

Ventura County Coastal

Official Publication of the Ventura County Coastal Association of REALTORS®

November/December 2020

Keeping the Office Open *Virtually*



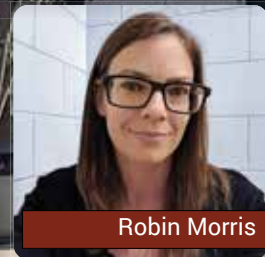
Wyndi Austin



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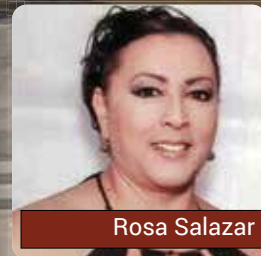
Marta Golding Brown



Robin Morris



Angel Rodarte



Rosa Salazar



Tammy VanDeusen

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The Calendar is now on the back page. For the most current information, see the online calendar on the [VCCAR website](#). Click on the Classes and Events tab.

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This edition of the Ventura County Coastal® is made possible by the following industry partners:

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STAFF

GENERAL CONTACT INFORMATION
805-981-2100 – PHONE
805-981-2107 – FAX
VCCAR@VCREALTORS.COM

ADMINISTRATION
WYNDI AUSTIN, CAE, RCE, E-PRO®, C2EX
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
P: 805-981-2100 X110
D: 805-973-8576
WYNDI@VCREALTORS.COM

ROSA SALAZAR, C2EX
OFFICE MANAGER
REALTOR® STORE
P: 805-981-2100 X107
D: 805-973-8573
ROSA@VCREALTORS.COM

MEMBERSHIP
ANGEL RODARTE
MEMBERSHIP MANAGER
P: 805-981-2100 X109
D: 805-973-8575
ANGEL@VCREALTORS.COM

MARKETING
TAMMY VANDEUSEN, C2EX
DIRECTOR OF MARKETING
P: 805-981-2100 X114
D: 805-973-8569
TAMMY@VCREALTORS.COM

GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS
MARTA GOLDING BROWN, MPA, RCE
DIRECTOR OF GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS
P: 805-981-2100 X106
D: 805-973-8572
MGBROWN@VCREALTORS.COM

FINANCE
ROBIN MORRIS, E-PRO®, C2EX
DIRECTOR OF FINANCE
P: 805-981-2100 X112
D: 805-973-8528
ROBIN@VCREALTORS.COM

MULTIPLE LISTING SERVICE
DALE FARNUM
DIRECTOR OF MULTIPLE LISTING SERVICE
P: 805-981-2100 X105
D: 805-973-8571
DALE@VCREALTORS.COM

VENTURA COUNTY COASTAL
JOHN FRITH, EDITOR
916-765-6533
JOHN@TWSCOMMUNICATIONS.COM

SCOTT ARNOLD, DESIGN & LAYOUT
SCOTT@FOLEYPUB.COM

ADVERTISING: FOLEY PUBLICATIONS
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2350 Wankel Way, Oxnard, Calif. 93030
Phone: (805) 981-2100 / Fax: (805) 981-2107
Website: www.vcrealtors.com

Tim Comstock
2020 VCCAR President



Tim Comstock

2020 Was a Wild Ride

This year didn't take the turns we all expected but we are all on this wild ride together. I think we have collectively ridden over a few speed bumps and a pothole or two and through a dumpster fire this year.

We saw our business activities sidelined in March by the mandate of our county health officer. Until we were deemed essential, many people in our industry were upset but our staff and many of our members worked hard to educate county officials and we were soon allowed to resume business if we took proper precautions.

We had numerous calls saying that agents wanted to hold open houses and show properties because that is how they conduct business. My response then and now is that everyone would need to be patient and adopt new technologies and new ways of conducting business. Violating COVID-19 protocol in showing listings or dealing with the public will be looked at more unfavorably now. Standards of practice and the Code of Ethics matters. Putting our client's interests first is one of the things that makes an agent a REALTOR®.

Almost lost in everything else that's happened is that the NAR Clear Cooperation Policy 8.0 went into effect on May 1. Enforcement was light to start as members learned the new rules and policies but will be more strictly enforced going forward. We have learned that rules are not consistent in all Associations and MLSs. There are a few MLSs that allow showings when most no longer do. Hopefully over time we can get to a common rule set that provides the fairness and consistency which NAR intended.

Late summer started to really rock for real estate. Buyer demand created overbidding and month-over-month appreciation we hadn't seen in years. Some were worried that housing would fall soon but were proven wrong by the continued low mortgage interest rates and the desire many buyers had to be in a home that provided the functionality for working and schooling from home.

Another hot-button issue our industry has been dealing with is hazard insurance. Fire and flood risks are rising. Statewide, fires have burned an area the size of several New England states. Structures built in canyons, hilltops and more rural locations are at risk of being damaged or destroyed in epic firestorms, making insurance harder to find or unaffordable. Better defensible space and home hardening are going to be keys to saving and preventing excessive losses.

We as REALTORS® are advocates for the communities in which we work and live. It's nice to see some of our members running for public office and attending online city council meetings. At least with the online format, there is less of an excuse to not be involved. Homeownership and quality of life matter. Please don't leave all the heavy lifting to others. I challenge all of you to do your part to better your surroundings and working relationships with fellow REALTORS® and all the decision-makers who can impact our communities.

I also want to thank our hard-working officers, directors, committee chairs and vice chairs, and all the REALTORS® and Affiliates who have served VCCAR this year. And special thanks go to CEO Wyndi Austin and her amazing staff. Leadership had to deal with more than usual this year on budget decisions, CARETS dissolution, wrapping up the integration with FBS to CRMLS, and how to conduct events virtually. Our committee chairs and vice chairs stepped up and surprised me with their creative ideas and were able to pull off some great educational as well as fun events.

Special congratulations go out to Eric & Janet Baucom for their NAR Good Neighbor recognition. Thank you for doing good in the community by donating some 350 bicycles and helmets to so many foster kids. You are part of the community and are like the 70% of REALTORS® who volunteer in our communities. I'm proud of you and all the others who help foster kids, feed the homeless, clean the beaches, and volunteer time to help those suffering hardships in this community and beyond.

In conclusion, I want to say thanks for the honor to serve as your 2020 President. I had to juggle my real estate business, some family health challenges, and my leadership responsibilities. But I am grateful for all the outstanding support from leadership and staff at VCCAR and many others I'm proud to call friends. I accepted the challenges and will continue to support our real estate community in other capacities in the future. 🌱

“Thanks for the honor to serve as your 2020 President. I am grateful for all the outstanding support.”

2020 Installation & Awards Breakfast Will Be a Drive-In Event at the Fairgrounds on December 11

As with so many things in this year of COVID-19, the annual installation event will be different this year – but at least it won't be a Zoom meeting! That's right, this year's installation will be a drive-in event at the Ventura County Fairgrounds that will include a box breakfast and orange juice.

The event – From Surviving to Thriving – will take place on Friday, December 11, from 9 a.m. to noon. Check-in begins at 8 a.m., with attendant-directed parking. 2020 President Tim Comstock will recognize and honor the 2020 VCCAR Board of

Directors' achievements and will also welcome 2021 President Sher Heard and next year's Officers and Directors.

Tickets for the event, presented in conjunction with Concerts in Your Car, are \$30 and are valid for one person only. Ticket sales close Wednesday, December 9, at 5 p.m. Tickets will not be sold at the door, and strict social distancing protocols will be enforced.

Tickets and more information about the COVID-19 restrictions [are available here](#).

Membership Tops 2,000, Putting VCCAR on Course for an NAR Director Slot

VCCAR membership has climbed over the 2,000 level, which if maintained through July 31 will result in giving the Association an NAR director position in 2022 for the first time in many years. Membership is the lifeblood of any association,

and the more members we have the more influential we will be – in addition to the many benefits of belonging. Thank you all for your membership!

Ventura REALTORS® Receive Most Votes in NAR's Good Neighbor Online Voting

Eric and Janet Baucom, owners of Coastlands Real Estate Group, received the most votes in NAR's online Good Neighbor Award voting and received \$2,500 for their Project Bicycle Love program in addition to the \$2,500 they received for being named one of five honorable mentions.

An all-time record 225,383 votes were cast to determine the Web Choice Favorites – 60,000 more than the previous record vote. Project Bicycle Love gifts bikes and helmets to foster children. You can read more about the Baucoms and their charitable work in the [September-October issue of Ventura County Coastal](#).

Legal Update/Annual Membership Meeting set for Nov. 17

Once again, real estate lawyer Stella Ling will give members a fun and informative update about legal and regulatory changes affecting REALTORS® at VCCAR's annual Real Estate Legal Update and Annual Membership Meeting. The event will be held via Zoom on Tuesday, November 17, from 2-3 p.m.

VCCAR President Tim Comstock will tag-team with Ling as he introduces updates from C.A.R. and NAR, followed by Association announcements and a time of Q&A. You can [register to attend here](#).

Free Safe and Secure Shredding Event to Take Place Nov. 19

Members wanting to safely and securely dispose of documents they no longer need are encouraged to take part in VCCAR's free shredding event, which will be held this year on Thursday, November 19, from noon to 4 p.m. in the VCCAR office parking lot.

Just bring the documents you want shredded and drive up to the StoreRite shredding truck. A company representative will unload your boxes, bags, and bundles of documents into the shredder and you can simply drive away.

White paper, colored paper, file folders, carbon-less paper and staples and paper clips can be shredded; plastic, binders, metal, Styrofoam, glass, trash, garbage, and wet material cannot be. For more information, please contact Tammy VanDeusen [by email](#) or at 805-973-8569.

YPN Month of Giving Raffle Generates \$1,318 for Charity

The YPN Month of Giving raffle and virtual happy hour in September raised \$1,318 that was donated to Community Action of Ventura County. The event was put together by the YPN Committee, which was determined not to allow the COVID-19 pandemic to hinder its giving efforts.

Raffle winners were REALTOR® Ashley Anderson, who won the Apple iPad donated by RE/MAX Gold Coast; Darryl Geewax

with Loan Depot, who won the Air Pod Pros donated by VCCAR; REALTOR® Jorge DeLeón, who won the regular Air Pods donated by Comfort Real Estate Services; and REALTOR® Alfredo Almada, who went home with Air Pods donated by Fidelity Home Warranty.

VCCAR to Be 'Virtually Dark' During Weeks of Thanksgiving and Christmas

To help members focus on the holidays, VCCAR will be "virtually dark" the weeks of Thanksgiving and Christmas, and will limit texts, emails, and other electronic communications to extremely important issues. In addition, there will be

no scheduled Zoom meetings those weeks. Staff, however, will be working from home and will be available except November 26-27 and December 24-25, when the office will be completely closed for the holidays. 🌿



FREE SHREDDING EVENT



StoreRite - Shredding Services

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Thursday, November 19th

12:00 - 4:00 PM

VCCAR Office

2350 Wankel Way, Oxnard, CA 93030

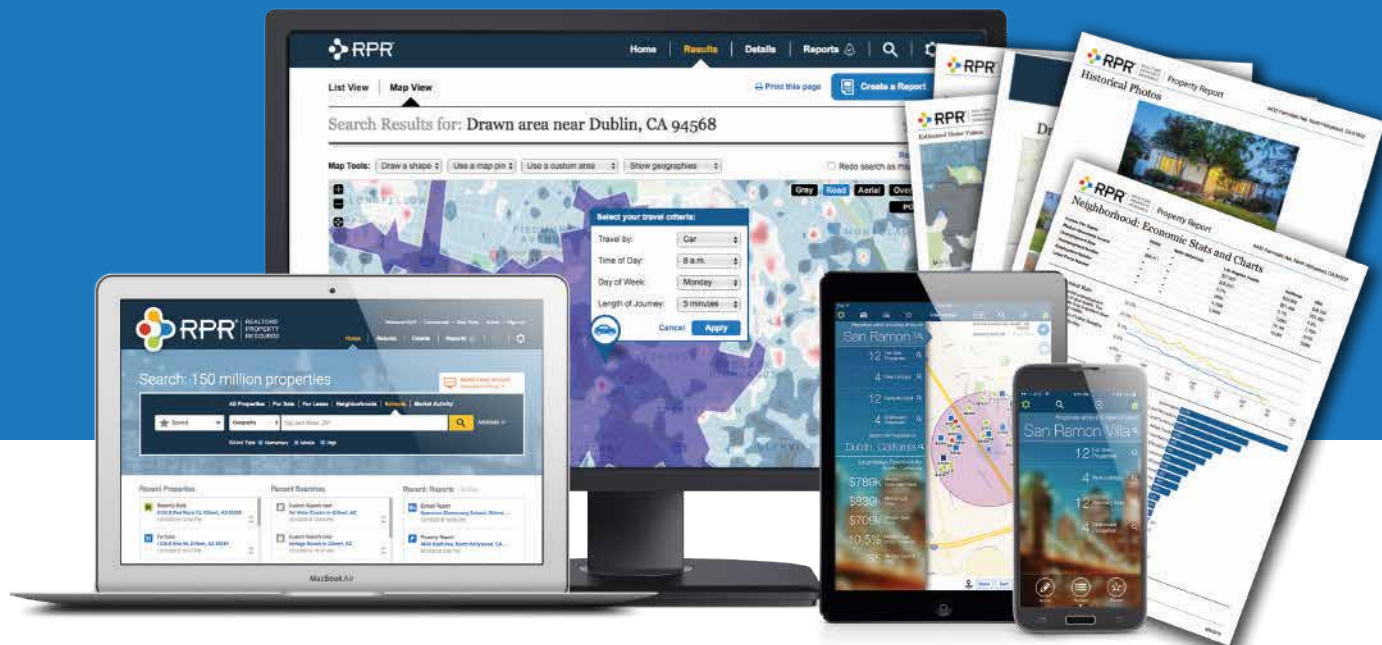
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VCCU membership is open to anyone who lives, works or attends school in Ventura or Santa Barbara counties. All loans subject to credit approval and secured by lien on owner-occupied home. Certain restrictions apply. VCCU is an equal housing lender.



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Homeowners, Buyers Are the Real Winners in This Election

CNBC | November 5

Volatility surrounding the 2020 presidential election has helped push mortgage rates to their 12th record low this year, giving both homeowners and buyers a boost.

The average rate on the popular 30-year fixed mortgage fell to 2.78% for the week ending Nov. 5, down from 2.81% the previous week and 3.69% the same week one year ago, according to Freddie Mac.

"Interest rates dropped to another record low this week ... because of uncertainty around the election results," said George Ratiu, senior economist at realtor.com.

[Read more](#)

Lack of Inventory, Higher Prices Push Housing Affordability Near 2-Year Low

NAHB Eye on Housing | November 5

Record-low mortgage rates were not enough to offset inventory shortages and rising home prices as housing affordability continued to decline in the third quarter of 2020, according to the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB)/Wells Fargo Housing Opportunity Index (HOI).

In all, 58.3 percent of new and existing homes sold between the beginning of July and end of September were affordable to families earning an adjusted U.S. median income of \$72,900. This is down from the 59.6 percent of homes sold in the second quarter of 2020 that were affordable to median-income earners and the lowest reading since the fourth quarter of 2018.

[Read more](#)

Why Liberal California Keeps Saying No to Rent Control

Los Angeles Times\$ | November 4

In one of the most liberal states in the country, California voters have twice had an opportunity to expand rent control statewide amid a historic housing affordability crisis.

And both times voters have given a resounding "no" to the idea.

The decisive failure of Proposition 21 on Tuesday — like Proposition 10 before it in 2018 — shows that despite California's reputation as a progressive bastion, voters here are far from willing to support one of the most well-known housing ideas championed by the left.

[Read more](#)

Homeownership Is Growing, Especially Among Younger Age Groups

Mortgage News Daily | October 27

The U.S. homeownership rate in the third quarter fell back slightly from the prior quarter. The second quarter saw the highest level for homeownership since the second quarter of 2008. Homeownership in the third quarter, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, was 67.4 percent, 0.5-point decrease from the previous period, but up from 64.8 percent in the third quarter of 2019. That rate ties with the second quarter of 2009 as the second highest rate since the onset of the housing crisis.

The rate was highest in the Midwest and South at 71.2 percent and 70.8 percent and substantially lower in the Northeast (62.0 percent) and West (62.1 percent). All four regions posted annual increases.

The rate increased for all age groups. Those under the age of 35 jumped from 37.5 percent in the third quarter of last year to 40.2 percent and

the rate for those 35 to 44 years old rose more than three points to 63.9 percent. The rate for those 45 to 54 was 72.0 percent, 55 to 64, 76.4 percent and those over 65 had a rate of 80.7 percent.

[Read more](#)

\$142 Billion in SoCal Housing at High Wildfire Risk by This Math

Orange County Register\$ | October 27

Twin Southern California wildfires serve as a reminder that the region has \$142 billion of housing at "elevated risk" of wildfire damage, according to a new study.

Real estate tracker CoreLogic's annual assessment of wildfire risks highlights how much is at stake in the four counties covered by the Southern California News Group. The report shows 282,000 housing properties have elevated wildfire risk. This week the Silverado and Blue Ridge fires have forced tens of thousands to evacuate, no doubt unnerving many property owners, in Orange, San Bernardino and Riverside counties.

In Los Angeles and Orange counties, 154,000 single-family residences worth \$90.3 billion in replacement costs are at an elevated risk. Both totals lead the nation's metro areas.

[Read more](#)

Eco-tip: Do 'Green' Features Help Sell Houses?

Ventura County Star\$ | October 24

Realtors are known for using certain terms to describe homes, and those terms sometimes can have an unexpected meaning.

For example, as <https://readynest.com> points out, if a Realtor describes a home as "quaint," it could mean cozy and charming, or it could mean tiny and cramped. "Close to transportation" could mean a block from a bus stop, or it could mean next to a railroad track.

In contrast, the term "green" can have only one meaning if you want it to reliably add value to a home, according to Andy Pletcher, with Century 21 Everest. Pletcher recently completed training to obtain the National Association of Realtors Green Designation, and she pointed out the importance of using real data to quantify the term "green."


[Read more](#)

COVID Impact on Housing Market Discussed at Annual Conference

Ventura County Star\$ | October 22

The percentage of 25- to 34-year-olds with their own housing unit is "tanking" in Ventura County, according to Dowell Myers, of the University of Southern California's Sol Price School of Public Policy.

The "headship rate" for young adults, or the percentage of people who are counted as heads of households, is declining across the U.S. and California. But Ventura County is seeing an even sharper decline, dropping by about 10 percentage points between 2000 and 2019.

"This has been declining since 2008 and more strongly and continuously in Ventura County," said Myers in a virtual presentation on Wednesday. 

[Read more](#)

FROM SURVIVING TO THRIVING

Friday, December 11th
9 AM - 12 PM

Check-in begins at 8 AM, Attendant directed parking

Ventura County Fairgrounds
10 Harbor Blvd.
Ventura, CA 93001

\$30 per Person
Includes a box breakfast & orange juice

VCCAR's Annual Installation & Awards Breakfast

VCCAR is excited to announce that for this year's Annual Installation & Awards Breakfast we can all be together again! This will be a drive-in event held at the Ventura County Fair Grounds in coordination with Concerts in Your Car!

2020 President, Tim Comstock, will recognize and honor the 2020 VCCAR Board of Director's achievements. He will also be welcoming the 2021 President, Sher Heard, along with the 2021 Officers and Directors.

REGISTER TODAY: <https://vcrealtors.com/classes-and-events/events.html>

Please note:

- Ticket sales close Wednesday, Dec 9th @ 5 PM. Tickets cannot and will not be sold at the door/day of the event. No refunds.
- Each ticket is valid for ONE PERSON and Includes a box breakfast & orange juice.
- Strict social distancing protocols will be required and enforced.

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Keeping the Office Open – Virtually

VCCAR's staff worked hard and successfully this year to continue serving members despite COVID-19



2020 got off to a roaring start thanks to incoming President Tim Comstock and outgoing President Jorge DeLeón.

2020 got off to a great start for VCCAR. Our installation event was a huge success. Economists agreed the local housing market would remain healthy. The transition to the CRMLS platform was going well. And about 40 people attended the year's first (and as it turned out only) YPN mixer.

Who knew that incoming president Tim Comstock's opening words in his column in the January-February issue of this magazine would be so prescient:

"Each year brings us new challenges, and I'm sure that 2020 will be no different," Tim wrote. "Sometimes we know the challenges are coming, but more often than not they smack us in the face without warning. Most of the time we can't stop these challenges from happening, but we can control how we respond to them."

Truer words were never spoken. When the coronavirus pandemic hit California hard just two months later, VCCAR's leadership and staff knew we couldn't stop the spread of a virus that was affecting the world, but we could control how we responded. But looking back, it's a wonder how we

“Each year brings us new challenges, and I'm sure that 2020 will be no different.”

– Tim Comstock

were able to do so during those first hectic weeks, when the situation was changing hour to hour.

As late as March 12, there had been just three confirmed COVID-19 cases in Ventura County, all travel-related. A week

Wyndi Austin
Chief Executive Officer



Wyndi Austin

later, we closed our office and staff began working from home because it had become clear that we needed to do so to keep staff and members safe as the virus quickly spread.

Planning on working efficiently

Early that week, everyone was directed to pick up what they needed to work efficiently at home. Fortunately, we had two or three spare training laptops in the office and were able to get them ready for use so staff without home computers could take them home and get themselves situated in their home offices.

Even more fortunately, shortly after I came aboard as CEO in 2017 we had upgraded our phone system, which gave us the ability to forward calls to our mobile phones and/or desktop solution so we could all answer members' calls. So on the morning of Wednesday, March 18, we decided to close effective 5 p.m. on Friday. But because staff worked so quickly, we were

“Our office is considered a nonessential business office. REALTORS® are deemed essential, but we're not.”

actually able to begin working from home on Thursday at noon. Everyone was set up at home and we were ready to roll.

Early on, there was so much uncertainty. At first, we thought we could be back to normal operations by May, then we saw that wasn't going to happen, but we thought maybe it would be late summer, but by then we all realized we don't have a date to look forward to.

One of our first priorities, of course, was to make a full-court press to persuade county health officials that real estate was an essential business. We fought like hell on that issue, and Government Affairs Director Marta Golding Brown worked tirelessly to educate officials about the negative impacts of not allowing real estate transactions to continue in a safe manner. And it helped that our members were doing the same thing. We're a small community here in western Ventura County and many members are friends with some of the officials. All of that helped tremendously.

While it was bad for our members, the fact the county didn't declare real estate to be an essential business at first gave us a chance to adjust to working from home. Our focus was on keeping the staff busy and efficient. Everyone has projects on the back burner that they never have time to do, so we got started on some of those and assigned tasks to staff. That helped establish a rhythm, but of course once real estate was considered essential, they went back to the back burner because the members again had needs.

Supra keys and the REALTOR Store

Two of the biggest things we regularly help members with is their Supra keys and the REALTOR® store. Members need new Supra keys or to have them reprogrammed, and of course they need signage, sign riders, signposts, and other supplies. So we had to find ways to accommodate those needs but still keep everyone safe.

One thing that our members may not understand is that our office is considered a nonessential business office. REALTORS® are deemed essential, but we're not. In staff's case, if we can efficiently work from home, we must do that. I'm on a call every Monday with C.A.R. leadership and association CEOs from across the state and we constantly get updates from C.A.R. – simply stated, we are not allowed to open, and can service members by appointment only. But we have figured out ways to make things work.

Even though the office is closed, members can make an appointment and we'll figure out how to make it happen. For example, they can order and pay online, and when they pull up to the door, we'll put the purchase in a drop area and the member can pick it up with no physical contact. We can also ship to the members or drop items off at their doorstep.

We are also striving to keep people safe when members come in to get keys reprogrammed. For anyone who comes in, their temperature must be taken and they have to fill out and sign a form certifying they aren't ill and haven't been in contact with anyone who is. If there's anyone with them, we ask them to wait outside so there's no more than one person in the office with our staff.

There are a few members who are frustrated by the fact we aren't open for business as usual and we understand, but we are grateful that we have the flexibility to still help our members. I'm grateful to our staff for being able to do that. Angel Rodarte, our membership manager, and Rosa Salazar, our office manager, go into the office most often. Angel handles any membership issues while Rosa takes care of key support and the REALTOR® Store.

Meeting in the Zoom world

We also were quick to transition to holding meetings and events virtually in the Zoom world. We held our first webinar, a class on rent control and tenant protection, the Tuesday after the office closed. By early April, the pre-tours were converted to virtual meetings, and we held our first new member orientation online at the end of April.

Since then, we've even been able to hold some reimagined fun events on Zoom, including the talent show and the Month of Giving raffle and virtual happy hour in September. We'll be holding our annual membership meeting online this month. In fact, we've held some virtual webinar or event just about every week since early April.

I can say that just about all our Zoom meetings have been very efficient, and with board and committees, 99% of time we've had 100% participation. Zoom has proven to be very efficient. Pre-tour meetings went to Zoom and attendance more than doubled on all of them, and they haven't dropped too much.

There have been a few other positives from all of this. To begin with, we've saved tremendously on our budget. Like REALTORS® earn their designations, we allocate funds for staff professional development and training because I'm a huge proponent of keeping our staff well-trained. And the fact everything is now virtual with no travel involved, it's allowed staff to attend C.A.R. and NAR conferences. NAR is unveiling new system called Members First and our accountant, Robin Morris, and Angel were able to participate in sessions about it. They wouldn't have had an opportunity to do so in a normal environment. Staff has loved these opportunities

And keeping staff morale high was a top priority for me. I knew everyone would run the gamut, from excitement about doing something new to possible depression that it was dragging on and on. We check in twice a day, first thing in the morning and at close of business, through Microsoft Teams. We also have weekly talk meetings where we talk about work and we also talk about what we did over the weekend and what we might have on the horizon, either professionally or personally. It helps us stay in communication with one another and gives us a heads-up if someone needs help.

I've also tried to do some fun things. I've sent staff and members a variety of gift cards with notes. We also held a group staff lunch where I had Grubhub deliver everyone's food and then had a Zoom lunch together and talked about both work and non-work-related things for 40 minutes.

It's hard to believe it's already November – how did we get here? Time has gone by at lighting speed but we just take it day by day. It's daunting to have to keep living like this, but we're all keeping a positive outlook. There's no point in complaining about it so we're just trying to remain positive, and mini-meltdowns are OK because we're all human.

I do hope we can open sometime in the first quarter of 2021 though. Some sort of stairstep opening would be fine, and we'll follow what the rules are, but we are all certainly anxious to open up again and see everybody. 🌱

“It's daunting to have to keep living like this, but we're all keeping a positive outlook.”

By **Marta Golding Brown**
VCCAR Government Affairs Director



Marta Golding Brown

Five Candidates Supported by VCCAR Elected in 2020

Three candidates supported by VCCAR were elected by voters in balloting earlier this month. The winners are:

- Tony Trembly, re-elected to the District 4 seat on the Camarillo City Council
- Bryan MacDonald, re-elected to the District 4 seat on the Oxnard City Council
- and Doug Halter, elected to the District 2 seat on the Ventura City Council

These three were in addition to two VCCAR-supported candidates who were elected in the March primary. Because they received outright majorities then, Matt LaVere of Ventura was elected to the District 1 seat on the Board of Supervisors, while incumbent Supervisor Kelly Long of Camarillo was re-elected to represent District 3.

Members of VCCAR's Local Candidate Recommendation Committee of CREPAC – The California Real Estate Political Action Committee – conducted interviews and voted to support the business and real estate-friendly candidates.

Flood safety information distributed

VCCAR recently partnered with the Ventura County Public Works Agency to send information to members about flood safety and flood insurance. The county can provide information about insurance rating requirements, geological and other natural hazards such as seismic and tsunami inundation zones, as well as contacts with FEMA. If you did not receive your email, please let us know.

VCCAR represented on NAR's GAD Advisory Committee

On a personal note, I'm pleased to announce that I have been appointed to NAR's Government Affairs Director Advisory Committee. A total of 20 GADs from AORs across the country are appointed to the committee to provide information and input to NAR committees, task forces, and staff and to serve as an avenue of communication between and among GADs and NAR. I will be one of eight members representing AORs and the only GAD representing medium-sized associations.

One of the things I'm hoping to do is further awareness of the important issue of how to best respond to sea level rise among other GADs in coastal areas of the U.S. VCCAR was instrumental in the formation of Smart Coast California, a nonprofit empowered to educate local AORs, local elected officials, and the state Coastal Commission about the importance of private property rights and the need to find ways to protect important coastal development. (See the nearby article for more information about SCCa.)



Consultant, Geologist Provide Insights C.A.R. Issues Group Smart Coast California expands efforts to deal with sea level rise

About 80 REALTORS® and AOR staff were briefed on the science of sea level rise by a leading expert in the field as well as a report on the progress that the [Smart Coast California program](#) has been making during C.A.R.'s Coastal Issues Group Zoom meeting on October 5.

VCCAR and the Santa Barbara AORs led the effort to form Smart Coast California (SCCa) to work with AORs along the coast, local officials, property owners, and the Coastal Commission to develop appropriate responses to how to respond to sea level rise. You can read more about those efforts and SCCa in the [September-October 2019 issue of Ventura County Coastal](#).

Dr. Gary Griggs, distinguished professor of earth sciences at UC Santa Cruz, told the group that there's no doubt that temperatures have been steadily increasing since the 1940s and that sea levels have been rising along with them.

"The shoreline is one of the most important lines on the planet," Griggs said. "It's where most of the world's people live and where some of the most desirable property is. But after 8,000 years of relative stability, it's now moving toward us because of sea level rise."

That 8,000 years of stability has been an anomaly in geological history. As the planet warmed and cooled over the millennia, sea levels have at times been 400 feet lower than they are today, meaning the California shoreline was as much as 10 miles further out to sea than it is today during the depths of past ice ages as up to 10 million cubic miles of water was locked up on land as ice.

But during the warmest periods in the glacial cycles, sea levels were some 20 feet higher than they are today. At this point, precise satellite measurements possible since 1993 show that sea levels are rising by about 4.5 mm per year, or 18 inches in 100 years – but there are indications that the rate is increasing. By 2100, scientists project that sea levels will range from 1.6 feet higher than today at the extreme low end to as much as 10.2 feet higher in an extreme case, with the likely range between 1.6 and 3.4 feet.

The presentations and PowerPoint slides from Dr. Griggs and Don Schmitz are available [on the SCCa website](#).

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AVP / Mortgage Loan Originator
NMLS # 996017

(805) 979-4478
cgonzales@montecito.bank



montecito.bank/mortgage • homeloans@montecito.bank

NMLS ID#: 472185





Areas at risk

Griggs said there are two kinds of areas particularly at risk – low-lying coastal plains that can easily flood in the right circumstances and sandy cliffs, bluffs, and dunes that can erode more quickly with higher sea levels. Both happen periodically today.

“The point to keep in mind is this is not going to occur tomorrow. But there will come a point with further sea level rise that will affect each area, and we need to start thinking about what will happen 30 or 40 years in the future,” he said.

There are four basic options:

- Wait and see what happens
- Beach nourishment
- Increased armoring of the shoreline with seawalls and revetments
- And relocation – planned or unplanned retreat.

He said simply adding tons of sand to existing beaches usually only works for a couple of years before its washed away. And while groins and artificial reefs can be effective, he said the era of hardening the shoreline is essentially over because the Coastal Commission’s position is that anything built after 1977 can’t be protected. That’s despite the fact that 14% of the coast – and 38% of the Southern California coast – is hardened in one form or another.

As for communities that choose not to respond, he warned insurance companies may have the last word. Particularly on the low-lying East Coast, they are beginning to deny coverage for high-risk coastal homes and without insurance, banks won’t make loans.

Effective alternatives

But while Griggs supported forms of managed retreat, dismissing the value of replenishment and said artificial reefs are expensive, Smart Coast California consultant Don Schmitz said alternatives to managed retreat can be effective.

“It’s not all or nothing – deniers or managed retreat,” Schmitz said. “We believe artificial reefs are an important part of the toolbox and that you can do beach nourishment and protect private property.

“There’s middle ground here and science to determine how fast this will happen if it will happen at all. The vast majority of the state’s coastline is undeveloped, places like Big Sur and much of Northern California. We’re talking about communities that are established – places like San Diego, Laguna Beach, and Santa Barbara that are hugely important from an economic and cultural standpoint. What are we going to do about those communities that are already there?”

Since coming on board in February Schmitz said he had been meeting with public officials, making presentations to city councils, boards of supervisors, and business groups, and working on building coalitions with coastal property organizations.

“The Coastal Commission wants to only consider businesses and residences there before 1977 as worthy of protection. But the Coastal Act doesn’t say that – it says existing development.”
– Don Schmitz

As a result, he said, “we’re starting to get a name as a resource for cities and counties to reach out to. That’s a really important aspect because we want to have a seat at the table.”

Assistance available

Another SCCa priority has been providing assistance to AORs and their GADs. Among the AORs helped have been San Mateo, Santa Cruz, Ventura, San Clemente, Half Moon Bay, and Santa Barbara.

“Local AORs and GADs carry the water. We’re available to back you up. We can do analysis on policies and recommendations and feed them to you. At the end of the day, what’s most important is for individual REALTORS® and organizations to weigh in. No one knows a community better than the REALTORS® who have been working there for years,” he said.

In addition, the smartcoastca.org website is now up and running and AORs are encouraged to send articles about sea level rise issues that can be posted there by emailing them to info@smartcoastca.org.

While the Coastal Commission’s view is that the Coastal Act prohibits action to protect structures and areas developed after the act went into effect in 1977, Schmitz disagrees.

“The Coastal Commission wants to only consider businesses and residences there before 1977 as worthy of protection. But the Coastal Act doesn’t say that – it says existing development,” he said. There has been litigation over that arbitrary cut off, but it’s not resolved yet, with Schmitz saying eventually there will be published case law that will be very important.

In the meantime, he said it’s a huge point of contention. Last month, the commission’s staff wanted to take the definition back to 1977 when considering San Clemente’s LCP, but the city disagreed. Staff compromised a little, but the issue was such a poison pill that the city council pulled the plan back from further consideration.

In the end, the fact SCCa is up and running is hugely important, noted President Matt Capritto, who quoted the old Sacramento adage that if you’re not at the table, you’re probably on the menu.

“This gives us a seat at the table,” he said. 🌊

NAR Extends Code of Ethics Application

On November 13, NAR's Board of Directors strengthened REALTORS®' commitment to upholding fair housing ideals, approving a series of recommendations from NAR's Professional Standards Committee that extend the application of Article 10 of the Code of Ethics to discriminatory speech and conduct outside of members' real estate practices.

Article 10 prohibits REALTORS® from discriminating on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status, national origin, sexual orientation, or gender identity in the provision of professional services and in employment practices. The Board approved a new Standard of Practice under the Article, 10-5, that states, "REALTORS® must not use harassing speech, hate speech, epithets, or slurs" against members of those protected classes.

The Board also approved a change to professional standards policy, expanding the Code of Ethics' applicability to all of a REALTOR®'s activities, and added guidance to the Code of Ethics and Arbitration Manual to help professional standards hearing panels apply the new standard.

Finally, Directors approved a revision to the NAR Bylaws, expanding the definition of "public trust" to include all discrimination against the protected classes under Article 10 along with all fraud. Associations are required to share with the state real estate licensing authority final ethics decisions holding REALTORS® in violation of the Code of Ethics in instances involving real estate-related activities and transactions where there is reason to believe the public trust may have been violated.

The Board made these changes effective immediately, though the changes cannot be applied to speech or conduct that occurred before the effective date. NAR has produced training and resource materials to assist leaders with understanding and implementing the changes and will be rolling those out in the coming weeks.

You can [learn more about the new standards here](#).

Preventing cybercrime during COVID-19

Editor's note: This is an excerpt from an NAR Window to the Law video. You can [watch the entire video or read the transcript here](#).


It's important that brokers and agents are constantly on guard and monitoring business e-mail communications. In 2018, a broker in a Kansas federal case called *Bain v. Platinum Realty* claimed that a criminal had infiltrated e-mail exchanges between parties and sent fake wire instructions from her e-mail account which were used to defraud a buyer. The broker couldn't prove that she had not sent the false instructions and she was held liable. This is a cautionary tale of where better e-mail monitoring could have prevented the cyberscam and saved the broker from liability.

Be vigilant about cybersecurity, and consider these five tips to guard yourself and your clients against cybercriminals:

1. First, from the outset and throughout the relationship, constantly advise and remind your clients on how you will communicate with them, and to verify any and all information sent to them, especially as payments come due and as the closing date draws near.
2. Next, familiarize yourself and educate your clients about the various pandemic related schemes criminals are using. Check out the FTC website which provides videos and robocall audio recordings about COVID-19 related scams

that can be reviewed and shared so that you and your client can better know when being targeted.

3. Third, know where to go for trustworthy information about the pandemic, and educate your clients not to rely on third-party e-mails or websites, and instead, visit authoritative websites, such as the CDC, SBA, or other governmental agencies directly.
4. Fourth, diligently check your e-mail account for any suspicious activity. Make it a habit of checking your deleted e-mail folder and your mailbox settings. If you see any suspicious activity, such as automatic forwarding to an outside e-mail account, change your password immediately and contact your e-mail provider.
5. Lastly, check out NAR's resources on [NAR's Data Privacy & Security webpage](#). You will find resources like the [NAR Cybersecurity Checklist: Best Practices for Real Estate Professionals](#), which provides best practices to curb the risk of cybercrime.

Remember. You can never be too careful when conducting business digitally. By being informed and cautious, you and your client can protect against becoming another victim of cybercrime. 

C.A.R. Declares Victory in Prop. 19 Campaign

Last week, C.A.R. was finally able to declare victory in the campaign to pass Proposition 19, the measure that will allow homeowners to sell their homes and take their property tax base with them when purchasing a new home in California. Here are excerpts from C.A.R. President Jeanne Radsick's announcement:

With more than 15 million votes counted, we are proud to announce the passage of Proposition 19, which received 51.1 percent of the more than 15.3 million votes cast. Proposition 19 is a win-win for California voters providing needed housing and tax relief for seniors and wildfire victims, and generating much needed revenue for schools, fire districts, cities, and counties as they face budget shortfalls due to the harmful economic impact of COVID-19.

The passage of Proposition 19 would not be possible without the tremendous support of our members. Thousands of our members educated clients and colleagues, shared Prop. 19 information on social media, wrote letters, advocated for endorsements and supported the Association every step of the way.

We are also thankful for the support of our co-sponsor, the California Professional Firefighters, as well as key endorsements from Gov. Gavin Newsom, Secretary of State Alex Padilla, State Controller Fiona Ma, the California Democratic Party, Republican legislators, labor unions, chambers of commerce, seniors, wildfire survivors and many more.

This has been a historic election with a record-breaking voter turnout, and we are grateful to all of you for your hard work and continued efforts to bring success to Proposition 19. From collecting nearly 1.5 million signatures from California voters, to putting the original measure on the ballot two years ago, to working closely with legislators to create an even stronger bipartisan measure to place on this year's ballot, to strongly supporting Prop. 19 at every opportunity — each of you made a difference.

Housing Market Forecast projects solid year for real estate

Editor's note: This is an excerpt from the full Housing Market Forecast presented by Leslie Appleton-Young and Jordan Levine. You can [view the video and download the slides here](#).

Assuming that a vaccine or a cure for COVID-19 will not be available for mass distribution until early 2021, the economy will continue to be in recovery mode and interest rates will remain near historical low levels for most of next year. A favorable lending environment will continue to benefit the housing market and fuel housing demand further as economic conditions improve. Tight supply will put a cap on sales growth, however, as homes sold in California are expected to rise modestly by 3.3% 2021.

Home prices have been experiencing robust gains so far in the second half of 2020 and will continue to have a solid growth for the rest of the year. With housing supply being tighter in more affordable markets and the economic downturn having a bigger adverse impact on lower-priced segments, the mix of sales will continue to skew towards higher-priced properties and push median prices upward in

the last quarter of 2020. While the imbalance between supply and demand will be less intense as the market transitions into the off-season, the statewide median price will continue to rise on a year-over-year basis in the fourth quarter and will reach a new annual median high in 2020.

The normalization of the mix of sales as the economy recovers, an increase in foreclosed properties as mortgage forbearance is lifted, a shift in housing demand to more affordable suburban areas as remote working policies are more widely adopted, and an increase in sales of rental properties due to heightened concerns in recent eviction policies, are all reasons that will keep prices in check and prevent the statewide median price from rising too fast next year. While supply constraint and low rates will continue to provide support to home prices, the statewide median price is projected to increase only slightly in 2021. 📈

California Housing Market Forecast (baseline)

	2017	2018	2019	2020p	2021f
SFH Resales (000s)	424.9	402.6	398.0	380.1	392.5
% Change	1.7%	-5.2%	-1.2%	-4.5%	3.3%
Median Price (\$000s)	\$537.9	\$569.5	\$592.4	\$640.3	\$648.8
% Change	7.1%	5.9%	4.0%	8.1%	1.3%
Housing Affordability Index	29%	28%	31%	32%	31%

NEW MEMBERS

25 New REALTORS® Join VCCAR in October

A larger-than-normal group of 23 new REALTORS® completed their virtual new member orientation in late October and were presented their pins. The new members are:

Ignacio Anzaldo, LIV Sotheby's International, Ventura; Katie Badilla, Keller Williams West Ventura County, Oxnard; Christa Berban, RE/MAX Gold Coast, Ventura; Kelly Bershinsky, Century 21 Everest, Simi Valley; Brilynn Enomoto, Century 21 Everest, Port Hueneme; Daniel Freeman, Everhome Realty, Westlake Village; Candace Gordon, Jacobson Realty, Camarillo; Iris Gutierrez, Century 21 Everest, Oxnard; Olie Hamm, The Hamm Team, Moorpark; Ruby Hernandez, Global 365 Real Estate, Oxnard; Michael Hester, Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices California Realty, Camarillo; Sasha Kurkcuoglu, Real Estate eBroker, Carlsbad; Matthew Larsen, Pinnacle Estate Properties, Westlake Village.

Emma Murphy, Coldwell Banker Realty, Oxnard; Phillip Nemy, The Omni Group, Santa Ana; Gabriel Olguin, Experts of Real Estate, Fillmore; Juan Paniagua, Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices California Realty, Thousand Oaks; Cecilia Perez Fernandez, Dilbeck Estates, Pasadena; Pamela Portenstein, Keller Williams West Ventura County, Ventura; Diane Quinn, Ventura Real Estate Co., Ventura; Mark Ramey, Veteran Home Services, Camarillo; Mayra Rubio Cuevas, Keller Williams West Ventura County, Oxnard; Khasan Simmons, Coldwell Banker Realty, Oxnard; Emily Storz, Keller Williams West Ventura County, Oxnard; Mantrel Taylor, Realty Executives Legacy, Ventura; and Elizabeth Velasco, Realty ONE Group Summit, Ventura. 🏡



Roy Torrence
Branch Manager
NMLS# 44871
805.890.0792



Claudia Paramo
Loan Officer
NMLS# 304920
805.637.5830



Ken Rust
Loan Officer
NMLS# 1434508
805.791.6470



Michael Araiza Jr.
Loan Officer
NMLS# 990662
805.844.0270



Kim Lovetro
Loan Officer
NMLS# 692560
818.266.7783



Marianna L'Engle
Loan Officer
NMLS# 1426049
805.418.0071

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Sales, listings, and prices eased slightly in October from prior month's totals

New listings, sales, and prices all eased back in October compared to the prior month, but all three categories were higher than they were in October 2019, according to statistics compiled by the Ventura County MLS and RPR.

There were 274 closed sales reported during October, down 9.3% from the 302 reported in September and even with sales reported a year ago. October marked the second straight monthly decline in sales since they peaked at 317 in August. Closed sales for the year total 2,372, down 6.8% from 2019.

New pending sales, however, rose month over month and year over year to 304. That's 8.2% higher than the 281 pending sales in September and up 13.9% from 267 a year ago. October's total was the fourth straight month with higher year-over-year pending sales than 2019.

The median sales price also dropped to \$725,000 from \$777,000 the month before, a 6.7% decline. That was the lowest median price since May, when it was \$657,000. The median sales price was 5.5% higher than last October's \$687,000. The median price per square foot rose month over month and year over year to \$395, the highest it's been in the past 12 months. That is a 3.1% increase from September and is 10.3% higher than October 2019.

Inventory also declined from September's level. There were 321 new listings in October, down 8.3% from September but 19.3% higher than the 269 reported a year ago. New listings have now been higher than last year's levels for three straight months but are still 9.3% lower year to date. Active listings at the end of the month totaled 498, down 10% from 553 in September and down 25.7% from 670 a year ago. For each of the past 12 months, active listings have been between 20- and 30% lower than the same month the prior year.

Median listing prices have gradually fallen the past two months to \$827,000, down 3.7% from \$859,000 in September and down 4.8% from its peak in August. October's figure was still 3.4% higher than October 2019, and for the year the median listing price has averaged \$847,000, up 11.6% from 2019.

On a per-square-foot basis, however, asking prices rose to \$409 in October to its highest level in the past 12 months. It was up 3.1% from September and 10.3% higher than a year ago. For the year, the per-square-foot price has averaged \$376, which is 5.2% above 2019's average.

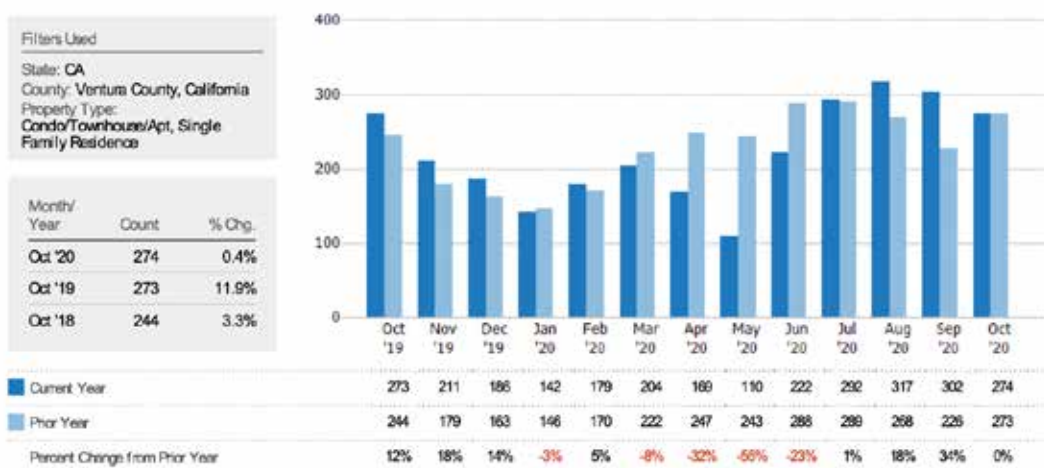


Market Data Report

VCCAR Report

Closed Sales

The total number of residential properties sold each month.



Roy Sherman, CFA
Sherman Asset Management



Roy Sherman, CFA

The Hidden Tax Benefits of the Self-Employed Retirement Plan

Do you know the hidden tax benefits that come with a self-employed retirement plan? You may already know that the self-employed have many more tools in their arsenal for tax planning and retirement planning than traditional employees. The most popular tools are the generous SEP-IRA and the Solo 401(k) retirement plans. The Solo 401(k) also offers tax savings at a higher ratio than the SEP IRA, account access through loans, and a tax-free component, if desired. What is often overlooked, however, is how these retirement plans create access to extra tax savings for which you may otherwise be ineligible.

Your retirement plan contributions create this cascading effect in which you open yourself up to additional tax credits and deductions. This happens because retirement plan contributions are figured prior to your calculation of adjusted gross income (AGI). AGI is often used to determine eligibility for tax credits and deductions. If your AGI is too high you become ineligible, but if you are able to lower AGI then you gain access to those benefits. Let's examine some characteristics you may possess in order to access these hidden benefits.

You have children (particularly children in college)

If you have an eligible dependent under age 17 you are eligible for a credit of up to \$2,000 per dependent, and a smaller credit if your dependent is 17 or older. For children enrolled in college, the American Opportunity Tax Credit offers a credit up to \$2,500 per child and the Lifetime Learning Credit offers a credit up to \$2,000 per tax return. All of these credits are subject to reduction if your AGI is too high.

You want a tax-free account

A Roth IRA contribution can be made if your AGI is low enough. This allows you to grow your account without having to pay taxes on the earnings for the rest of your life. Lowering your AGI can make you eligible to make a contribution.

You have business income

If you have business income you may be eligible for the Qualified Business Income (QBI) deduction. QBI can be phased out in certain circumstances at high levels of income, but eligibility can be retained if AGI can be reported at a lower amount.

You haven't received your coronavirus stimulus payment

If you haven't received your coronavirus stimulus payment because you earned too much in 2019, you can still be eligible in 2020 as long as you are under the AGI threshold. This can be as much as \$1,200 each for you and your spouse, and \$500 for any qualifying children you have.

You have large medical bills and pay your own health insurance premiums

If you have large medical bills you may be eligible to deduct a portion of them. Deductibility is determined based upon amounts exceeding 7.5% of your AGI. The lower the AGI the easier it is to qualify. You can also receive a credit for amounts paid for health insurance premiums based upon AGI and family size.

As the end of the year approaches, you should carefully take a look at these scenarios with your tax advisor. Your retirement plan contribution may do more than meets the eye, if you plan accordingly.

Disclaimer: This material has been prepared for informational purposes only, and is not intended to provide, and should not be relied on for, tax, legal or accounting advice. You should consult your own tax, legal, and accounting advisors before engaging in any transaction.

Sherman founded Sherman Asset Management in 2014. He uses his background in psychology, business, and financial planning to help clients achieve investment goals. For more information, visit www.shermanassetmgmt.com.

“You should carefully take a look at these scenarios with your tax advisor.”

UPCOMING Meetings/Events

NOVEMBER 16

Realist Tax

Virtual Training
9:00 - 10:00 am

NOVEMBER 17

Legal Update & Annual Membership meeting

ZOOM Meeting
2:00 - 3:00 pm

NOVEMBER 18

Oxnard Pre-Tour

ZOOM Meeting
10:00 - 11:00 am

CRMLS Committee Finance Committee

ZOOM Meeting
10:00 am - 12:00 pm

Triennial Code of Ethics

Virtual Training
1:00 - 4:00 pm

REFAT Annual Fraud Awareness Forum

Virtual Training
2:00 - 3:00 pm

NOVEMBER 19

New Member Orientation

ZOOM Training
9:00 am - 12:00 pm

Camarillo Pre-Tour

ZOOM Meeting
9:00 - 10:00 am

Ventura Pre-Tour

ZOOM Meeting
10:00 - 11:00 am
FREE Shredding Event
VCCAR Office
12:00 - 4:00 pm

NOVEMBER 20

Finance Committee

Zoom Meeting
12:30 - 2:00 pm

NOVEMBER 23-27

VCCAR Virtually Dark

NOVEMBER 24

Officers Meeting

ZOOM Meeting
9:00 - 10:00 am

NOVEMBER 26-27

VCCAR Office Closed for Thanksgiving

DECEMBER 1

Board of Directors Meeting

ZOOM Meeting
9:00 - 11:00 am

Grievance Committee

ZOOM Meeting
9:00 - 10:00 am

DECEMBER 2

Oxnard Pre-Tour

ZOOM Meeting
10:00 - 11:00 am

DECEMBER 3

Camarillo Pre-Tour

ZOOM Meeting
9:00 - 10:00 am

Ventura Pre-Tour

ZOOM Meeting
10:00 - 11:00 am

DECEMBER 9

Oxnard Pre-Tour

ZOOM Meeting
10:00 - 11:00 am

DECEMBER 10

Camarillo Pre-Tour

ZOOM Meeting
9:00 - 10:00 am

Ventura Pre-Tour

ZOOM Meeting
10:00 - 11:00 am

DECEMBER 11

Annual Installation & Awards Breakfast

Ventura Co. Fairgrounds
9:00 am - 12:00 pm

DECEMBER 15

Officers Meeting

ZOOM Meeting
9:00 - 10:00 am

DECEMBER 16

Oxnard Pre-Tour

ZOOM Meeting
10:00 - 11:00 am

Triennial Code of Ethics

Virtual Training
1:00 - 4:00 pm

DECEMBER 17

New Member Orientation

ZOOM Training
9:00 am - 12:00 pm

Camarillo Pre-Tour

ZOOM Meeting
9:00 - 10:00 am

Ventura Pre-Tour

ZOOM Meeting
10:00 - 11:00 am

DECEMBER 18

Finance Committee

Zoom Meeting
12:30 - 2:00 pm

DECEMBER 21-25

VCCAR Virtually Dark

DECEMBER 24-25

VCCAR Office Closed for Christmas

DEC. 31-JAN. 1

VCCAR Office Closed for New Years