more, Brenton brings the same dedication to everything he pursues. He will be attending Nova Southeastern University to study Business/Economics, with his sights set on expanding *ClearWave Washing* following graduation. We can't wait to see where his ambition takes him!

A Special Thank You

A heartfelt thank you to our Directors Ernie Salgado, Lacey Pennypacker, and Lisa Tillman for their time and dedication in reviewing all 43 scholarship submissions. Your commitment to investing in the next generation of business leaders does not go unnoticed — thank you!



Ernie Salgado (left) & Courtney Dombrowski (right) attended the Berks County Community Foundation's Scholarship Luncheon to meet with Brianna Fraley (center), 2026 R-BAR Scholarship Fund winner.

Recognizing Our Affiliate Partners

Business Name	Category
1031 CORP.	1031 Exchanges
Interlace Communications, Inc.	Advertising/AI Consultant
Commonwealth Commercial Appraisal Group	Appraisers
Jamison Appraisal Services	Appraisers
Bartlett Tree Experts	Arborists
Barry Isett & Associates, Inc.	Architects/Engineers
Home Builders Association of Berks County	Building Association
Boyer Engineering, LLC	Civil Engineer
SERVOPRO Team Fabiani	Cleanup & Restoration
Greater Reading Chamber Alliance	Community
Habitat for Humanity of Berks	Community
Neighborhood Housing Services of Greater Berks Inc.	Community
Turnberry Construction Group	Construction
Irish Creek Construction	Construction/Remodelers
Berks County Redevelopment Authority	Government
US Health Advisors	Health Insurance
Comparion Insurance Agency	Insurance
Goosehead Insurance - Coley Insurance Group	Insurance
Trego Insurance Agency, LLC	Insurance
Miller Law Group, LLC.	Law Firm
Tompkins Community Bank	Mortgage Lender/Bank
Univest Bank & Trust Co.	Mortgage Lender/Bank
Fleetwood Bank	Mortgage Lender/Bank
First National Bank	Mortgage Lender/Bank
Fulton Mortgage Company	Mortgage Lender
Mortgage America - Wyomissing	Mortgage Lender
Truist Bank Mortgage Lending	Mortgage Lender
Citadel Credit Union	Mortgage Lender/Credit Union
Diamond Credit Union	Mortgage Lender/Credit Union
Discovery Federal Credit Union	Mortgage Lender/Credit Union
Members 1st Federal Credit Union	Mortgage Lender/Credit Union
Riverfront Federal Credit Union	Mortgage Lender/Credit Union
Sun Federal Credit Union	Mortgage Lender/Credit Union
Visions Federal Credit Union	Mortgage Lender/Credit Union
Bright MLS	Multiple Listing Service
Office Service Company	Office Supplies/Furniture/Promotional Products & Apparel
Moselem Springs Golf Club	Private Golf Club
Compleat Restorations	Property Maintenance
Fetch Home Management	Property Management
TransferMortgage, LLC	PropTech
Home Stream, LLC	Senior Downsizing
Caring Transitions of Reading, PA	Senior Relocations/Downsizing/Estate Sales
Guardian Transfer	Settlement Services
Homesale Settlement Services	Settlement Services
Stewart Abstract	Title Company
Dierolf Plumbing and Water Treatment	Water Treatment

2026 Tiered Sponsors

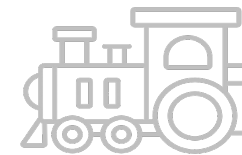


Golden Pagoda

FultonMortgageCompany

A Division of

Fulton Bank, N.A.



Silver Railroad



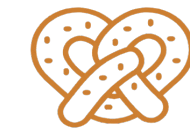
Bright MLS

Members 1st Federal Credit Union

Mortgage America - Wyomissing

Neighborhood Housing Services of Greater Berks Inc.

Visions Federal Credit Union



Bronze Pretzel



Welcome to our newest affiliate members:

1031 CORP

Citadel Credit Union

Fetch Home Management



FOR REAL ESTATE PROFESSIONALS
PRODUCT SELECTION

Conventional conforming fixed rate products

- Conventional Fixed Rate
- Conventional Manufactured Home Product
- CRA Products in conjunction with community seconds
- 30-Year Fixed Jumbo
- Fulton Bank Community Combo - 80% first mortgage combined with up to a 20% second mortgage*

*matching rate & term for both mortgages

Adjustable rate mortgage products

- 3/6, 5/6, 7/6, 10/6, 15/6

Construction products

- 1/6, 3/6, 5/6, 7/6, 10/6, 15/6 ARM Construction/Permanent
- Fixed Rate Construction/Permanent with float-down
- Construction/Permanent Rehab with Escrow Holdback
- HomeStyle Renovation Loans
- 30-Year Fixed Jumbo
- Float down available upon modification

Second mortgage products

- OptionLine Home Equity Line of Credit

Bridge loans/swing loans

Government programs

- FHA Fixed Rate
- VA Fixed Rate
- RHS (Rural Housing)
- State Bond Programs
- Grants and down payment assistance loans available

Jumbo financing

- Up to 95% Financing Available
- 15 and 30-Year Term Fixed Products and ARMs available

Medical professionals program¹

- 100% financing available for loan amounts up to \$1.5 Million
- 95% financing available for loan amounts up to \$2 Million
- 90% financing available for loan amounts up to \$3 Million
- Mortgage Insurance Not Required
- Up to 6% Seller Concessions
- Construction/Permanent financing available

Contact us today!

EAN KOFSKY
 Senior Mortgage Loan Officer
 NMLS# 467643
 610.898.8306
 ekofsky@fultonmortgagecompany.com

ROBERT SAHARIG
 CRA Mortgage Loan Officer
 (Se habla Español)
 NMLS# 2243631
 610.898.8308
 rsaharig@fultonmortgagecompany.com

MEL FICARRO
 Mortgage Loan Officer
 NMLS# 723286
 610.898.8350
 mficarro@fultonmortgagecompany.com

MARLENE SCHWOYER
 EVP/Regional Sales Manager
 NMLS# 528199
 610.898.8325
 mschwoyer@fultonmortgagecompany.com

BRENDA BAER-EDSALL
 VP/Mortgage Sales Manager
 NMLS# 535322
 610.898.8319
 bbaeredsall@fultonmortgagecompany.com

FultonMortgageCompany
 A Division of
Fulton Bank, N.A.
fultonbank.com/mortgage



Fulton Bank, N.A., NMLS #485401. Member FDIC. Loans are subject to credit approval. Subject to FHA/VA/RHS approval. Other conditions may apply.
¹Medical Doctorate degree required. Restrictions apply. Information provided for real estate professionals only and is not intended for further distribution to any individual consumers. Message and data rates may apply.



Call 610-916-7507 or email
sjamison@comcast.net



Valuations for:

- Estates
- Tax Appeals
- Pre-Listing
- VA/FHA

Steve C. Jamison, RAA

Bachelor of Science
 Real Estate - Penn State University

Michael Zettlemyer

PA State Certified
 Residential Appraiser



**REALTOR[®]
Owned!**

**READING BERKS
ASSOCIATION OF
REALTORS[®]**

MEMBER DISCOUNTS

Annual Membership Discount
**Buy 9 Months,
 Get 3 Months FREE**

Monthly Membership Discount
**15% Off Any
 Car Wash Package**

Visit InstaShine Car Wash to Sign Up
 All you need is your M1# (NRDS#)!
 4621 Penn Ave, Sinking Spring

1 in 5 Targeted: How to Prepare for Rising Scam Threats

[NAR News By: Melissa Dittmann Tracey](#)

Home buyers and sellers face growing risks, and real estate professionals are urging vigilance.

Cybercrime in real estate has reached what the “2026 State of Wire Fraud” report calls “epidemic” levels. Americans lost \$275 million in 2025 alone through real estate-related fraud, according to the FBI’s latest figures.

Behind those numbers are real victims. In 2024, Raegan Bartlo and her husband were preparing to move to West Virginia after finding a home that would offer them financial independence. Just days before closing, Bartlo wired a \$255,000 down payment after receiving what appeared to be legitimate instructions from her title company’s attorney—complete with accurate timing, branding and transaction details.

It wasn’t until closing day that she learned: The funds never arrived.

“That’s when my world fell apart,” she said. “I froze. ... It’s a horrible, horrible feeling to have all your savings stolen from you.”

Bartlo, who has worked in banking and cybersecurity, knew the risks—underscoring how sophisticated these scams have become as criminals increasingly leverage AI to deceive home buyers and sellers.

Real Estate Becomes a Prime Target

Real estate remains a favored target for cybercriminals because of high-dollar transactions and abundance of publicly available data, says Tom Cronkright, a real estate broker who co-founded the cybersecurity firm CertifiD after being a victim of a \$180,000 real estate scam in 2015.

AI is accelerating the threat by enabling more convincing impersonations—from emails that mimic tone to cloned voices and deepfake video messages, Cronkright says.

More than one in five consumers report receiving suspicious communications during closing, according to CertifiD’s “2026 State of Wire Fraud” report. Meanwhile, 57% of 150 title and escrow companies say they encounter suspicious activity at least quarterly, with 60% reporting that fraud attempts are increasing.

It’s sparking a state of “wire fraud fear,” with nearly half of buyers delaying funds because of security concerns as they are “lying awake at night wondering if they sent their life savings to a criminal,” the report notes.

‘We Warn Every Client’

Brokerages have been responding with stronger education efforts, warning of the dangers. Some agents even ask clients to sign disclosures acknowledging scam risks. Others walk buyer and sellers through the closing process so they know when something might feel off.

Levi Rodgers, broker-owner of LRG Realty in San Antonio, Texas, says his team updates fraud training monthly about evolving threats. “These scams are constantly changing,” he says.

The attempts are becoming more frequent: “We’re getting hit weekly to biweekly,” he says.

Scammers are impersonating legitimate parties or exploiting routine workflows. In one case, Rodgers’ team uncovered a fraud attempt involving someone posing as a seller of vacant land. When they had asked for ID—a standard protocol when working with new clients—they noticed inconsistencies in the driver’s license when verifying with the real owner.

Rodgers also uses his company’s blog to warn clients about other growing scams—like fake utility bills, bogus property tax notices, home warranty scams and mortgage insurance schemes. While these may not deliver the same high-dollar loss as wire fraud, they rely on volume and urgency. Criminals count on people paying smaller charges without question.

The best defense, Rodgers says: “Verify independently and validate.” He adds that agents also can help by providing vetted vendors and contractors, reducing the risk of clients falling for fraudulent service providers.

Rodgers says he also keeps his real estate team aware of scams targeting agents, like phishing emails and fake leads designed to access their systems. “They’re coming through as leads to agents, then trying to get into your computer, hack your email and CRM,” he says.

Make Security Part of the Transaction

CertifiD includes a platform to verify wire transfers in real estate. In 2025, the company blocked about 1,000 fraudulent real estate transactions, protecting \$283 million in funds that scammers attempted to target.

His company’s consumer surveys show a desire for greater transparency on:

- How wire instructions are verified
- How identities are confirmed
- What safeguards are in place before funds move

He urges brokerages to standardize protections, including identity verification, secure communication channels and holding ongoing staff training. Ensure everyone knows recovery plans in case fraud occurs.

“Security has to be part of the deliverable of the transaction,” Cronkright says. “You wouldn’t buy a car without seatbelts or airbags ... it’s just part of what you expect.”

CertifiD recommends:

- Have verification protocols in place that move beyond email or phone confirmation alone.
- Communicate early about how clients’ funds are being protected. Sixty-one percent of consumers say they feel anxious about their funds during transactions: “Tell your clients how you are protecting them,” Cronkright says. “Explain your security measures at the first meeting, not the day before closing.”
- Use secure communication channels, like encrypted email or a transaction management platform whenever sharing sensitive information.
- Conduct ongoing training for agents and staff to

stay alert to evolving threats.

- Identify recovery plans so agents know exactly what to do if fraud occurs. (e.g., contact the Internet Crime Complaint Center at IC3.gov or find tips at Home Closings 101).

Don’t Let Your Guard Down

In Bartlo’s case, she recalls how quickly her real estate agent, title company and lender mobilized after discovering the theft. They helped her report the crime to the FBI’s Internet Crime Complaint Center while the bank attempted to trace the wire. “I was numb the whole time,” she recalls. “But they immediately jumped into action.”

Bartlo eventually recovered about half of her \$255,000, but the rest was gone, without a trace, now even more than a year later. She tapped retirement savings to proceed with closing on the home—which triggered taxes and penalties she is still paying today.

As she headed to her delayed closing, she received another fraudulent email just days before. “It was the exact same method,” she says. “Same tone, same urgency.”

But her team had abandoned email communication, initiated extra verification checks and shifted to direct phone verification.

“We were prepared,” she says, hoping her story is one of caution that can help others be better prepared as well.

[READ THE WHOLE ARTICLE HERE](#)

NHS BUY YOUR FIRST HOME
AS LITTLE AS \$1,500 Down

NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSING SERVICES
OF GREATER BERKS, INC. CALL NHS TO FIND OUT
NeighborWorks® HomeOwnership Center HOW! 610-372-8433



From Market Trends to Main Streets: A Look at Recent CIC Events

R-BAR's Commercial & Industrial Council (CIC) has had an exceptional stretch of programming, highlighted by four events that brought members — and the broader region — together around the topics shaping commercial real estate today.

In March, at the beautiful Abraham Lincoln Events Center in Reading, Brendan Wewer of Commonwealth Commercial Appraisal Group and Steve Willems of NAI Keystone, delivered a commercial real estate market update that was both timely and comprehensive. The duo brought a wealth of knowledge to the table, offering perspective that ranged from global market trends all the way down to a focused look at what's happening right here in Berks County — exactly the kind of insight our members need to stay ahead.

Next up was an event at the iconic Knitting Mills in Wyomissing, presented in partnership with the Greater Reading Chamber Alliance (GRCA). Aaron Gantz of GRCA led an engaging conversation on Main Street Programs, with a spotlight on West Reading's impressive progress. Borough Manager Randy Miller, along with Nick Price and Amanda Timochenko, delivered an exceptionally informative program that gave members a deeper appreciation for the community-driven work fueling revitalization across our region.

At the beginning of May, CIC held a walking tour of

Boyertown on a picture-perfect day. Members explored standout spaces, learned about the town's rich history, and saw firsthand what the Main Street program has helped to create in this thriving community.

At the end of May, R-BAR & CIC were proud to sponsor the annual Regional Industrial, Commercial & Investment Conference alongside our colleagues at the Lancaster County Association of REALTORS®, the Realtors Association of York and Adams Counties, and the Lebanon County Association of REALTORS®.

The conference opened with keynote speaker Dave Won, who challenged attendees to rethink their money mindsets and introduced his U.N.L.O.C.K. Method™ — a six-step framework to help sales professionals sell with greater clarity, confidence, and conviction. Brenda Nguyen of CoStar Analytics followed with a sharp, data-driven economic update on South Central Pennsylvania's commercial market, giving attendees a clear-eyed look at where the region stands and where it's headed. The morning closed with a timely panel discussion on data centers and AI, featuring Abby Smith of TeamPA, Jason Hunt of PPL Electric, and Rock Stahovic of Barry Isett & Associates.

CIC's next program will be a site tour of Highland Place in Amity Township. It is a 338 unit housing development for the 55+ community that is utilizing Tax Increment Financing (TIF) to complete the project. More details to come, but save the date of July 2nd! Bonus - all CIC members who attend the site visit are invited to attend Fielding Connections: CIC at the R-Phils on August 13th!



MONTHLY WEBINAR SERIES:
STANDARD FORMS UPDATE: COMMERCIAL FORMS
LEGAL CORNER
July 14 at 10 a.m.

PAR is rolling out four revised commercial standard forms in August 2026. The revisions are the result of PAR's Commercial Forms Task Force, which consisted of members who engage in commercial transactions.

The revised forms, available in draft, include:

- Listing Contract – Exclusive Right to Sell and/or Lease Commercial Property – Form XLSC
- Commercial Buyer/Tenant Agency Contract – Form CBAC
- Agreement of Sale for Commercial Real Estate – Form ASC
- Commercial Property Information Sheet – Form CPI

PAR Associate Counsel Kacy Clouser and Dominic Janidas, chair of PAR's Commercial Forms Task Force and past president of the Certified Commercial Investment Member (CCIM) PA/NJ/DE Chapter, will discuss changes that were made and how they reflect the current marketplace. [REGISTER HERE](#)

Are You Connected?
Follow CIC on social media!



Six Forces Shaping Commercial Real Estate Today
In this episode, Shannon and Patrick break down the key policy and market dynamics shaping commercial real estate today. From tax policy to insurance, to construction and energy costs, to rent control measures, NAR advocacy is working on dozens of federal, state and local actions that impact how CRE is transacted. Whether you're in brokerage, development or investment, this episode connects the dots between market forces and the advocacy efforts shaping the future of commercial real estate. [LISTEN HERE](#)



Protect Your Mental Health to Protect Your Business

By: [Khalid Bryan, Blog Contributor for NAR YPN.realtor](#)

As a real estate professional, you are an entrepreneur. And entrepreneurship is not easy on the mind.

Traditional jobs come with stress, too. But entrepreneurs carry a different weight. You are the CEO, the marketer, the accountant, the manager and the brand. You live without the predictability of a steady paycheck. In real estate, that pressure multiplies. The market constantly shifts. Clients rely on you not only to manage a transaction, but to guide one of the biggest financial and emotional decisions of their lives. That mental load adds up. To build a long, sustainable career, you must keep your mental health front and center.

Recognizing mental fatigue is critical. Procrastination. Irritability. Overreacting to small inconveniences. These are not personality flaws. They are warning signs. Every reaction you have becomes part of your professional narrative. It shapes how clients, colleagues and even you see your story. When stress builds, minor issues feel catastrophic. You may find yourself distracted or forgetful. Why did I walk into this room? How did I miss that exit on a route I drive all the time? These moments are signals, not coincidences. Pay attention to them.

Seek the Help You Need

Stressful transactions. Rejected offers. Cold calls that end with insults. In some cases, safety concerns or confrontations that shake your confidence. Experiences like these can chip away at your self-belief and trigger imposter syndrome. You may even

question whether you belong in the business at all. Let's be clear: this job is not easy. Struggling at times does not mean you are failing. It means you are human.

The difference between burning out and breaking through often comes down to support. Surround yourself with fellow professionals who understand the business. Lean on friends who know you beyond your production numbers. And consider therapy. Therapy is not weakness. It is a proactive investment in your clarity, resilience and long-term performance.

You would not advise a client to ignore a problem that could be solved with expert help. Don't do that to yourself.

Take Care of Yourself First

Mental breaks are not indulgent. They are necessary.

If you want a fulfilling career, you must protect your energy. Stress does not just impact you; it impacts your service. An overwhelmed entrepreneur struggles to show up fully for clients.

Build intentional pauses into your life. Take a "do nothing day" without guilt. Enjoy a long shower with music. Walk slowly through your favorite section of a store. Step into spaces that inspire you, whether that is an art gallery, a car showroom or a neighborhood you aspire to live in. Small resets compound. Plan experiences that recharge you. A weekend getaway. A night in a beautiful hotel. A personal treat you have been denying yourself. These are not

reckless expenses when planned for. They are strategic investments in sustainability.

Your physical presence matters too. A fresh haircut, a manicure, a massage or a session at your favorite gym can reset your mindset. Movement clears mental fog.

Learning something new through a book, film, show or class reignites creativity and sharpens ambition. When you care for yourself, you return stronger.

Invest in Your Continued Success

There will be slower seasons. Instead of fearing them, use them.

When you are in a "shift-up" period without active clients, invest in education. Take classes from reputable instructors. Study the market. Refine your scripts. Sharpen your systems. Preparation builds confidence, and confidence attracts opportunity.

Create structure for your mind. Daily to-do lists

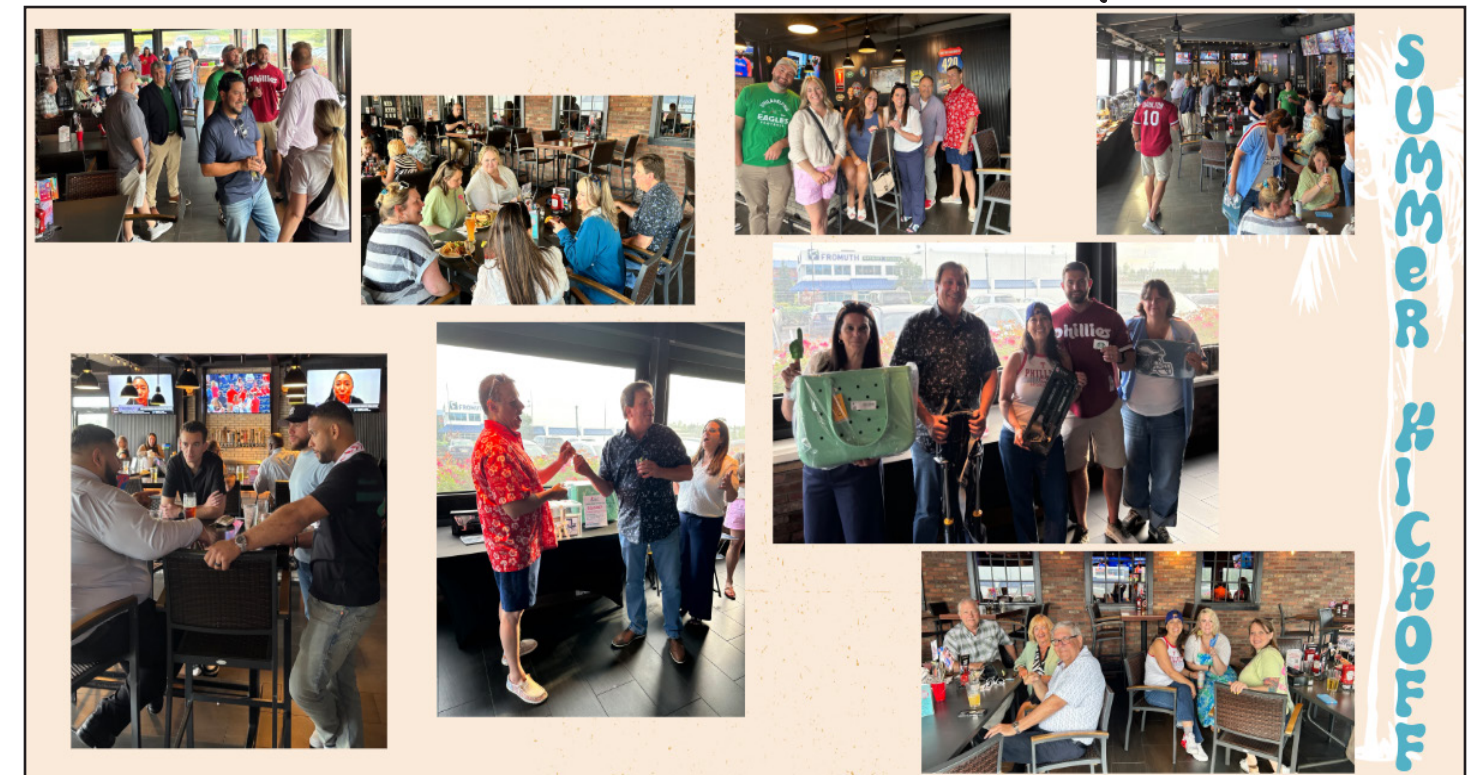
prevent overwhelm and reduce forgetfulness. Clear, written goals transform scattered ambition into intentional action. Tie your daily tasks to long-term life goals so that every step reinforces the bigger picture.

Growth rarely feels dramatic. It looks like consistent progress. It feels like resilience after a setback. It shows up in quiet discipline when no one is watching. Envision where you want to be five, 10 or even 20 years from now. Define it. Write it down. Return to it often.

Entrepreneurship will always come with unpredictability. The key is not eliminating stress. It is learning to manage it while protecting your well-being. Slow, steady growth. Self-awareness. A commitment to mental health. That is how you build success that lasts.

[Read this and other related Young Professional Network Lounge articles HERE](#)

Summer Kickoff Recap - Good Food, Fun Games and Philly Vibes



We kicked off summer the right way! Nearly 50 members gathered at PJ Whelihan's for a Philly sports-themed evening that delivered on every front. The star of the night was undoubtedly the make-your-own cheesesteak bar — a crowd favorite that had everyone feeling like a true Philadelphian. Add in fun prizes, great company, and a lineup of sponsor-powered games including Basketball Pong (sponsored by NHS), Baseball Plinko (sponsored by Comparion Insurance Agency), and a scratch-off game (sponsored by Fulton Mortgage Company), and you had a recipe for a memorable night. But the highlight? The Lucky Key Challenge, brought to us by our FUN-raising Committee. Shout out to our tiered event sponsors for their generous support for this event. Here's to a great summer ahead!



MOSELEM SPRINGS GOLF CLUB

REAL ESTATE PROFESSIONAL

Rewards Program

Turn referrals into rewards at one of Berks County's premier private golf clubs! We're partnering with local Realtors to grow our membership and reward YOU for connecting your clients with Moselem Springs Golf Club. Whether it's a new homeowner looking for community or a golf lover seeking their next home course – send them our way and earn big!

ACTION	Point System HOW TO EARN	POINTS EARNED
Tour of the club completed		1 Point
A Social Member joins		4 Points
A Second Club Member joins		6 Points
A Non-Resident Member joins		10 Points
A Resident Member joins		20 Points

POINTS	Point Redemption HOW TO REDEEM	REWARD
6 Points		\$50 Gift Certificate
10 Points		1 Round of Golf with a Cart <small>(must pay for guests)</small>
40 Points		Social Membership
100 Points		Golf Membership for following year

CONTACT: Crystal Noll-Rance 610-944-7616 ext 22 cnoll@moselemgolf.com

COMMUNITY CORNER

- June 10th, 5 - 8 p.m., Registration at Fred Astaire Dance Studio - [West Reading Summer Wine Walk](#)
- June 13th - 14th, Chef David's Pizza & More - [Family Promise's Cheesesteaks to Furnish Futures](#)
- June 13th, 11:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m., Kutztown Community Park - [Taste of Kutztown Wine & Beer Festival](#)
- June 13th, 11 a.m. - 9 p.m., [Muhlenberg Township's Spring Fiesta](#)
- June 13th, 12 p.m., Pagoda City Brewing - [Pagoda Fest](#)
- June 18th, 5:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m., Go Fish! Seafood Market & Sushi Bar - [Women2Women Lobsterfest](#)
- June 19th, 4 p.m. - 7 p.m., St. John's Reformed Church - [Homes & Heroes Spaghetti Dinner Fundraiser](#)
- June 20th, 11 a.m. - 7 p.m., [West Reading Art on the Avenue](#)
- June 20th, 9 a.m., The Mills at Sly Fox Brewery - [Walk for No More SafeBerks](#)
- June 22nd, 10:30 a.m., The Berkshire Country Club - [Opportunity House Golf Outing 2026](#)
- June 26th - 27th, Reading Liederkrantz - [20th Annual Berks Celtic Festival](#)
- July 3rd, 12 p.m., Santander Arena - [FIFA World Cup Fan Zone Watch Party](#)
- July 4th, 11 a.m. - 6 p.m., Santander Arena - [FIFA World Cup Fan Zone Watch Party](#)
- July 4th, 2 p.m. - 10 p.m., Berks County Fairgrounds - [Star-Spangled Spectacular](#)
- July 8th - 11th, Leesport - [172nd Berks County Fair](#)
- July 11th, 9 a.m., Classic Harley-Davidson - [8th Annual Ride to End Veteran & First Responder Suicide](#)
- July 18th, 3 p.m. - 8 p.m., Santander Arena - [FIFA World Cup 2026 Fan Zone Watch Party](#)
- July 19th, 11 a.m. - 5 p.m., Jim Dietrich Park - [Berks Pride Fest 2026](#)
- July 19th, 2 p.m. - 6 p.m., Santander Arena - [FIFA World Cup Fan Zone Watch Party](#)
- July 25th, 6 p.m., The Doubletree - [The LGBT Center of Greater Reading presents Sip, Sashay, & Support](#)
- July 25th - 26th, The Doubletree - [Colombian Independence Fiesta/Festival Colombiano](#)
- July 27th, Moselem Springs Golf Club - [ProBerco Golf Tournament](#)
- Aug. 8th, 10 a.m., Berks County Heritage Center - [Smokey's Birthday Celebration](#)
- Aug. 8th, 8:30 p.m., FirstEnergy Stadium - [Boom Ball](#)
- Aug. 22nd - 23rd, Reading Liederkrantz - [3rd Annual Romanian Festival](#)
- Aug. 29th, 10 a.m., Jim Dietrich Park - [CHOR Goats & Floats](#)

SAVE MONEY ON YOUR LOCAL DUES!



AFFILIATE MEMBER PROGRAM

Refer ONE organization, receive **25% off your local dues***
Refer TWO organizations, receive **50% off your local dues***

Email Info@RealEstateinBerks.com with any questions.

*New affiliate dues must be paid in full by January 31 for reimbursement to be issued for that year's dues.



Agents,
Quote, compare and enroll in health, dental,
vision, life and more – all tailored just for
members of NAR!

CLICK HERE TO CHECK IT OUT!