

# Ventura County Coastal

Official Publication of the Ventura County Coastal Association of REALTORS®

March / April 2020



## IS AN OPEN HOUSE A GOOD IDEA?

Coronavirus is a Threat

Retirement Strategies  
Explained Page 10

Beefing Up Fight  
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For the most current Calendar of Events, please refer to the online calendar on the [VCCAR website](#). Click on the Classes and Events tab.

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**Tim Comstock**  
2020 VCCAR President



*Tim Comstock*

## Leadership Requires Training

### Annual retreat for directors, chairs and other leaders will help us move VCCAR forward

For the past several years, VCCAR has held an offsite leadership retreat near the beginning of the year to give new volunteer leaders a crash course in how to truly lead rather than manage our Association. It also provides a much-needed refresher course for those of us returning in leadership roles.

This year, the retreat was held in February. Attending were officers, directors, committee chairs and vice chairs, and past presidents, along with key staff. As usual, it was held off the beaten path to keep the attendees more focused on the learning at hand.

We were fortunate to have Adorna Carroll as our facilitator because she knows a bit about how to get things done right. Adorna is a REALTOR® herself and is the broker/owner of a medium-sized firm. She also is an experienced trainer who facilitates strategic planning and leadership training for state and local associations and teaches advanced designation and certification courses for agents, broker-owners, team leaders, and managers.

Her no-nonsense approach clearly communicates how we need to see the big picture, understand our leadership responsibilities, adhere to our fiduciary duty, and avoid conflicts of interest and antitrust concerns. Importantly, the directors, committee members, executive committee members, and staff all learned more about our roles and responsibilities, and we did a deeper dive in to running meetings, setting agendas and understanding what should be included in the minutes.

One funny quote from Adorna was to “kill the monster when it’s young.” By that she meant a bad idea or plan can sink the ship so don’t let bad ideas or people take you down with them. Critical thinking is essential for members who serve on committees, boards, work groups, task forces, and strategic planning.

In addition, we learned that the six key questions we must answer is the Who, What, Where, When, Why, and How: Who benefits from this? What is another alternative? Where will this idea take us? When is the best time to act? Why is this the best or worst scenario? And finally, How will this benefit us or others?

Another subject covered was getting committee members on board. It doesn’t happen automatically. Your committee chairs and vice chairs need to see the big picture to pass along the long-term vision taken from the strategic plan. And we need to keep in mind that while we can sometimes put out a call to our members to join a task force to help with a short-term project, it’s important not to burn out committees with too much busy work. They are volunteers and despite all the things that we’d like to accomplish we can’t take advantage of them.

My takeaway from the retreat was that we as association leaders are continuing to improve and will keep in mind the insights Adorna Carroll brought to us and that our CEO, Wyndi Austin, continues to use to effectively lead us. The board and staff will use the information learned to monitor and improve our processes during the coming year to better serve our members. 🌱

“My takeaway from the retreat was that we as association leaders are continuing to improve.”

## 26 Attend First-Ever Military Relocation Professional Certification Class

A total of 26 VCCAR members attended the Association's first-ever Military Relocation Professional Certification class in February, learning about working with service members and their families as well as veterans to find housing solutions that best suit their needs and to take full advantage of available benefits and support.

The class, held on February 24, was the first step toward earning NAR's MRP certification.

The military has a huge presence in the county with nearby Naval Base Ventura County, which employs some 19,000 military and civilian personnel at Point Mugu and Port Hueneme.

The MRP Certification helps REALTORS®:

- Understand the processes and procedures involved in a military relocation and how these impact service members' relocation and housing choices.



- Provide information to help members through a rent or buy, sell or rent decision-making process.
- Identify and provide services that help service members sell or find and purchase suitable homes.
- Understand the military relocation process in order to guide service members through the real estate transaction.
- Able to explain the basics of VA financing.

## Learn About Rent Control Laws at Webinar on March 23

Statewide rent control is now in effect, and owners of rental property need to know what the new laws require. VCCAR will hold a webinar on March 23 to provide information. The speaker will be Daniel Yukelson, executive director of the Apartment Association of Greater Los Angeles.

The webinar will provide information on topics including:

- How Assembly Bill 1482 impacts rental housing providers
- How much rents can be increased each year
- Notices that must be provided to tenants
- And new "just cause" eviction requirements.

[Online registration is now available.](#)

You will receive login information once you register.



## Annual Report Now Available

VCCAR's Annual Report, including statistics and highlights of your Association's efforts to promote REALTORS® and private property rights, is now available. Among the highlights are membership statistics, information about the statewide

Smart Coast California campaign VCCAR helped launch, and a list of contributors to the REALTOR® Action Fund. You can download the [full report here](#) and hard copies are available at the VCCAR office.

## Nearly 40 Attend Year's First YPN Mixer

Nearly 40 members, affiliates, and family members mixed and mingled at the year's first YPN Mixer, which was held at the Rincon Brewery in Ventura on February 21. The no-host event was a great networking opportunity and a chance to talk to members about what the YPN Committee is all about. 🍷



Vanessa Rice with Kylie and Deagan



Dee Lomeli and Ryan Bruns

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We offer your clients great rates and local experts who get things done quickly and efficiently. We're the oldest and largest credit union headquartered in Ventura County, and we're ready to lend:

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VCCU membership is open to anyone who lives, works or attends school in Ventura or Santa Barbara counties. All loans subject to credit approval and secured by lien on owner-occupied home. Certain restrictions apply. VCCU is an equal housing lender.



Autry.com VCF-208



## Housing Not Immune to Coronavirus Risks Despite Cheap Mortgages

Long Beach Press-Telegram | March 3

The Federal Reserve, in a surprise move on Tuesday, March 3, cut the central bank's key interest rates it controls by a half-percentage point. It was the first emergency action, and the largest cut, since the financial crisis of a decade ago.

The cut shows the Fed is taking seriously the economic risks created by the global coronavirus outbreak. And that cheers some investors. But the fears of a global pandemic and its potentially harsh impact on the world's business climate won't be easily soothed by cheaper money.

[Read more](#)

## Red Counties Outperform Blue Counties for Home Construction

NAHB Eye on Housing | March 3

For the current edition of the Home Building Geography Index (HBGI), NAHB introduces a red vs. blue segmentation of the 3,221 counties of the United States.

"Red counties" are defined as those in which the majority of the population in the 2016 Presidential election voted for President Donald Trump, while "blue counties" are defined as those in which most of the population voted for then-Senator Hillary Clinton. The data show that the population distribution is 48.7% in red and 51.3% in blue.

While the population of the country is almost evenly split between red and blue counties, the same is not true for the distribution of single-family and multifamily construction. In fact, 61% of single-family construction is in red counties, while almost 64% of multifamily construction are in the blue counties. Blue counties tend to feature greater population density, hence the divide.

[Read more](#)

## Bubble Watch: California Home-Price Gains Evaporate

Orange County Register | March 2

Buzz: California ranks high on a national scoreboard of yet another unflattering real estate trend: rapidly cooling home appreciation rates.

Source: My trusty spreadsheet filled with Federal Housing Finance Agency data.

The Trend: To measure the rate of cooling for home-price gains, I looked at appreciation for 2019, according to this federal index, and compared it with the annualized rate of gains for 2015 through 2018. I then ranked states and metro areas by the percentage-point change in appreciation rates.

[Read more](#)

## Taxing Empty Properties

Fox & Hounds | March 2

Moves to tax housing units and storefronts left empty are gathering steam in California and once again will pit government instincts to "do something" with real and perceived problems in conflict with rights of property owners.

In San Francisco tomorrow, voters will decide if storefront properties left empty for 182 days or longer will have to pay a per foot tax that would increase yearly. Last November, across the Bay, Oakland voters did pass a \$6,000 per year fee to be levied against properties not in use for 50 days or more, with the funds dedicated for housing and homeless services. In Los Angeles, a city council member wants to create an empty homes penalty to force empty units back on the market to help with the housing problem.

[Read more](#)

## Pending Home Sales Rebounded 5.2% in January

MarketWatch | February 27

The index of pending home sales increased 5.2% in January following a decline the month prior, the National Association of Realtors reported Thursday. This was the second strongest monthly increase in over two years but came off a significant decline in December.

The index measures real-estate transactions where a contract has been signed but the sale has not closed, benchmarked to contract-signing activity in 2001. It serves as an indicator for existing-home sales reports in the coming months.

[Read more](#)

## 84% of Americans Say Homeownership Is a Priority

Inman News | February 25

Although median home prices have been on the climb for almost eight years, Americans are still holding onto the dream of homeownership, according to Nerdwallet's 2020 Home Buyer Report released on Tuesday. In a survey of more than 2,000 adults, 84 percent said homeownership is a 'priority,' a nine percent increase from 2019.

Millennials were the most passionate about homeownership, with 88 percent saying buying a home is one of their main goals. Eighty-five percent of gen-Xers, 84 percent of gen-Zers and 79 percent of baby boomers said the same, with 55 percent noting homeownership is a "good investment."

[Read more](#)

## Southern California Home Prices Rise Nearly 7% in January as Market Heats Up

Los Angeles Times | February 25

Southern California home prices shot up in January from a year earlier, as buyers fought over a meager supply of homes for sale across the six-county region.

The area's median price — the point at which half the homes sold for more and half for less — clocked in at \$533,000, DQNews said Monday. That was 6.6% higher than a year earlier. It's the latest indication that the housing market is heating up after muddling through much of 2019.


"We are definitely settling into a seller's market," San Fernando Valley real estate agent Moe Verma said. "Last year, things seemed a lot calmer."

[Read more](#)

## CA Housing Crisis Bills Would Cut Development Fees

Sacramento Bee | February 24

California Democrats unveiled on Monday a package of eight proposals that attempt to spur construction of new homes by slashing some of the fees that local governments charge for building permits.

Those fees can run into the tens of thousands of dollars per house, driving up the cost of construction and leading developers to favor luxury homes over affordable ones, advocates say. 

[Read more](#)

## As Coronavirus Fears Soar, Are Open Houses a Good Idea?

Survey finds 10% of California REALTORS® report sellers have stopped holding them

*Editor's note: This package was prepared before rapidly moving events have taken place, including shelter-in-place orders. Check the [VCCAR website](#) for the latest information and links.*

Nearly 1 in 4 home sellers nationwide are changing how their home is viewed while the home remains on the market due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, according to a new survey from the National Association of REALTORS®. The changes include stopping open houses, requiring potential buyers to wash their hands or use hand sanitizer, asking buyers to remove shoes or wear footies, or other changes.

The concern over the virus has also reached Ventura County, where as of March 12, public health officials reported there had been three presumptive positive cases of COVID-19 confirmed locally. All had been travel-related. County officials followed the lead of many other jurisdictions and have declared a local health emergency, which county officials said will enhance their ability to respond to the evolving threat.

And VCCAR has also been monitoring the COVID-19 situation closely and has made changes to help ensure members' health and safety. Specifically, most events are likely to be rescheduled or postponed, and committee meetings will be conducted by conference call and/or Zoom for the foreseeable future. (See more details in sidebar).

The NAR survey found that the percentage of sellers adopting changes climbs to 44 percent and 34 percent, respectively, in Washington State and California, two of the states hardest hit by coronavirus.

NAR's Economic Pulse Flash Survey – conducted March 9-10 – asked members questions about how the coronavirus outbreak, including the significant declines in stock market values and mortgage interest rates, has impacted home buyer and seller interest and behavior. Several highlights of the member survey include:

- 37% said lower mortgage rates excited home buyers much more than the stock market correction.
- Almost 8 out of 10 (78%) said there has been no change in buyer interest due to the coronavirus.
- 16% said buyer interest has decreased due to coronavirus, with members in California and Washington State citing larger decreases in buyer interest – 21% and 19%, respectively.
- Nearly 9 in 10 members (87%) said coronavirus has not affected the number of homes on the market.
- In Washington State and California, 5% and 4% of members, respectively, reported homes were removed from the market. That figure is 3% for members nationwide.

You can view NAR's Economic Pulse Flash Survey [full report here](#).



# CORONAVIRUS:

## A Guide for REALTORS®

In response to the growing concerns about COVID-19, commonly referred to as coronavirus, NAR is providing this guidance to help REALTORS® respond to the coronavirus's potential impact on the real estate industry. As of March 4, 2020, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has issued Level 3 Travel Warnings for all of China, South Korea, Italy, and Iran, and a Level 2 Travel Warning for Japan. However, the situation is rapidly evolving. Be sure to refer to the CDC's website for [up-to-date information about travel warnings](#), as well as information about the coronavirus's [current impact in the United States](#). Daily updates about the coronavirus are also available from the [World Health Organization](#).

### What is Coronavirus?

The CDC is responding to an outbreak of a respiratory illness caused by a novel coronavirus outbreak. While the outbreak started in Wuhan, China, a growing number of cases have been identified in several other countries, including the United States.

### What is the risk of exposure to coronavirus?

The CDC reports that most people in the United States do not have an immediate risk of exposure to the virus. However, the situation is rapidly evolving, and the CDC will [update its risk assessment as needed](#).

### What preventative measures may be taken to reduce the risk of contracting and spreading coronavirus?

The same preventative measures recommended to prevent influenza are also effective in reducing the risk of contracting or spreading coronavirus. These measures include:

- Staying home if you have a fever, cough, shortness of breath or any other cold or flu-like symptom.
- Washing your hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water aren't available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoiding close contact with anyone who is sick.
- Cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched objects and surfaces.
- Covering your mouth and nose with a tissue when you

cough or sneeze, or cough or sneeze into your sleeve.

### What unique issues does coronavirus present to the real estate industry?

When an infectious disease, such as coronavirus, is associated with a specific population or nationality, fear and anxiety may lead to social stigma and potential discrimination. REALTORS® must be mindful of their obligations under the Fair Housing Act and be sure not to discriminate against any particular segment of the population. While the coronavirus outbreak began in Wuhan, China, that does not provide a basis for treating Chinese persons or persons of Asian descent differently.

### May I ask clients or others I interact with in my real estate business if they have traveled recently, or have any signs of respiratory illness?

Yes, you may ask clients or others about their recent travel, particularly to areas identified as having an increased risk of coronavirus. To avoid potential fair housing issues, be sure to ask all clients the same screening questions based on current, factual information from public health authorities

### I typically drive my clients to showings. May I refuse to drive potential clients to see homes?

Yes. However, be sure that any change to your business practices is applied equally to all clients. You may refuse to drive clients who show signs of illness or reveal recent travel to areas of increased risk of coronavirus, or you may instead decide to stop driving clients in your car altogether, and simply arrange to meet clients at a property. If you do continue to drive clients in your car, it is a good idea to frequently clean and disinfect surfaces like door handles and seat belt latches, and to ask clients to use hand sanitizer when getting in and out of the car.

### Should I still conduct open houses on my listed properties?

Speak openly and honestly with your seller about the pros and cons of holding an open house. Assess the risk based on your specific location and direct your clients to local and state health authorities for specific information about the severity of the risk in your area. You could also propose alternative marketing opportunities for your seller's consideration, such as video tours and other methods to virtually tour a property. If you do hold an open house, consider requiring all visitors




to disinfect their hands upon entering the home, and provide alcohol-based hand sanitizers at the entryway, as well as soap and disposable towels in bathrooms. If you decide to do any cleaning at your client's home, be sure to check with your client in advance about any products you plan to use. After the open house, recommend that your client clean and disinfect their home, especially commonly touched areas like doorknobs and faucet handles.

### **What precautions should brokers consider taking in their offices?**

Brokers should use their best judgment when formulating a plan. First, brokers should implement a mandatory "stay-home" policy for any staff member or agent exhibiting any sign of illness, and depending on where the broker is geographically located, a broker may want to consider

imposing a mandatory remote work policy for employees and instructing agents to stay out of the office. In addition, taking measures such as holding virtual meetings or potentially postponing or cancelling in-person meetings or events may be good measures to take to limit close contact between individuals. Be sure to monitor updates from the CDC, as well as your state and local health authorities for additional information and guidance on holding meetings or events. For travel considerations, review NAR's "[Coronavirus: A Guide for REALTOR® Associations.](#)"

Finally, do not panic, stay informed, and use your best judgment. The situation is rapidly changing, so focus on putting policies and procedures in place to keep your employees informed, safe, and to avoid business disruption in the event the situation worsens. 

## **VCCAR CLOSES OFFICE, CANCELS MEETINGS DUE TO OUTBREAK**

Due to the COVID-19 health threat, VCCAR has closed its offices until March 31. However, staff will be working remotely. Our phone lines will remain open and we will do our best to provide you with the customer services you have learned to trust. If you need a sign, an item from the store, or help with a Supra issue, please call and we will arrange a way to try and facilitate your need.

In this time of uncertainty, we are trying to make sure that we are available to help you keep your business moving forward.

To access the latest news and updates from VCCAR, please visit our [website](#) or our [Facebook page](#).

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In case you missed it, here is the statement from VCCAR 2020 President Tim Comstock sent to all members:

I would like to thank you all for your professionalism and compassion in this difficult time. The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the way we do everything. Please educate yourselves by going to national, state, and local government websites for their latest updates. Also, refer to other professional sites, such as the CDC, <https://www.cdc.gov> for current information and to find ways you can help.


Social distancing is critical in helping reduce the exponential spread of this virus. Some people may have a compromised immunity to this virus which could put them at a greater risk of contracting the disease.

In the real estate sector, we are seeing the dynamic effects of COVID-19 as they play out. In person meetings, conferences, and pre-tour meetings have all been canceled due to the risk they pose.

The VCCAR office has closed through the end of March to general access, but the staff is working remotely to assure the safety of our members and staff. It is our intent to proceed with an abundance of caution and be forward thinking as we work through this challenge.

Please view the NAR <https://www.nar.realtor> and the new C.A.R. Coronavirus Update <https://www.carcovidupdates.org> sites to view best practices in handling listings, showings, and open houses that will protect you, your clients, and the general public. There are also many options with technology that you may want to consider when finding solutions that will allow you to move your business forward without undue risk.

Looking at the local business sector, which directly impacts our economy, jobs, and way of life; we must find ways to support our community and help them and get through this. One example is the city of Ventura has initiated changes to policy which allow restaurants to only receive takeout orders and waive metered parking to accommodate quick access. It is important that we find ways to support local businesses that are suffering severe economic hardships. I challenge our members to show how big our hearts are and how much we care about our local communities by being advocates, supporters, and leaders for those who are less fortunate than we are.

Be smart, safe, and appreciative so we all can get through this. 

Roy Sherman, CFA  
 Sherman Asset Management



Roy Sherman, CFA


## Retirement Plan Strategies for Tax Time

Tax returns are due soon, and there are still some strategies you can use to reduce your tax bill or increase your refund. Understand the rules and plan with your tax adviser, and you will achieve your goals much more easily.

The simplest line of defense for your tax bill is the **IRA contribution**. You may contribute \$6,000 (\$7,000 if over age 50) and receive a deduction on your tax return. Pretty simple, on the surface. Consult with your tax adviser to see what you are eligible for, though. If you or your spouse are covered by a retirement plan at work you may not be able to deduct the contribution from your income (although you can still contribute). Your modified adjusted gross income (MAGI) will dictate whether you are eligible. Also, consider contributing on behalf of your spouse, if they don't have earned income; spousal IRAs are potentially available as long as income limits are met. IRA contributions must be done by April 15.

A better line of defense is the **SEP IRA contribution**. This is a much better way for self-employed agents to reduce their tax bill. A SEP IRA allows for higher contribution limits (25% of compensation up to a maximum of \$56,000, or \$62,000 if over age 50), and is not subject to the income and spousal retirement plan limits of the traditional IRA contribution. The SEP IRA is required to be set up separately from any traditional IRA you might have. Also, the SEP IRA contribution deadline can be extended out to October 15, as long you properly file for an extension of your tax return, too.

If you want to reduce your taxes in future years instead, you should consider a **Roth IRA contribution**. You don't receive a deduction now, but any growth within the Roth IRA can be distributed tax-free in retirement. There is an income threshold that you must be below, but there is a way to get around that if you are creative and willing to put forth a little extra effort via a Back-Door Roth IRA. You simply contribute to a traditional IRA and convert the contribution to a Roth IRA immediately thereafter. Be careful though; if you already have a traditional IRA in which you have not paid taxes yet, you will owe taxes on the conversion. Calculating the owed taxes can be onerous if you have both deductible and non-deductible contributions in your traditional IRA already.

Make sure to consult with your tax professional before using any of these strategies. There are numerous rules and considerations to follow, above and beyond what is already written here. You do not want to run afoul with the IRS. 

“Make sure to consult with your tax professional before using any of these strategies.”



Retirement can be enjoyable but requires planning.

Photo by Max Harlyinking on Unsplash

## FAIR HOUSING MONTH

### REALTOR® Associations Beef Up Fight Against Housing Discrimination

NAR launches new initiative in wake of Long Island allegations; VCCAR continues strong support of REFAT

To many people, housing discrimination may seem like something that happened in the distant past, not in 21st century America. But as a newspaper in New York reported last fall, discrimination remains all too real. A three-year investigation found that some agents and brokers on Long Island steered potential buyers toward specific neighborhoods based on their race or ethnicity – acts prohibited by the 52-year-old federal Fair Housing Act.

The investigation paired a black, Hispanic, or Asian tester with a white tester, each with similar demographic profiles, and

#### NAR statement

NAR President Vince Malta issued this statement:

“While NAR has long been a champion of the Fair Housing Act, recent incidents have underscored the progress our nation must still make. Governor Cuomo’s proposals continue to reflect our societal understanding of the collective need to do more, and we believe REALTORS® across the country must work with their state and local government leaders to combat issues that arise in each community.

“At the national level, REALTORS® have redoubled our commitment to pursuing equal access to housing for all Americans. Back in September we created a 45-member Fair Housing Committee to further elevate these critical issues and, earlier this month, NAR sent a letter to Congressional leadership urging them to secure adequate funding for fair housing activities at HUD. ▶



asked an agent to help buy a home in the same price range. The interactions were recorded via hidden cameras.

Newsday conducted a total of 86 tests, and found blacks received disparate treatment 49% of the time, Hispanics experienced differing treatment 39% of the time, and Asians 19% of the time. In one example, an agent told a black client that a certain neighborhood “had the nicest people” while the agent told a white client to “do some research on the gang-related events in that area for safety.” [The full series is available here.](#)



The 2020 NAR Leadership Team Meet with HUD Secretary. From left: President-elect Charlie Oppler, President Vince Malta, HUD Secretary Ben Carson, CEO Bob Goldberg, Immediate Past President John Smaby, First Vice President Leslie Rouda Smith, Vice President of Association Affairs Mabel Guzman, and Vice President of Advocacy Christine Hansen.



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# FAIR HOUSING MONTH



"As we stated immediately following the report's release, NAR was deeply troubled to review the results of Newsday's three-year investigation into how real estate agents on Long Island treat buyers of different backgrounds, which does not reflect the ethical commitment made by 1.4 million REALTORS® nationwide. Housing discrimination violates NAR's Code of Ethics, and there is no place for this behavior in our industry, our society or our world."

NAR has gone further, with its leadership team meeting in January with U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Secretary Ben Carson and other senior HUD officials to discuss fair housing just hours after unanimously passing a new plan to tackle the issue.

## New ACT initiative

The new NAR initiative, abbreviated ACT, will emphasize Accountability, Culture Change and Training in order to ensure REALTORS® are doing everything possible to protect housing rights in America. Among the [new initiatives](#) are steps to ensure that members uphold the fair housing standards incorporated in NAR's Code of Ethics, integrating fair housing into all conferences and engagements, and forming partnerships with fair housing advocates to pursue shared goals around accountability and training.


"Our Code of Ethics and its adherence to fair housing are the cornerstones of our commitment as REALTORS®. With this new plan, we will see more robust education focusing on core fair housing criteria, unconscious bias, and how the actions of our members impact communities. A partnership

"The meeting allowed us to reiterate our commitment to partnering with HUD to advance fair housing protections, and we agreed to work jointly on public service announcements and other proactive initiatives to communicate the importance of housing access for all Americans," according to a statement.

"We have been active in our pursuit of innovative new policies and partnerships that will help us preserve the fundamental right of housing in America. While we have long been a champion of the Fair Housing Act, recent incidents have underscored the progress our nation must still make. That's why we are proud to announce that the Leadership Team has unanimously voted today to approve an action that will directly ramp up and reinvigorate NAR's fair housing commitment, which we encourage you to read."

with government officials and fair housing advocates will allow us to further promote equality as we continue to work to diversify our industry," the statement concluded.

NAR had increased its emphasis on fair housing before the Newsday series broke. Last summer, it organized a Fair Housing Policy Committee to more effectively advocate on national fair housing policy and hired Bryan Greene as its director of fair housing policy. Green served at HUD for 29 years, where he was the top career official overseeing enforcement of the Fair Housing Act.

For more information, check out the [NAR Fair Housing guidelines for brokers](#) and [C.A.R.'s guide](#) to California's Fair Employment and Housing Act and Unruh Civil Rights Act, which add additional requirements. 

## VCCAR Continues Fair Housing Commitment

During Fair Housing Month, the Real Estate Fraud Advisory Team (REFAT) will once again be making presentations at city council meetings throughout the county to stress the importance of fair housing and showing a short video REFAT has produced, said VCCAR Director Jim Keith, a broker with Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices California Realty.

And Association President Tim Comstock issued the following statement to mark the observance: "Housing discrimination has no place here in Ventura County, and VCCAR will continue its efforts to fight it through our training programs and our strong support of REFAT. I remind all REALTORS® that actions such as steering clients are not only illegal under state and federal law, they also violate NAR's Code of Ethics."



## Everyday Ethics Webinar to Address Fair Housing

California REALTORS® are concerned that fair housing violations are occurring in our state as well. What steps should you take to avoid doing something that violates the ethical and legal duties related to fair housing, and what can you do to report other REALTORS® who are engaging in discriminatory practices?

In this month's Everyday Ethics Webinar, C.A.R. attorneys Brian Polinsky and Amanda Byun will discuss how the Code of Ethics applies to fair housing. Using examples from the C.A.R. legal hotline, the Newsday article, NAR Case Interpretations and more, Brian and Amanda will give you the practical advice you need to handle any fair housing issues that come your way.

The webinar will take place on Thursday, March 26, from 1:30-2:30 p.m. You can [register here](#).



# FAIR HOUSING DECLARATION



## I agree to:

- Provide equal professional service without regard to the race, color, religion, gender(sex), disability (handicap), familial status, national origin, sexual orientation or genderidentity of any prospective client, customer, or of the residents of any community.
- Keep informed about fair housing law and practices, improving my clients' andcustomers' opportunities and my business.
- Develop advertising that indicates that everyone is welcome and no one is excluded,;expanding my client's and customer's opportunities to see, buy, or lease property.
- Inform my clients and customers about their rights and responsibilities under the fairhousing laws by providing brochures and other information.
- Document my efforts to provide professional service, which will assist me in becoming a more responsive and successful REALTOR®.
- Refuse to tolerate non-compliance.
- Learn about those who are different from me, and celebrate those differences.
- Take a positive approach to fair housing practices and aspire to follow the spirit as well as the letter of the law.
- Develop and implement fair housing practices for my firm to carry out the spirit of this declaration.

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By Marta Golding Brown  
VCCAR Government Affairs Director



Marta Golding Brown

## VCCAR-Supported Candidates Move Forward in March Elections



Matt LaVere

While county officials have until April 3 to compile a complete count of votes cast during the March elections, it appears that two candidates for county supervisor who were supported by VCCAR have won a majority of the votes and will not appear on the ballot in November.

As of March 6, Matt LaVere had received 21,188 votes (60%) in the First District race to replace termed-out Steve Bennett. The district is centered in Ventura. If a candidate receives a majority of the votes cast, he or she is elected and will take office in January. In the Third District race, centered on Camrillo, incumbent Kelly Long had received 18,471 votes (57.5%) and appears to have triumphed as well.



Kelly Long

As expected, nobody received a majority in the Oxnard-based Fifth District because five candidates were vying to replace termed-out Supervisor John Zaragoza. Oxnard Mayor Tim Flynn, whom VCCAR supported, appears to have finished first with 31% of the votes and is all but certain to appear on the November ballot along with Oxnard City Councilmember Carmen Ramirez. Three other candidates trailed Ramirez by more than 10 percentage points.



Tim Flynn

Members of our Local Candidate Recommendation Committee of CREPAC – The California Real Estate Political Action Committee – interviewed the candidates and voted to support LaVere, Long, and Flynn.

Because many ballots are mailed on Election Day, elections officials have several weeks to verify that the ballots should be counted and to tally the final results.



## Top State, National Advocacy Issues for 2020

There is no shortage of issues facing REALTORS® this year, both in Sacramento and in Washington, D.C. C.A.R. and NAR are focusing on these important topics now, but of course different priorities could emerge based on changing circumstances.

C.A.R. priorities include increasing housing supply, point of sale issues, establishing a first-time homebuyer tax credit, the portability initiative (see below), CEQA reform, and PACE assessment disclosures.

NAR priorities include restoring tax benefits for property ownership and easing limits on state and local tax deductions, indexing capital gains exclusions on the sale of a principal residence to inflation, GSE reforms, and changes to federal mortgage programs.

## C.A.R. Submits Signatures for New Initiative


An unprecedented 1.4 million signatures from California voters were submitted recently in support of the Family Home Protection and Fairness in Property Tax Act. The initiative,

sponsored by C.A.R., will help alleviate California's housing crisis by providing relief for victims of wildfires, people with disabilities, and homeowners over the age of 55.

Specifically, The Family Home Protection and Fairness in Property Tax Act will do the following:

Provide housing relief for seniors, people with disabilities, and victims of wildfires by allowing seniors (55 years or older), people with disabilities and victims of wildfires to transfer their current home's property tax base to a new residence anywhere in California.

Protect children who inherit the family home from a large property tax increase by protecting the right to pass a family home onto children and grandchildren for use as a primary residence without a large tax increase.

Benefit schools and communities by generating hundreds of millions of dollars in new revenue for local schools, cities, and counties. These revenues can provide additional resources for public safety, emergency services, libraries, local housing and homeless programs, and infrastructure. 

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## Year-end housing statistics show fewer listings, flat sales and pricing

The inventory of homes for sale in Ventura County continued to decline on a year-over-year basis in February, and for the first time since last March closed sales declined as well, according to data compiled by RPR and the Ventura County MLS. Median listing prices during the month continued to soar, while median sales prices were up modestly from a year ago but down sharply from a spike recorded in January.

At the close of the month, there was 3.1 months of inventory on the market, based on sales trends. That's down 37.6% from the 5 months reported in February 2019 but is up 27.1% from 2.44 months in January. On a year-over-year basis, February marked the eighth straight month of inventory declines.

New listings totaled 561, down 5.6% from the prior year. It was the seventh straight month that new listings were lower than the same month in the prior year. New listings did rise 1.3% from the 554 properties listed in January, but year-to-date, new listings are 10.9% below 2019. There were 1,186 active listings at the end of the month, a steep 32.4% drop-off from the prior year. The figure was 2.2% above January's level of 1,160, however.

There were 308 closed sales in February, which is 20.6% lower than 388 recorded a year ago and 18.5% below January's figure of 378. For the first two months of the year, 686 homes sold, down from 737 in 2019. New pending sales totaled 414 in February, which was 11.5% below a year ago but up 5.9% from the 391 reported in January. February marked the first month in over a year that pending sales were lower than the same month in the previous year. Pending sales so far this year have been 4.4% below last year.

Both listing and sales prices were higher on a year-over-year basis. The median sales price was \$579,975, a 3.5% increase over February 2019 but a 7.8% reduction from the \$629,000 reported in January. So far this year, the median sales price is 7.3% higher than a year ago. The median sales price per square foot came in at \$371, a 3.5% increase over last year and 1.6% higher than January. For the year the median sales price is 4.8% above last year.

The median listing price came in at \$746,950, a 14.9% jump from February 2019 and 4.5% above the \$715,000 recorded in January. The median listing price per square foot was up 9% from last year to \$386.



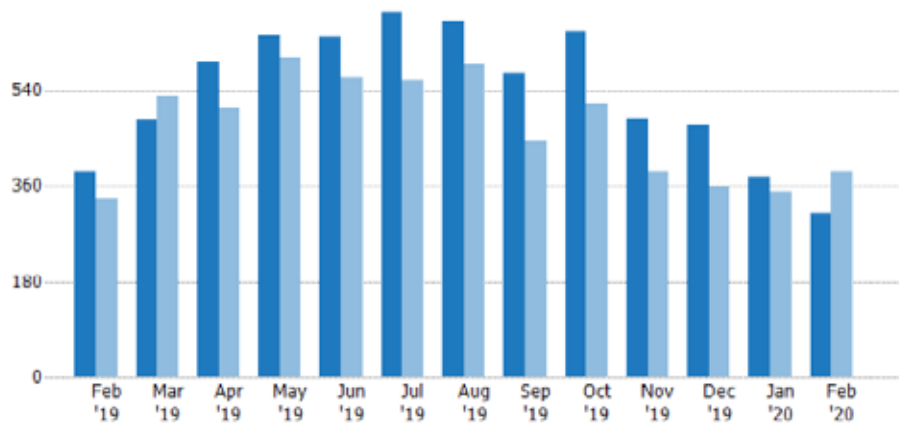
### Closed Sales

The total number of residential properties sold each month.

**Filters Used**

State: CA  
 County: Ventura County, California  
 Property Type:  
 Condo/Townhouse/Apt, Single  
 Family Residence

Month/Year	Count	% Chg.
Feb '20	308	-20.6%
Feb '19	388	15.5%
Feb '18	336	14.6%



Current Year	388	485	595	642	641	686	669	572	661	487	475	378	308
Prior Year	336	530	507	601	563	559	590	446	516	389	359	349	388
Percent Change from Prior Year	15%	-8%	17%	7%	14%	23%	13%	28%	26%	25%	32%	8%	-21%



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## NEW MEMBERS

### More than 20 New REALTORS® Complete Training at VCCAR

A total 23 new REALTORS® completed their new member orientation classes in January and February and received their pins from Tim Comstock, 2020 VCCAR president.



#### January

Twelve new REALTORS® received their pins in January. Front row, from left: Gilbert Lorona, Keller Williams West Ventura County, Oxnard; Elizabeth Jebef, Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices California Properties, Ventura; Patricia Martinez, Coastline Realty Group, Ventura; Joyce Provencher, RE/MAX Gold Coast, Oxnard; Veronica Lake, RE/MAX Gold Coast, Ventura; 2020 VCCAR President Tim Comstock; and instructor Sher Heard.

Back Row, from left: Eric Burton, Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices California Properties, Ventura; Alana Leighton, RE/MAX Gold Coast, Ventura; Matthew Horne, Century 21 Everest, Camarillo; Jade Arner, Keller Williams West Ventura County, Ventura; Conner Armstrong, Sun Coast Real Estate, Ventura; Christopher Williams, Coldwell Banker Property Shoppe Ojai; and Ryan Amico, RE/MAX Gold Coast, Camarillo.

WELCOME



## February

Eleven new members joined in February. From left, VCCAR instructor Ashley Anderson; Brittany Hannon, Keller Williams West Ventura County, Oxnard; Raul Ayala, Weichert Realtors Superior Homes, Oxnard; Oscar Muñoz, eXp Realty, San Ramon; Jayne Mislang, Del Prado Financial, Oxnard; Patti Zuleger, Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices California Realty, Camarillo; Nancy Suarez-Treichler, Berkshire Hathaway

HomeServices California Properties,, Ventura; Antonia Ayala Galvez, RE/MAX Gold Coast, Fillmore; Courtney Andrews, Keller Williams West Ventura County, Oxnard; VCCAR President Tim Comstock; Kim Recharte, Forsyth & Rizzie Realtors, Oxnard; James Wilk, White House Properties, Westlake Village; and Christopher Keesling, Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices California Realty, Westlake Village. 🌴

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