



Emily Levitt
2026 STAR President

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House, DOL, and HHS

Officials to Advance Health
Coverage Options for Real
Estate Professionals

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STAR Monthly News

Powering REALTORS® Across Stark, Carroll, and Trumbull Counties...

President's Message

2026 | September

The Power of Being Present

As summer winds down and the familiar rhythm of back-to-school season begins, many of us find ourselves navigating a long list of competing priorities. School schedules return, fall activities begin, business plans demand our attention, and our clients continue to look to us for guidance in an evolving real estate landscape. During seasons like this, it is easy to become busy without being fully present. Being present is more than simply showing up. It means giving our full attention to the person, conversation, or responsibility in front of us. It means putting down the phone, listening with intention, asking thoughtful questions, and making people feel that their needs truly matter.

In our businesses, presence allows us to recognize opportunities that we might otherwise miss. Real estate continues to change—from affordability and inventory challenges to new technologies, shifting consumer expectations, and evolving business practices. We cannot control every change, but we can control how we respond. When we remain engaged in our local markets, committed to professional development, and connected to one another through our Association, we are better equipped to adapt and lead. With our customers, being present has never been more important. Buyers and sellers have access to more information than ever before, but information alone does not always create clarity.

Consumers need trusted professionals who will listen to their concerns, explain their options, and guide them confidently through important decisions.

A returned phone call, a thoughtful market update, or a few extra minutes spent explaining a contract can make a meaningful difference. Our clients may not remember every statistic we share, but they will remember how we made them feel during one of the most significant financial and emotional experiences of their lives. Presence also matters within our families. Back-to-school season reminds us just how quickly time passes. Whether we are helping children prepare for a new school year, supporting aging parents, connecting with our spouses and friends, or simply trying to protect time for ourselves, the people we love deserve more than the part of us that remains after work is finished.

Real estate rarely fits neatly into traditional business hours, and achieving perfect balance may not always be realistic. However, we can create intentional boundaries. We can be fully engaged in a client meeting and then equally committed to putting the phone away during dinner, attending the game, asking about the school day, or enjoying a quiet moment at home. As we enter this new season, I encourage each of us to pause and consider where our presence is needed most. Let us stay focused on the fundamentals of our profession: relationships, service, communication, knowledge, and trust. Let us remain flexible as industry changes without losing sight of the human connection at the heart of what we do. Our calendars will always be full, and the market will always present new challenges. But when we choose to be truly present—with our businesses, our customers, our colleagues, and our families—we become better REALTORS®, stronger leaders, and more connected members of our communities. This fall, let's not simply move through the season. Let's be present for it.

Emily Levitt
2026 STAR President

Classes & Events

SEPTEMBER

- SEP 7 STAR OFFICES CLOSED | Labor Day
- SEP 17 [REGISTER NOW](#)
MLS Now | CMA | 1:30 PM - 3:30 PM
7110 Whipple Ave NW, Suite B, North Canton, OH 44720
- SEP 22 YPN Committee | Staff Liaison: [Collene Burgess](#)
- SEP 24 [REGISTER NOW](#)
New Member Orientation | 2:00 PM - 3:30 PM
7110 Whipple Ave NW, Suite B, North Canton, OH 44720
- SEP 25 [REGISTER NOW](#)
Golf Outing | 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM
Sleepy Hollow Golf Course | 374 Homeworth Rd, Alliance, OH 44601

OCTOBER

- OCT 2 [REGISTER NOW](#)
Chilli Cookoff | 11:45 AM - 1:00 PM
The Barrel Room | 7901 Cleveland Ave NW North Canton, OH 44720
- OCT 5 Growth & Connection Committee | Staff Liaison: [Maggie McAbier](#)
- OCT 5 [REGISTER NOW](#)
1-Hour Lending CE | 12:00 PM - 1:30 PM
7110 Whipple Ave NW, Suite B, North Canton, OH 44720
- OCT 7 Leg. Affairs / RPAC Committee | Staff Liaison: [Rich Cosgrove](#)
- OCT 9 Affiliate Committee | Staff Liaison: [Collene Burgess](#) / [Maggie McAbier](#)
- OCT 12 STAR OFFICES CLOSED | Columbus Day
- OCT 15 [REGISTER NOW](#)
MLS Now | Buyer Basics | 1:30 PM - 3:30 PM
7110 Whipple Ave NW, Suite B, North Canton, OH 44720
- OCT 21 [REGISTER NOW](#)
R-Day | Block Party
La Pizzeria | 3656 Dressler Rd NW, Canton, OH 44718
- OCT 27 [REGISTER NOW](#)
STAR Halloween Shaker | 5:00 PM - 7:30 PM
MBAR | 5260 Dressler Rd NW, Canton, OH 44718
- OCT 29 [REGISTER NOW](#)
3 HR Brokers Management CE | 10:00 AM - 1:00 PM
7110 Whipple Ave NW, Suite B, North Canton, OH 44720

NOVEMBER

- NOV 2 Growth & Connection Committee | Staff Liaison: [Maggie McAbier](#)
- NOV 4 Leg. Affairs / RPAC Committee | Staff Liaison: [Rich Cosgrove](#)
- NOV 11 STAR OFFICES CLOSED | Veterans Day
- NOV 12 [REGISTER NOW](#)
New Member Orientation | 2:00 PM - 3:30 PM
7110 Whipple Ave NW, Suite B, North Canton, OH 44720
- NOV 13 Affiliate Committee | Staff Liaison: [Collene Burgess](#) / [Maggie McAbier](#)



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A Note from the CEO

Your Voice Matters: Meet STAR's 2027 Board Candidates

As we head into fall, STAR is preparing for an important part of our Association each year—selecting the members who will help lead us into the future.

I am pleased to share the official slate of candidates for STAR's 2027 Board of Directors.

This year, we have a contested race for 1st Vice President between **Arbutus D'Urso** with BHHS Stouffer Realty and **Eric Henry** with Keller Williams Legacy Group.

Voting will take place **September 27–29, 2026**. All REALTOR® members in good standing will receive an electronic ballot by email. Please take a few minutes to vote. Your voice matters, and our leadership should reflect the members we serve.

We are also fortunate to have three members willing to step forward for uncontested leadership positions. **Nicole Hatfield** with Howard Hanna and **Rochelle Arriola** with BHHS Stouffer Realty are candidates for REALTOR® Director, and **Jamie Haren** with Buckingham, Doolittle & Burroughs, LLC is our candidate for Affiliate Director. These candidates will continue through the election process in accordance with STAR's Bylaws.

Serving on the Board takes time, commitment, and a willingness to be part of the conversations and decisions that move STAR forward. I truly appreciate everyone who put their name forward and is willing to give their time to our Association and our members.

Please watch your email beginning **September 27** for your ballot and remember that voting closes **September 29**.

We have a lot happening at STAR as we finish out 2026, and I am excited about where we are headed in 2027. As always, thank you for being a member of STAR, for participating, and for allowing us to continue working for you.



Collene Burgess
Chief Executive Officer
cburgess@Star.Realtor
office: (330) 494-5630

Collene Burgess
Chief Executive Officer
Stark Trumbull Area REALTORS®

Obituary | Linda Mae Combs [Please refer to the attached obituary](#)

STAR is deeply saddened by the passing of Linda Mae Combs on August 5th, 2026. To learn more about Linda and her legacy, please click on the attached obituary above.



Special Awards

Congratulations to Our 2026 STAR Award Winners! STAR is excited to congratulate **Debbie Ferrante** with RE/MAX Edge Realty, our **2026 REALTOR® of the Year**, and **Dan Kozma** with Pursuit Lending Group, our **2026 Affiliate of the Year**!

Both Debbie and Dan have shown tremendous dedication to STAR, our members, and the real estate community, and we are proud to recognize them for this well-deserved honor.

They will be recognized at R Day, with their official awards presented at the STAR Installation & Awards Ceremony on **January 14, 2027**.





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(UP TO 8 HOURS)



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A WEEK



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1:30pm - 3:30pm

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June 18: Buyer Basics

Learn how to add a new contact, set search criteria for automatic emails via the Client Portal, and manage prospect details—including editing criteria, tracking emails, scheduling tasks, stopping auto emails, deleting contacts, and using reverse prospecting.

July 16: My Matrix and More

Explore the My Matrix tools, including custom headers and grids, personalized email signatures with photos and links, speedbar shortcuts, team settings, hot sheets for market tracking, and portal notifications to monitor prospect activity.

August 20: Realist: Using Tax Data

Learn how to get more from Realist tax data, including report views, sorting, search tips, flood and assessor maps, neighbor profiles, label downloads, finding comps (even with zero results), setting preferences, and using mortgage calculators.

September 17: CMA

Learn how to find comps using radius or map searches and create a CMA package with customizable reports, cover pages, and stats—saved under the contact for easy editing, printing, or emailing anytime

October 15: Buyer Basics

Learn how to add a new contact, set search criteria for automatic emails via the Client Portal, and manage prospect details—including editing criteria, tracking emails, scheduling tasks, stopping auto emails, deleting contacts, and using reverse prospecting.

***Rayse: Showcasing Your Value as a REALTOR®**

Rayse is the all-in-one platform that helps agents deliver the transparency and professionalism today's buyers and sellers expect. You've seen how it works for buyers—now discover the new seller experience with tools like the Seller Services Presentation, Seller Journey, and enhanced reporting. These features make it easy to demonstrate your value from listing to closing.

To learn more, please allow 15 minutes after your class for a brief lesson.

MLS NOW LEARNING

Stark Trumbull Area REALTORS®

GOLF OUTING

FRI Sept 25, 2026



Sleepy Hollow Golf Course

374 Homeworth Rd, Alliance, OH 44601

8:00 am Registration / Check In

9:00 am Shotgun Start

\$75 SINGLE GOLFER

\$300 FOURSOME

Registration Includes:

- 18 Holes at Sleepy Hollow Golf Course
- Unlimited Beverages
- All day event - Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner will be provided

Skins Available \$40/Team

Mulligans \$5 for Two

50/50 Raffle at Check-In

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1st \$300

2nd \$200

3rd \$100

per place



Questions? Reach Out to STAR Staff
(330) 494-5630 or info@STAR.Realtor
and Dan Kozma (330) 323-9366
dkozma@pursuitlendinggroup.com

www.STAR.Realtor

13th Annual Chili Cook-Off

BATTLE of the Brokers

Bring the Spice!

10 Chilis 3 Winners CASH Bar

FRI October 2, 2026

 **The Barrel Room**

7901 Cleveland Ave NW North Canton, OH 44720

FREE for STAR Members

11:45 am	Chili Tasting
12:45 pm	Winners Announced
1:00 pm	Event Ends

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RSVP requested but not required on our website TODAY!

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1-Hr Continuing Education

Lending: Non QM vs Traditional **Ways to Close More Transactions**

MONDAY

October 5, 2026

12:00 PM to 1:30 PM

at the STAR Office

**7110 Whipple Ave NW,
Suite B, North Canton, OH 44720**

Topics We'll Cover:

- DSCR Loans
- Fix & Flip Financing
- Portfolio Loans
- Bridge Loans
- Commercial Lending Basics

FREE

FOR STAR MEMBERS

**Credit: This course is certified
for 1 hour of Elective CE Training
for Ohio Licences**

Registration Deadline: Sun, October 4th

**You will be charged a \$20 No Show Fee
if you do not cancel your reservation 24
hours prior to the event per STAR Policy.**

**QUESTIONS? Contact Maggie McAbier via email
or phone maggie@STAR.Realtor | 330-494-5630**

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2026 R-Day BLOCK Party!

**JOIN US FOR FOOD, FUN, PRIZES
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 **WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2026**

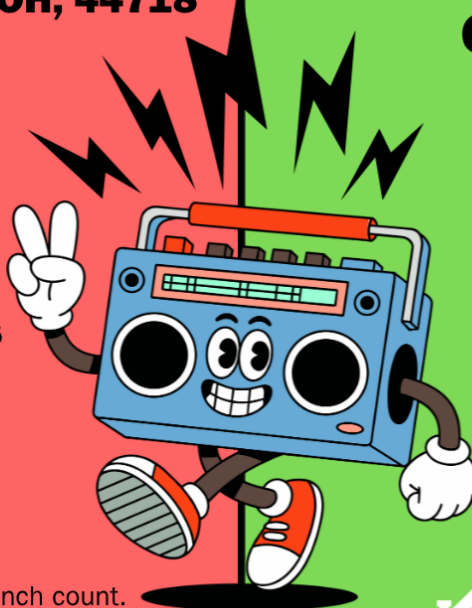
La Pizzeria (Piazza Room)
3656 Dressler Rd NW, Canton OH, 44718

10:00 AM Vendor Fair
Don't forget your business
cards to enter Affiliate Vendor
Give-A-Way Drawings!

**NOON Lunch &
Annual Meeting**

1:00 PM Affiliate Give-A-Ways

1:30 PM 1 Hour Elective CE
"Beyond the Home Inspection"
by Pillar to Post



**LUNCH
GIVE-A-WAYS
PRIZES
1 HOUR
ELECTIVE CE**

FREE
for STAR Members
\$20 for Non-Members



Sign-Up TODAY!

Please Register for accurate lunch count.
CE Sign-up is an option within the Registration
Form.

QUESTIONS? Contact Maggie McAbier
(330) 494-5630 or maggie@STAR.Realtor

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Affiliate SHAKER & Costume Contest

Tuesday, October 27, 2026

5:00 pm - 7:30 pm at MBar

5260 Dressler Rd, Canton OH 44718

Join your STAR Affiliates for a Halloween Costume Contest starting at 6:30! Dress up in your Favorite Costume, and take home a first, second or third place prize for best dressed!

Food, Drinks & Prizes Provided

FREE for STAR Members! Questions: Contact STAR info@STAR.Realtor or 330.494.5630

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Ohio Broker Responsibilities

THURSDAY

October 29, 2026

10:00 am - 1:00 pm

At the STAR Office
and Via ZOOM

7110 Whipple Ave NW, Suite B,
North Canton, OH 44720

FREE

FOR STAR MEMBERS

\$20 for Non-STAR Members

Credit: This course is certified for 3 hours of State Required Broker Manager Training credit for Ohio Broker, and Manager Level Licensees. For all other Licensees, you will receive 3 hours of Elective Training.

Per ODRE requirements, attendees must be present 90% of the program.

Registration Deadline: Wed, October 28th.

You will be charged a \$20 No Show Fee if you do not cancel your reservation 24 hours prior to the event per STAR Policy.

**QUESTIONS? Contact Maggie McAbier
maggie@STAR.Realtor | 330.494.5630**

SIGN UP TODAY!



**Instructor: KATIE McCARTNEY
REALTOR®, CRS, & SRES®**

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September 2026 GAD Report

Canton City Water Update

Canton City along with Plain and Canton Townships have approved a 25-year annexation agreement. The agreement protects most township homeowners who receive city water and sewer services from annexation into the city. This agreement does not apply to industrial or commercial properties, nor does it apply to apartment buildings that include 4 units or more. For properties that are annexed, the city will collect a 2.5% income tax, and 1% of that will go to the township.

Canton passes data center zoning rules after packed public hearing: City Council has approved new zoning regulations for data centers. But residents and some council members argue, "too little, too late." Ahead of its vote, council held a 7 p.m. public hearing, giving residents an opportunity to speak on proposed changes to the zoning code. Over 50 residents packed the room July 27, ready to share their perspective. Meanwhile, dozens of others were turned away from City Hall, left standing outside in the rain.

Carroll County Commissioners approve \$10,000 payment for lift station project: The Carroll County Board of Commissioners approved a \$10,000 payment request through the Ohio Water Development Authority during their Aug. 10 meeting for the county's lift station improvement project.



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Rich Cosgrove
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Contact for: Legislative Affairs, RPAC

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Monthly Market STATS

July 2026

[CLICK HERE](#) to check out our Blog for shareable assets and watch social media for August STATS soon!

Market UPDATE

STARK COUNTY

Stark Trumbull Area REALTORS®
Single-Family & TownHome Listing
Analysis of Stark, Trumbull, & Carroll Counties



NEW Listings
651



SOLD Listings
473



Average SALE Price
\$271,619



Average MARKET TIME
28 Days

JULY 2026

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Market UPDATE

CARROLL COUNTY

Stark Trumbull Area REALTORS®
Single-Family & TownHome Listing
Analysis of Stark, Trumbull, & Carroll Counties



NEW Listings
48



SOLD Listings
19



Average SALE Price
\$355,773



Average MARKET TIME
52 Days

JULY 2026

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Market UPDATE

TRUMBULL COUNTY

Stark Trumbull Area REALTORS®
Single-Family & TownHome Listing
Analysis of Stark, Trumbull, & Carroll Counties



NEW Listings
244



SOLD Listings
188



Average SALE Price
\$220,237



Average MARKET TIME
39 Days

JULY 2026

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Membership Report August 2026

New Salespersons

Sarah Jobin, *KW Chervenik*
Dana Counts, *EXP Realty*
Christine Choate, *XRE Realty*
Merideth Blackwood, *DeHoff Realtors*
Nicholas Papantonakis, *BHHS Stouffer Realty*
Natasha LaVolpa, *BHHS Stouffer Realty*
Yvette Pullin, *Hackenberg Realty Grp*
Madison Friel, *Howard Hanna*
Jennifer Sibit, *BHHS Stouffer Realty*

Office Transfers

Heba Abdul, *McDowell Homes*
Kaitlyn Lewis, *Hayes Realty*

Transfers from Another Board

Zachary Kreakbaum
Keelan Moore
James Warren III
Dawn Paul

Dropped Members

Elton Davis
Lillian Vonwyl
Rachel Ivers
Gina Hamilton
Jonathan Oberhauser
Stephen Welsh
Marcus Williams
Lonzie Padgett
Skye Burns
Stacy Huston
Kyle Crum
Jesse Wood
Kayla Dawes
Gerald Foringer

Dropped Members Cont.

Debbie Sgro
Johnnita Stockwell
Chena Lord
Chase Abdul
Patrick Butler
Rachel Wolfe
Jason Margo
Brian Campbell
Madeline George
Tanner Rich
Bryan Daily
Patrick Hoffman
Traci Skipper
Selena Thompson
Susan Schmidt
Heather Lindsey
Avery Bennett
Kimberly Lipford
Jesse Willis
Kathy Brindley



Meet Our Multilingual Members

Antonio Valdez - Spanish
Christina Murphy - ASL
Sandy Rains - Greek

Contact STAR for More Information



Candice Likely, Administrative Assistant

Contact for: Membership & Dues Inquiries,
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Dave Dennison NMLS# 2242306	Christine Schell NMLS# 293266	Jeremy Kruger NMLS# 1573708	Rachel Latin NMLS# 542872	



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Orientation,
and take the
guesswork out
of getting started!**

Orientation Dates

Thursday, February 26
Thursday, June 4
Thursday, September 24
Thursday, November 12

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Sign-Up TODAY!

NAR Meets with White House, DOL, and HHS Officials to Advance Health Coverage Options for Real Estate Professionals

[Published August 12, 2026 | NAR Newsroom](#)

WASHINGTON (August 12, 2026) – The National Association of REALTORS® (NAR) this week met with officials from the White House, U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to discuss expanding affordable health coverage options for self-employed Americans, including real estate professionals. The meetings come as DOL develops a proposed rule that could determine whether self-employed individuals may participate in employer-sponsored group health plans.

According to the [latest Regulatory Agenda](#), the Department of Labor is developing a proposed rule that would revisit the definition of "employer" under federal law and could provide a pathway for self-employed individuals to participate in Association Health Plans (AHPs). NAR urged policymakers to ensure any future rule includes real estate professionals and other self-employed individuals, and provides a workable, durable, and legally defensible framework for accessing AHP coverage. The proposed rule is expected to be released in November.

"We support a rule that allows real estate professionals and other self-employed individuals to participate in high-quality, affordable health plans offered through trade associations," said Shannon McGahn, Executive Vice President and Chief Advocacy Officer of the National Association of REALTORS®. "The Affordable Care Act works well for many of our members, and we strongly support protections for people with pre-existing conditions. But for others, premiums, deductibles, and copays remain a barrier to coverage. AHPs can complement existing coverage options—not replace them—by providing another choice for self-employed professionals who remain uninsured because the cost of coverage is simply out of reach."

"When REALTORS® were previously allowed to participate in AHPs, we demonstrated that it was possible to offer comprehensive coverage, meaningful consumer protections, and lower costs. Unfortunately, many of those plans were eventually taken away through litigation or conflicting federal policies. We support the Administration's efforts to develop a workable and legally defensible rule so that self-employed professionals can rely on these options for the long term." McGahn added. "Give self-employed Americans the freedom to choose the coverage that works best for their families. REALTORS® help millions of Americans achieve the dream of homeownership. They deserve affordable, stable, high-quality health coverage options as well."

NAR was joined at the meetings by Angela Shields, CEO of Tennessee REALTORS®, who previously [testified before Congress](#) in support of AHPs for real estate professionals; Tiffany Banks, CEO of Nevada REALTORS®, whose association previously offered an AHP to members; and Rick Lugg, CEO of Virginia REALTORS®, who shared Virginia's efforts to expand health coverage options for self-employed professionals and emphasized the importance of ensuring federal agencies take a consistent approach to AHP policy.

According to NAR's 2026 Health Insurance Survey, 14 percent of REALTORS® are uninsured. Among uninsured REALTORS®, 91 percent cited premium costs as a reason they lack coverage, while 58 percent cited high deductibles and copays. In addition, 35 percent reported difficulty maintaining coverage because of fluctuations in real estate income.

About the National Association of Realtors®

The National Association of Realtors® is involved in all aspects of residential and commercial real estate. The term Realtor® is a registered collective membership mark that identifies a real estate professional who is a member of the National Association of Realtors® and subscribes to its strict [Code of Ethics](#). For free consumer guides about navigating the homebuying and selling transaction processes – from written buyer agreements to negotiating compensation – visit facts.realtor.

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