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October 2020 | San Antonio's Homebuilding Industry Publication

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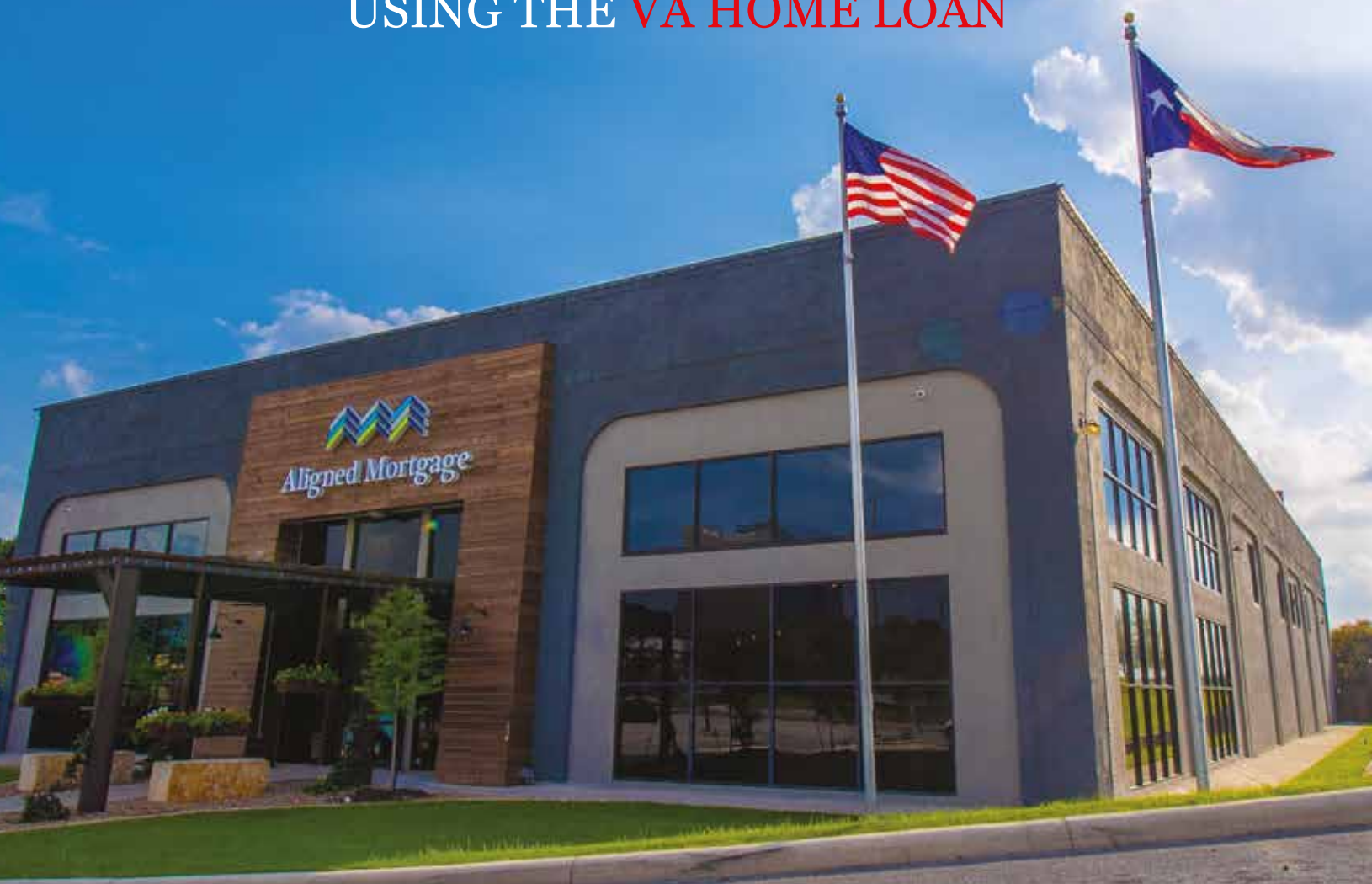
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[from the publisher]

We're Making **Lemonade out of Lemons**



The public speaker and self-development author Brian Tracy said, "Success is not a miracle. Nor is it a matter of luck. Everything happens for a reason, good or bad, positive or negative."

This industry is one that proves its resilience over and over again. As coronavirus threatened to turn our 2020 sales projections upside down last spring, for some, it has actually had the reverse effect as the value of "home," and everything that the term represents has increased in value in the minds of many people. Where they were quarantined led many to a decision to move up, move elsewhere, or get out of a rental and finally pull the trigger on a purchasing decision. Others developed a list of improvements or expansions needed due to their increased time at home. Our annual Outdoor Living section is timely, as the value of private outdoor space rises to the top of the list for many.

While we pray that the pandemic has an end soon, some things will remain different or forever changed after that day. And it's not all bad. Here's a couple of hints about our Savvy Special Report inside: location, location, the location may have less of an impact now on the appeal of a particular neighborhood; and forget downsizing—prior to the pandemic, "making do with less space" was said to be the wave of the future; that's one of many trends now being challenged.

Be prepared and adaptive to change and your bottom line should look just fine when 2020 is said and done!

Terry Kemmy
Publisher
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[association news]



The Greater San Antonio Builders Association is a not-for-profit trade association established to represent builders, developers, remodelers, and affiliated industry members in cooperation to benefit and promote homeownership.

GSABA members include but are not limited to: homebuilders, developers, remodelers, architects, suppliers, general contractors, mortgage lenders, interior designers, title companies, banks, service providers, tile, and masonry, and many more trade contractors and home-building categories.

There are several ways and opportunities to get involved with the association.

One of the most important committees GSABA has is the **Government Affairs Committee**, which works in conjunction with the association staff to address issues that impact the home-building industry at the city, county, state, and federal levels. One of the primary goals is to protect the industry from onerous regulations that could raise the cost of housing in the Greater San Antonio area.

*To learn more about the benefits of membership, or if you need help getting started, contact GSABA Membership Director **Feliz Morin** at (210) 696-3800.*



Who the buyers are, where they are buying homes, and what they're looking to find in their homes and are the real changes resulting from the fall-out of COVID-19 that will likely stand long after the day we're all hoping for—when all this is a thing of the past.

New Buyers Challenge Yesterday's Norms

The pandemic has been the tipping point prompting some first-time buyers to make their move in purchasing new homes. Who wants to be stuck in an apartment a second time if there's a relapse? Practicing social distancing every time you step out of your door is annoying and inconvenient. Robb Report reports that one-third of those who have purchased homes or plan to soon are aged 18 to 34. Homes.com attributes it to recently introduced 0 percent interest rates

on federal student loan payments and the closure of schools and offices resulting in savings on recreation, childcare, commuting expenses, and the like.

Location, Location, location, has been the selling point for decades—nearby retail and grocery stores, the school district, and proximity to highways and work centers are highlighted on every suburban developer's sales literature. But could proximity to stores

and malls no longer be a real estate priority in a society that has become accustomed to shopping online for groceries and everything else they need or desire? As homeschooling and working from home become mainstream choices, could a particular neighborhood's desirability have less to do with how easy it is to commute to and from and how the school district is rated?



Industry observers say that fresh air, backyards, home offices, a homeschooling area, space for pets, and home gyms are indeed top priorities for home buyers. Compass Real Estate reports that searches on its website for houses with pools are up threefold. Location choices have to do

with proximity to beaches, lakes, parks, and bike paths as Americans rediscover that health and happiness are important priorities. Yet there is no reason that they can't have all that and still maintain their job title or hiring desirability.

Upgrades being made by those who choose to stay put in their current home indicate many of the same priorities. Remodelers are reporting they are even busier than prior to COVID-19 with decks, patios, porches, and kitchen and bathroom jobs being the top priorities for upgrades by existing homeowners.

Gone is the desire to make do with less space! How might you feel if you had spent the pandemic in a tiny home? With so many families spending more time in their homes, there's never been more need for personal space. Some are even saying that the appeal of open floorplan is trending down in favor of more private spaces for school, work, hobbies, and entertainment. Home offices for adults and students need to offer privacy, good lighting, and be pre-wired for telecommuting. And with more meals being cooked at home, kitchens are a high priority, but some buyers are even re-thinking if an open kitchen means too much noise and mess!

Let's hope that soon, we, rather than governing bodies, are the ones making the choices about our lives, our priorities, and our health. But as an industry, it would be less than savvy not to be prepared to accommodate lasting changes with our geographic strategy and product design, as well as our marketing strategy and sales approach.

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A Home's Outdoor Space Determines Its Entertainment Potential and Value

By Beverly Smirnis

With the coronavirus quarantining people to their homes and dampening travel plans, the value of private outdoor living options has never been more significant as people yearn for spaces that improve wellness, reduce stress, and boost mood. Opportunities for relaxation, gardening, walking, enjoying nature, and gathering with family and friends are high on the priority lists of both new and existing home buyers.

Whether you're designing a rooftop terrace, balcony, courtyard, or spacious backyard area, carefully blending indoor and outdoor living space is the goal. Building products specifically made to stand up to the outdoor elements while matching the looks and quality of your indoor décor are plentiful.



Literally extend living space to the outside with retractable wall systems. Use motorized retractable screens to keep insects, rain, and wind out, and more easily keep temperatures consistent.

Add Fire and Water.

Fireplaces and firepits become the central gathering spot in your outdoor spaces. The visual drama of a water feature can also be a focal point while adding soothing sound. And nothing is more dramatic than water and fire combined. Practically anything is possible; the choice will depend on where these important elements are being placed and the aesthetics and proportion you're after..

Explore a higher-quality deck, fence, and stair railing products.

For decks, quality should start with the foundation. Fortress Building Products solves the challenge of "wavy" deck boards, callbacks, and maintenance with Evolution steel deck framing. It looks and installs like wood and can be finished with any type or brand of decking, including composite, PVC, aluminum, tile, wood, and tropical hardwoods. Deck boards stay flat with greater spans between the support thanks to the added strength of steel and the framing system comes with a 25-year limited manufacturer warranty.

You'll find a wide choice of decking materials made to look just like your interior hardwoods or tile. The latest in composite or PVC decking products can mimic the look of natural

hardwoods with non-repeating grain patterns while surpassing wood with UV-, slip- and splinter-resistance. Quality manmade boards are usually lighter and easier to handle, yet stronger, straighter, and more rigid (meaning no bounce or sagging between joists). Some are specifically designed to improve ventilation or heat dissipation.

As far as railings for decks, patios, or fencing around pools are concerned, wire and glass are popular options for an unobstructed view. Check out AGS Stainless Cascadia, a stainless steel bar rail system that installs with minimal field modification, designed to give builders a stainless railing product at a price closer to that of an aluminum railing system.

Build an Outdoor Kitchen that'll leave them talking.

Manufacturers of outdoor kitchen equipment are gearing up for a huge uptick in demand for everything from grills, pizza ovens, and smokers to refrigerators, dishwashers, beverage centers and more. Kitchen islands outfitted with sinks and providing plenty of prep space are as prized outside as they are inside. How about building in Fotile's 3-in-1 In-Sink Dishwasher combining sink, dishwasher, and washing station for produce or seafood, or PITT Cooking burners, now offered for the outdoor kitchen!

Add the finishing touches.

Paving and landscaping are essential to completing the desired atmosphere as is sound and light. Nowadays, the ability to automatically program scenes or change them from your phone is an expectation. Pools, putting greens made from synthetic turf and outdoor TV viewing areas extend outdoor entertainment value. Products are continually introduced to make it easier and more affordable to add just about anything you want to your outdoor living room. For example, Cabinet Tro-nix has a new Outdoor Pop-Up TV Lift Cabinet that houses flat-screen TVs of 49, 55, and 65 inches.



Aquaview glass pool fencing and railing systems allow for unobstructed views of your entire outdoor living space.



MoistureShield's Elevate capped composite decking features the Solid Core Difference™, a proprietary manufacturing process offering protection against moisture absorption, warping, rotting, and damage from insects.



Now available for outdoor kitchens, too, PITT is an innovative cooking concept where burners are directly integrated into your countertop with all the technical parts hidden below.

The bottom line:

Particularly in climates like we enjoy in Texas, where we are fortunate to enjoy outdoor spaces for all but a few weeks of the year, investing in your outdoor spaces is a wise choice that can have a significant payback. On the flip side, not presenting the outdoors as an oasis waiting to be enjoyed by the next owner may hurt you on the sale. Truly, an inspiring view that entices home occupants to the outside, and delivering beyond their expectations once they venture out, will turn lookers into buyers and ultimately increase the quality of life and home value.



Beverly Smirnis is the co-founder of Building Savvy magazine and publishes its flagship Dallas/Fort Worth edition. She and her business partner and husband, Steve Smirnis, have served as judges for the International Builders' Show Best of IBS Awards and judged numerous homes for builders association parade events across the country.

[trevor's take]

Three Things Your Buyers Hate



By Trevor Whitney

Want to finish the year with strong sales? Avoid doing these. In the world of home buying, there are a ton of options. Whether your potential buyers are a young couple who is just getting started, or retirees looking to spend more time on the golf green, a sale begins and ends with a solid relationship and transparency. If you build homes, you already know that today's buyers are more demanding than ever. They want all the amenities, the finish options, the great schools- all

at a great price. It can be tough to check all the boxes.

As the internet connects more homebuyers and people get educated on all the marketing gimmicks, you have to think outside the box if you want to stick out from the hordes of other builders. And no, this does not mean you need to buy an inflatable gorilla to park on top of your model home. Here are three things to consider when charting a course for your business in the upcoming years.

Preferred Lenders

One of the more common business to business relationships to emerge in the past decade has been the use of in-house or preferred lenders. It makes sense for both sides- the lender gets a steady stream of business and the builder knows what to expect when it comes time to close. But preferred lenders often leave a buyer with a bad taste in their mouth. Everyone knows that when you're playing with house money, the house always wins.

Consider opening up your new home sales associates to smaller local lenders or specialty lenders for programs such as FHA or VA loans. No one mortgage company really excels at all products. Also, buyers can apply for a mortgage from their smartphone these days, and they are not afraid to shop around. If you push a specific lender too hard, they will sniff out the profit motive and feel like they are getting worked. For the small margin you might make, you could push away potential buyers by being too rigid in this area.

Bare Bones Garages

This tip goes out to the production builders especially. Yes, you are on tight timelines and tighter budgets. Your churn is crazy high these days and anywhere you can save a buck, you want to. But long-term, that attitude has given Texas builders a reputation of building a product that is not built to last. In the era of Chip and Joana Gaines, buyers will not be wowed by that. As more people spend more time at home (thanks to COVID and lifestyle choices), you have to avoid cutting corners.

One of the biggest failures of builders in the past in Texas is to properly insulate houses. Yes, it's a constant battle between protecting the interior against the intense Texas heat and also allowing the home to breathe so mold doesn't take over the walls. But giving the garage a little more investment can pay off big time. Upgrade the thin aluminum garage door with no heat resistance and make sure you blow in the in-

sulation above the garage too. No, it's not an air-conditioned space, but heat rises through the large exposed low R-value door and ultimately defeats your insulation in other parts of the attic. Also, the radiant barriers used to be an expensive, untested thing but it should be mandatory in all new builds in climates such as ours. Oh and if you aren't finishing out and insulating garage walls, you might get passed up as buyers do not want to hassle with those upgrades after they move in.

Conventional Fireplaces

This is a controversial one. South Texas is not exactly the image you think of with a slow smoke rising from a chimney on a snowy winter's day. For a majority of homes in Texas, a fireplace is completely irrelevant and not likely to be used. Sleek, glass-encased gas- or electric-powered fireplaces are all the rage these days in higher-end homes, but for the vast majority of the product on the market, a traditional chimney and fireplace are outdated as much as a traditional dining room. Also, making a large brick and mantelpiece the center of a living area opens it up to become a dated, unfashionable feature very quickly. People want flexibility in their common areas. Traditional fireplaces often go unused, ignored, require regular maintenance, and just serve to leak precious air conditioning (which, in August, is as valuable as gold). Birds set up shop in the chimney, filling your house with annoying chirps. Or worst-case scenario, those chirping birds fry in the heat and then you've got dead birds in your fireplace. Always a mood killer.

Younger homebuyers in tract neighborhoods especially are unlikely to want a fireplace, as it becomes a danger to small children and pets, and is an unfamiliar feature to maintain. Older couples may worry about leaving a fire burning overnight and being exposed to carbon monoxide or fire risk. Skip the wood fireplace, buyers aren't going to use it anyway.

Want to close more deals than your nearest competitor? Keep your ear to the ground and react to what the buyers want. It'll pay off in the end.

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PAYING

— for the New Norm —



By Steven Bankler, CPA

The construction industry has changed dramatically this year. The volatility in the market, supply chain disruptions, delays and pivots, relief loans, and the

cost of new safety requirements will result in a bookkeeping challenge beyond anything you've seen before. Keep an eye on the following three areas to mitigate those challenges with tax opportunities:

Cost of PPE and COVID-19 Protocols

New COVID-19 protocols mean extra personal protective equipment (PPE) like face masks and face shields, cleaning products, sanitizing equipment, signage, COVID-19 testing, and more—expenses that can really add up.

Check with your CPA for the best ways to offset the cost of these essential supplies and protocols. A tax credit that specifically covers COVID-19 expenses may be available (it was in the works as this article was drafted). A combination of these potential relief credits, Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) funds, and/or traditional business deductions can help offset the added costs.

Understand how supply costs are changing

Lumber prices took a nosedive in February, but by July, an unexpected boom in the building brought those prices back up to pre-pandemic levels. One month later, lumber prices had risen another 47%. "Buyers are so desperate for lumber that they are paying much more than the futures price—in some cases hundreds of dollars more—for the prompt delivery," The Wall Street Journal reported in August.

Fluctuations in energy prices and global supply chain availability have also led to unpredictable



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construction costs in 2020. These changes can dramatically affect the accuracy of your bids. It's more important than ever to pay attention to these market fluctuations and to ensure that your bids are as accurate as possible in every other aspect. Getting your sales and use taxes estimated correctly when bidding can help. If, in the end, you suffer more losses than usual on projects due to unexpected supply chain costs, talk to your CPA about deductions to offset your losses.

Mitigate pivots and delays

The Associated Builders and Contractors report that many new construction jobs have been delayed or canceled, while work is done to modify existing structures has increased. If this has happened to your business—and projects you thought would be complete in 2020 won't be—you may have some tax-saving options.

First, if you're a small business contractor with annual gross receipts averaging \$25 million or less, you may be able to use the completed contract method of accounting to defer taxes on incomplete long-term contracts that you expect to finish within the next two years. Second, if you're self-employed, consider reasons to either defer or accelerate end-of-year income. With fluctuating project loads and factors like PPP possibly at play, you may decide to push some income to 2021 or, conversely, invoice as much as you can before the end of the year to pull income into 2020. It's important to weigh the pros and cons of each choice with your CPA.

Follow the rules

Payroll tax holiday? Clear up with a tax professional any rumors you hear. Penalties for skipping payroll taxes are some of the most severe – simply failing to file can carry a 15% penalty, and the addition of a trust fund recovery penalty can make the business owner 100% personally responsible for repayment.

And if you received a PPP loan this year, take the forgiveness process seriously. You may have heard that loans under a certain threshold will be automatically forgiven, but that doesn't mean you can bend the rules on the money spent or miss critical deadlines. Borrowers receiving more than \$2 million in PPP funds will automatically be audited for compliance when they ask for loan forgiveness.

There's no doubt 2020 was filled with challenges the likes of which your business has never experienced before. Some of the heartaches can be reduced with tax opportunities. Be sure, though, to understand your options now (before the year is over) to take full advantage.

Steven Bankler has more than 43 years of experience in the accounting industry. Steven's expertise lies in consulting, planning, tax, and asset protection as well as exit strategy services for closely-held businesses. He also provides litigation support (both as a testifying expert witness and a consulting expert), business negotiations, and estate planning. Visit www.bankler.com for additional tax strategy tips and to learn more about Steven Bankler, CPA, Ltd.

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COVID-19

Will Have a Lasting Effect on Builder's Risk Insurance



By Colby Duke Hotchkiss
Insurance Agency, LLC

We all pray the COVID-19 crisis will be past us for good soon. But the pandemic will forever change the way we think about certain things and perhaps better prepare us for another episode of this magnitude. New laws will likely mandate specific policy forms, endorsements, and language in your insurance policies, and limit coverage through exclusions.

If and when something like the coronavirus happens again, it will be necessary to report both preventative measures and actual infections to your insurer. Builder's risk policies cover a wide range of losses for construction projects unless they are specifically excluded. The coverage may be for hard costs, soft costs, loss of rent, or income, among others.

To avoid a declined claim due to unreported "increased hazard" and to preserve the escalation clause (due to major changes to claims costs) in a policy, documentation and prompt notification is vital. Some builder's risk (BR) policies are written such that they void coverage if an "increased hazard" is not reported to the carrier. Most BR carriers will consider a coverage extension known as an "escalation clause," which can serve as a helpful backstop in a crisis situation. Barring upfront known or foreseeable cost adjustments, this wording allows for an automatic increase in coverage limits should the final contract value exceed a stated percentage versus the original amount (typically 5% or 10%).

Two high-profile issues with respect to making claims for business interruption due to COVID have been "direct

damages" wording of the policies, as well as the presence of virus exclusions on most policies. The direct damages wording states that in order to file a valid claim, your property has to have suffered direct damage. Courts as far as New York state has consistently failed to agree that COVID-19 constitutes "direct damage" to a facility or project. If you are making a claim, you'll need to develop a detailed list of financial impacts your business has experienced as a result of any civil authority or Emergency Orders issues that restrict access to an insured location, as well as how these actions disrupt your supply chain for materials, equipment, inventory, and labor. Lost revenue and missed business opportunities due to delays, job site or project shutdowns, expenses associated with working remotely, additional cleaning costs, and salaries paid to

employees who are ill and absent should also be noted.

Other exclusions or limitations to watch out for in a BR policy are “cessation of work” and “abandonment.” Some policies void or reduce cessation of work after a certain time period, or may void coverage if work is stopped for a reason other than what is specifically outlined in the policy. Project abandonment clauses in some policies can also be troublesome. Contract abandonment is when both parties involved in a binding contract have conducted themselves in a manner where the original contract is no longer valid. Abandonment is defined as “when the contractor does not start on the project in a reasonable amount of time, if the contractor is unable to complete the agreed-upon work, or if the contractor fails to resume their work in a reasonable amount of time.”

Property insurance often covers lost income while a business is closed due to property damage, but doesn't always contain provisions that protect a business that is unable to reopen after an evacuation. As stated before courts across the country are split on what constitutes “direct physical loss” covered by peril, and most casualty insurers have insulated themselves from COVID-19 losses due to the aforementioned

specific exclusionary language in property policies including limitations and specific exclusions for “virus,” “contagion” or “pandemic.”

Since there is the onerous burden of linking the civil authority orders precluding occupancy of an insured job site or location to actual “direct property damage” questions arise including: Does the presence of a human virus constitute “direct physical damage to the insured property” or simply “property damage”? Does the inability to occupy an insured building, job site, or location because of the presence of a virus constitute “property damage”? What about mandated cleaning requirements for surfaces of shared equipment, walls, HVAC units, etc. where COVID-19 was found – are these costs a result of “property damage”? Sadly, for policyholders, most courts have not forced carriers to accept these liberal coverage triggers.

Savvy homebuilders should take action now to review their BR and property coverage and consider Business Interruption and Extra Expense Coverage with their agent. But be warned, scams are out there, and the existence of legitimate, low-cost pandemic virus protection is virtually non-existent until the carriers can get more comfortable with COVID-19's long-term economic and health effects.



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Half-Ton or Heavy Duty, RAM Sets the Bar High

By Beverly & Steve Smirnis

Ram has fought hard to earn and maintain its impressive rank in the competitive half-ton pick-up truck segment. Setting the bar in driving dynamics, the definition of what a generously appointed interior should be, and pushing the limits of fuel efficiency and ride quality has kept Ram on the heels of the best-selling Ford F-150 and kept both competitors striving for more year after year.



One of Ram's secret weapons in the 1500 battle is its class-exclusive rear coil air suspension that gives it its smooth ride and superior efficiency but also makes it capable off-road—something that's essential to almost all of the trucks and SUVs in the FCA family. Load-leveling and entry/exit convenience are other benefits afforded by the signature suspension system. Combine that with an all-steel frame and new damping shocks and it's truly as comfortable to ride in as a luxury car. Oh but that doesn't mean it's not all trucks! Our tester sported the 5.7-liter HEMI® V-8 engine with the optional e-torque mild hybrid system that improves the fuel efficiency (to 17/22) and smoothness of the engine stop-start system. Putting out 395 hp and 410 lb.ft. of torque it is rated to tow 11,320 pounds.

Enticing the target market that it's going after with clever packaging and marketing messages is another of Ram's hallmarks. Our Lone Star Crew Cab 4x4 sported a sleek, modern appearance with new front fascia and 20" black wheels against the Red Flame exterior. Its raised hood with HEMI emblems assures that everyone recognizes that it's a monster, while its dual exhaust also looks and sounds great. Inside, Ram has spoiled us with the quality of materials, comfortable seats, easy-to-use touchscreen infotainment system, clever storage solutions, and an impressive list of standard options. Even the second-row seats offer eight degrees of slide recline, were heated and cooled atop a flat-load floor. Tune in the country music and let's go on a road trip across Texas in style!

If you're in the market for a heavy-duty truck, jump up to the 2500 Ram and that coil-spring suspension delivers ride quality unheard of among heavy duties. There is no compromise on Ram's beautiful fit and finish here. either. This means that you can get a heavy-duty vehicle with comforts and luxuries just as impressive as the brute power and capability. 2020 Ram 2500 models feature more high-strength steel in the frame and aluminum body panels to reduce weight and improve fuel economy while increasing towing and hauling capabilities.



If off-roading is in your blood, and a payload of 1,660 and 10,300 tow capacity is sufficient, you can have the superlative there, too. We were fortunate to test Ram's Power Wagon with the 6.4-liter V8 HEMI engine, the undisputed ruler among off-road heavy-duty trucks. Ford's Tremor is a new contender in a category that the Power Wagon solely captured to date, but this time, it will be Ram that's the one to catch up to. The Power Wagon's main advantage lies in the fact that it comes standard with serious off-road hardware included—locking front and rear differentials and an electronically disconnecting front stabilizer bar that can be activated from inside the cab, 33-inch tall tires, a factory-installed 12,000 pounds rated winch, and hill descent control.

Ram's design and engineering team deserve a pat on the back, and they're getting it in the form of sales and awards!

“

Beverly & Steve Smirnis are members of the Texas Auto Writers Association and the Texas Motor Press Association, reviewing vehicles and casting their votes at driving events where the Truck of Texas, Car of Texas, and Off-Road Truck of Texas are some of the titles awarded. Follow their automotive blog on TheSavvyList.com/TheSavvyDriver

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“Woe is Me” or “Go is Me”

— Which Do You Choose?



By Paul Evans

I know everyone is tired of hearing about COVID by now and the news out there about the status of the virus and new ways to prevent getting it. I may be callous, but I am not watching the news much anymore because it is all just getting to me. Instead, I prefer to focus on coming up with new ways to keep my business running, my employees working and my customers happy.

People in our industry have amazed me by what they have done to figure out ways to work around the virus. But even more amazing is that, because of the virus, some have become more efficient and thus, more profitable. They have found ways of

doing the same things with less people or with less effort and less time spent on the job site.

One builder had a scheduling tool for years that some of his supers used and others didn't use at all. So, he had a virtual meeting and got them all up to speed on using it. Now, with everyone using the tool, his business is way more efficient than it was pre-COVID. Jobs are moving faster and with less time required of the superintendents on the sites; that means less fuel driving back and forth. Trades are getting their purchase orders quicker, and they are more complete. Holding the trades to the POs makes everything working smoother, the builder told me.

Another builder said that he had lost four of his eight superintendents due to the virus, so he has had to resort to asking his trade partners to video all of the work they completed so he didn't always have to physically be present on job sites to see how jobs were coming along. He now does Facetime calls with his trades; they walk the job and send him screen shots, which the builder uses to make a punch list for that trade or advise the next trade about.

The owner of a large will call business created a new process that's fast and efficient and keeps up with social distancing rules. Before coming to the warehouse to pick up material, all contractors are now required to call the order in first. At the time that they place the order, they are also asked for the license plate number of the vehicle coming to pick up the material. Materials are pulled 15 minutes before the allotted time they are due to arrive and staged with the customer name and license plate number on a sign. Then when the customer arrives, one employee in the yard is all that's required to check the license plate, point the customer to the material; the employee then takes a picture of the plate and the material loaded, and sends it to the billing department.

These are all examples of good things have come from our need to abide by the new rules that have been set out by the CDC to combat

this awful disease. In some cases, it has made us better and more efficient at what we do. It has forced some of us old dogs to learn some new tricks that help us in the long run. I sure never thought I'd be able to say that I've gotten really good at GoTo and ZOOM meetings!

Let's challenge ourselves to make the best out of a bad thing. Wait— let's not only make the BEST out of it; how about getting the BETTER YOU out of it?

“

R. Paul Evans CGA, CAPS, CGP is a native Texan with over 40 years in the construction industry. He is the National VP of Millwork for BMC. Paul has been an instructor with the NHBA University Housing for over 15 years and is one of only a handful of Master Instructors for the NHBA in the country. He travels the country teaching Sales & Marketing, Customer Service and Negotiating Skills and has authored numerous articles and published three books on these subjects. Paul is also a voting member of the ICC, is licensed as an engineer in Texas and Louisiana and holds GC licenses in 17 states. Paul also owns and operates a fully sustainable farm and is a licensed professional race car driver.

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[savvy builder]



Marquis Builders Hits the Mark

Dustin Franckowiak grew up in and around the construction business, surrounded by examples of hard-working men. His grandfather worked civil services at Kelly AFB in the woodworking division upon returning from WWII. After retirement, he opened a small shop to build custom cabinetry & millwork and do remodeling. Dustin's dad started selling building materials in the early 1970s and still does to this day.

“

My summers and weekends growing up were spent at either grandad's shop or on a job site with my father," he said. "Being around a lumber/millwork company and construction sites almost my entire life is what inspired me to enter the construction business.

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While going to school he worked at a small local lumber company near his hometown of Poth, pulling orders and selling materials. After college Franckowiak started working for a local builder as a superintendent and then moved into a couple of different construction management positions with two other larger building firms in the early 2000s. After 7 years Dustin decided it was time to hang out his own shingle and launch his own residential building enterprise. In the summer of 2009 Marquis Builders was formed.



Dustin is the heart and soul of the company. His philosophy of treating people with the utmost respect and honesty – like he was taught at an early age – has proven highly effective over the years. Like other quality builders, most of Franckowiak's new clients are referred by others he's already worked with. From the design phase to the delivery of keys at closing, Dustin is involved in every aspect of the process. He's not only the president of Marquis Builders but also everyday, hands-on homebuilding manager who is sincerely excited about his job and delivering more than what his customers expect.

"I feel for me it really boils down to the good ole' boy approach and having boots on the ground. When customers buy Marquis Builders they are not only purchasing a great product, but also the sense of having their largest investment entrusted to someone who is passionate about what he does. I strive to be patient, stay focused on the task at hand, always treat folks right, and remain true to the core value of delivering quality. I also work hard, and expect those on my job sites to do the same."

Before a budget is finalized with each client a great deal of information has to be shared regarding topography challenges, utility infrastructure, finalizing blueprints, etc. Once plans and specifications have been created the big process begins and finishes out details are discussed. Good communication and project site management is what Marquis Builders are known for. The target price point for Franckowiak's clients ranges between \$500,000 - \$1.5 million. And many of their clients take advantage of the energy-efficient ("green") features they offer:

- Vinyl windows
- Blown cellulose insulation
- Spray foam insulation
- ICF wall panels
- Rainwater catchment systems
- Solar water heating systems
- Tankless water heaters





Regarding the relationships Dustin has with his subs and suppliers...many of them have been his partners for several years. Here's what a few of them had to say:

"Dustin is a stand-up guy; his word is his bond. He's very organized, pays us on time, always has things lined up for us. He takes care of his guys."

Shelby Fojtik, Landmark Electric

"He's extremely easy to work with and doesn't miss deadlines. Dustin is always accessible and is on top of scheduling."

Noe Deras, AMS

"I can totally relate to his background and strong immigrant work ethic. I've been in the cabinet business for 35 years and come from the same kind of people he came from. Dustin is incredibly detailed oriented; runs a clean job site and pays attention to all of the little things. He's always looking for ways to enhance every square foot of the house...because he loves what he does."

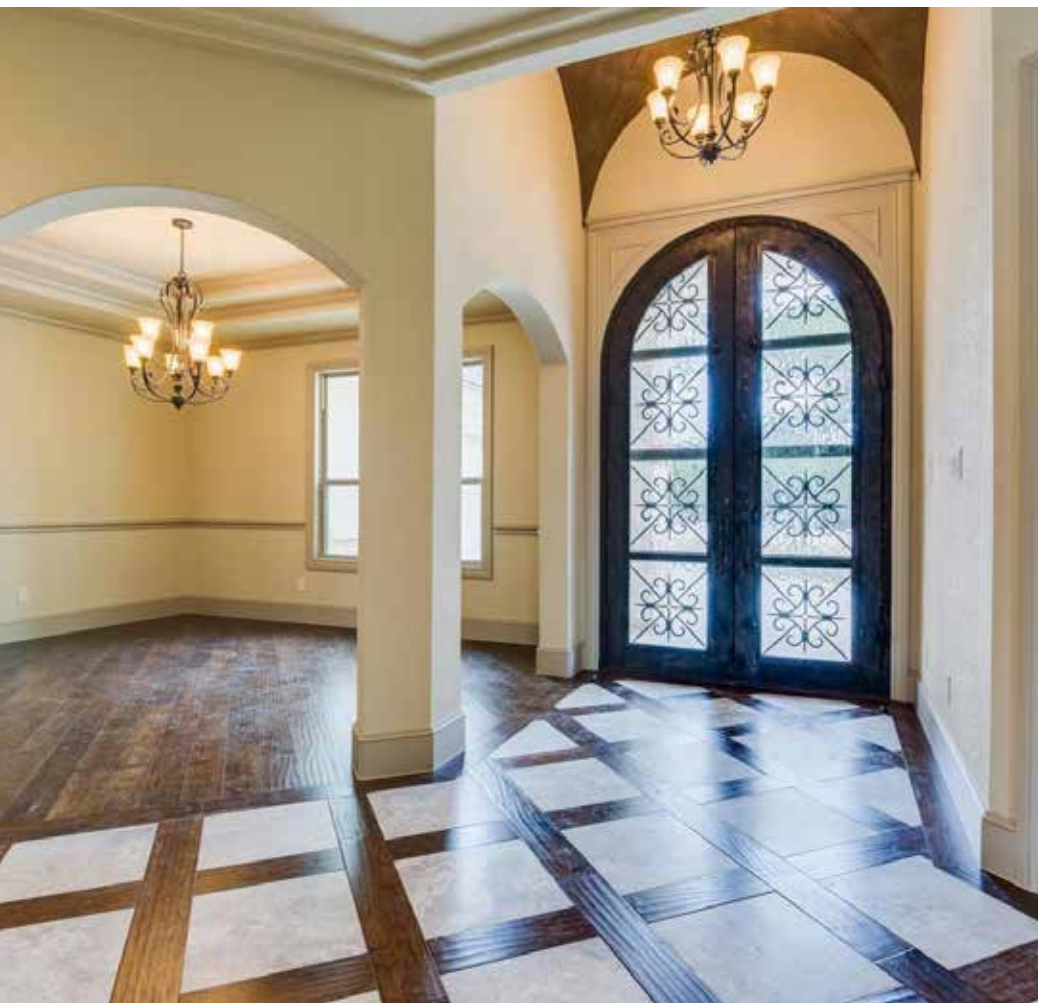
Richard Anulewicz, Michael Edwards Custom Cabinetry

"I have complete trust when I'm working with him or his entire team for that matter. That's something you just don't experience with everyone in this business. I've known Dustin since our days together at Ryland Homes. Great guy and a great friend."

Clint Berry, Venetian Marble

"He's very fair, honest, and totally customer-centric. Dustin treats us like partners, and that is a big deal."

Justin Bowden, Guardian Protection Services





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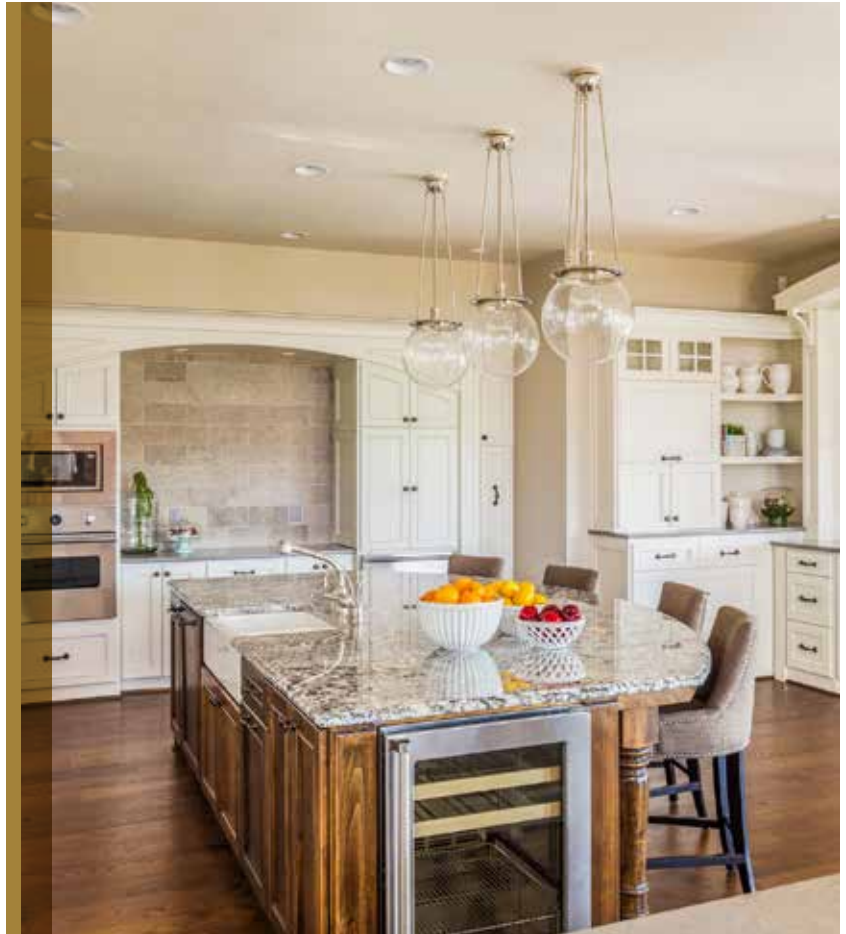
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Kendall County Roofing

Quality, Craftsmanship, Integrity

Alex and Kim Lopez, owners of Kendall County Roofing, have been honing their craft for 17 years. They know the importance of having a good roof over your head, and so do the many builders who trust them. “Our passion is roofing and we pride ourselves in providing excellent, professional service to all of our builders and individual customers,” says Kim Lopez.

Alex has nearly two decades of roofing experience and four years ago, along with his wife Kim, decided it was time to branch out and start Kendall County Roofing. The expert knowledge and skills that have come from years of dedication and hard work show up in every job done by Lopez and his team. “In all our power, we will complete the roofing project on time and within budget. Whether it is for new construction or repairing existing roofs, the expert team at KCR is well-qualified to do the job,” said Alex.

“With so many options available in today’s market,” adds Kim, “it can be very difficult to figure out exactly what you need, or even to sort through all your ideas on different materials and designs. At KCR we not only guarantee quality customer service for all our clients but also promote aesthetically pleasing and reliable roofing designs.”

KCR is truly a full-service roofing enterprise as they tackle everything from commercial, new residential or residential remodeling and repair. With a variety of suppliers at their disposal, KCR is able to find the best solution for their clients in an effective and timely fashion. The company guarantees that their work will look beautiful and will withstand the unpredictable Texas weather.

“It is our job to put a roof over your head, so we make sure it is 100% safe,” adds Kim. “Our team of professional roofers are highly trained

and have with all kinds of roofing materials – from shingles to metals to tiles.”



Kendall County Roofing works with builders throughout the greater San Antonio area and provides excellent service to all their customers in Boerne, Comfort, Cordillera, and the entire Kendall County area. KCR is a member of the Greater Boerne Chamber of Commerce and GSABA and was voted ‘Best of the Best’ by the readers of the Boerne Star for three years in a row. For more information contact them at www.KendallCountyRoofing.com; or call 830.331.5332.





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