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PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
4/9/2026

CEO Quarterly Update: Q1 2026

When I embarked on this communication platform, I envisioned a quarterly cadence, and I've been able to hold close to that vision. Often, we all feel a sense of information overload. I am still passionate though about working to ensure information about your Association and MLS is shared, especially with the rapidly evolving industry and what seems to be ever-changing viewpoints. Like everything in life that we encounter, there are always multiple viewpoints to consider and as staff, we work with the governing boards to ensure we do our best to implement their direction.

Association & MLS Membership

In our Q1 2025 update, I outlined our 'cyclical membership decline.' At a high level, we see ebbs and flows monthly, but at the end of each calendar year, we historically see a decline. This means they were active at the end of November and were inactive at the end of December. In my tenure with the group, I've seen that shift as high as 20% and as low as 11%.

While we don't have specific facts about why a member chooses non-renewal, we acknowledge that it surrounds many factors which can include industry requirements as well as other personal matters. What we also see is that in the first quarter of the new year the previously mentioned declines are negated either by the return of an inactive member or the joining of a new member. While the MLS will also have MLS only participants, we see a very similar pattern in that business as well.

Some like to focus on what I'll call the immediate or current change and while important, we also look at the trend over time. The trends align with market, industry, and economic factors, which is why we track them. On the Association side of the business, after adjusting billing volumes year over year, we saw a roughly 18% drop. That said, when I look at the Association level in March 2026, we had rebounded 21%.

To learn more about Royal Palm Coast Realtor® Association and membership, [visit rpcra.org](http://rpcra.org).

About the [Royal Palm Coast Realtor® Association](http://rpcra.org)

Founded in 1922 as the Fort Myers Board of Realty, the Royal Palm Coast Realtor® Association has grown to serve multiple counties across Southwest Florida, achieving Mega Board status. The Association is a leading advocate and resource for its members, advancing their professional success through education, communication, and strategic leadership on key industry issues.



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Advocacy

Advocacy is not a side function of real estate, rather it is the foundation that protects our business, our clients, and private property rights. Every day, decisions are made at all levels of government that directly impact how we operate and serve our communities.

At the state level, Florida Realtors® delivered meaningful wins during the 2026 legislative session. These were real outcomes that directly impact how you do business and how you protect your clients.

One major victory was increasing penalties on squatters. This sent a clear message that private property rights matter and that bad actors who try to exploit property owners will face real consequences. This is a direct win not just for property owners, but for Realtors® who are often on the front lines dealing with these situations.

Another critical win was protecting consumers by fighting off efforts to deregulate the real estate industry. While deregulation can sound appealing, in this case, it would have removed important safeguards that ensure professionalism, accountability, and trust in real estate transactions. Maintaining those standards protects your clients and the integrity of the Realtor® brand.

Beyond that, there were broader efforts to support housing availability and fund the Hometown Heroes downpayment assistance program. Just as important were the defensive wins where harmful proposals were stopped before they could take hold.

This year, local elections across Southwest Florida will shape the future of our communities. Local leaders make decisions on zoning, impact fees, and development that directly affect inventory, affordability, and your ability to do business.

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Professional Development

Members have been actively engaged in furthering their knowledge during the first quarter of 2026! Staff welcomed 907 members over the first three months through 35 course offerings. The courses included four new courses, two designations, and two lunch and learn opportunities. Two of the four new courses highlighted commercial opportunities. The board is also excited to announce the return of the Professional Development Scholarship program in 2026 as well. For more information on that specific program, you can email education@rpcra.org or visit our professional development page at www.rpcra.org.

The board would also like to thank our committed sponsors (listed alphabetically) CMG Home Loans, Easy Mortgage LLC, Elite Home Inspection, Empire Home Loans, Handy Home Inspectors, Holiday Builders, Lake Michigan Credit Union, Law Offices of Sam J. Saad III, Next Door Photos, State Insurance, V1 Real Estate Photography, and Vandyk Mortgage. Our partners contributed just under \$5,000 to help offset the educational operating costs.

Professional Standards

As the first quarter in Professional Standards ends, I am encouraged by the communication between our members to settle disputes before they get to the hearing stage. So far in 2026, there have been five (5) ethics complaints filed, with four of them moving forward to a hearing. The most common complaint received was regarding Code of Ethics Article 16, which relates to Realtor®-to-Realtor® duties. We have only received one complaint from a member of the public. As for arbitration, I am happy to report that the one arbitration/procuring cause complaint was resolved without the need to hold a formal hearing, since the parties involved worked together to come up with a solution. Our Ombudsman program is always ready to help achieve a settlement. As always, we remain committed to resolution of disputes.

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Multiple Listing Services

The MLS & Technology department had a strong start to the year, focusing on expanding member value, enhancing existing tools, and delivering impactful education.

We successfully launched NEO (New Estate Only) as a new member benefit, providing agents with exclusive access to new construction opportunities. This partnership connects our members with builders and new development inventory, helping them stay competitive in a growing segment of the market while streamlining the process of discovering, marketing, and selling new homes.

We also continued to build on our late 2025 launch of Property Panorama, which has seen significant enhancements in the first quarter. Expanded integrations and new marketing capabilities have made it easier than ever for members to create high-quality listing content, automate marketing efforts, and increase visibility for their listings all directly from the MLS.

In March, we hosted our third annual SWFL TechCon, which was our most successful yet with a record-breaking 215 registrations. The event brought together industry-leading speakers, innovative technology partners, and engaged members for a full day of education and networking. We are incredibly grateful for the support of our sponsors, vendors, and speakers who made this event possible and continue to elevate the experience each year.

Additionally, our MLS Monday webinar series has remained a consistent and valuable resource for members, taking place every Monday at 11:00 AM. We have seen a noticeable increase in attendance, which aligns with the influx of new members in the first quarter. These sessions continue to focus on practical, business-driven use of MLS tools and technology to help members succeed in today's market.

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General Matters

Work on the new offices located at 5265 Summerlin Commons Blvd, Fort Myers, FL 33907 is nearing completion. During one of my recent broker visits, I noted that this project has been a labor of love. What started as a board discussion in 2021 about our facilities, industry evolution and service began in earnest through hard discussion and the subsequent purchase of vacant land in 2022. The project was spearheaded by the Presidential Advisory Committee who worked diligently through what ended up being a multi-year endeavor that was active, shelved, and then reactivated late in 2023. It was that volunteer commitment and vision that assisted staff through the entire process. I won't say that the process was easy – it wasn't.

What I will say is that through the hard work of the volunteer leadership and staff, we will soon be able to call 5265 Summerlin Commons Blvd home. The new space will easily allow us to accommodate our current and constantly evolving needs with room for growth. Our hope is that we'll be able to host an open house in early June 2026. More information will be available as that date draws nearer, but in the interim, please [click here](#) for a sneak peek of our progress!

These are just a few of the key highlights from Q1. We're excited to keep building on this momentum in the months ahead, and I look forward to sharing another quarterly update with you soon!

Stay tuned!

Sean O'Brien
Chief Executive Officer

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