From the Executive Director

Description

In my capacity as Executive Director, I often serve as a sort of switchboard for industry-related questions. Letâ??s explore some of the most frequently asked questions from this summer.

Why is housing inventory so low?

Home Inventory is 7% lower compared to last year. According to CNBC, â??Homes in April sold the fastest since Redfin began tracking the market in 2010. The typical home went under contract in just 40 days, 10 days faster than April 2016. As a result, 1 in 4 homes sold above their list price, which is the highest percentage Redfin has recorded.â?• Whether itâ??s the after effects of the 2008 housing market crash or the delayed retirement of baby boomers, weâ??ve all noticed an inventory shortage in homes this summer. It has been a sellerâ??s market all year. But why? Here are some resources Iâ??ve found to explain the inventory crunch:

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- 2015: Why is Housing Inventory So Low?
- 2016: 6 Ways to Explain Low Inventory
- 2017: Explaining Todayâ??s Real Estate Inventory Shortage

Why is it so hard to hire people?

Recently, VLTA has received numerous requests for referrals for processors for title agencies across the Commonwealth. These requests almost always include the stipulation that the new hire should have at least 2 years of experience as a processor. So many of these vacancies go unfilled. So why is it so hard to hire people? There may be several factors at play:

- Training shortage â?? Few offices are willing to train new hires without experience.
- Aging industry â?? The majority of industry professionals are now over 50, and we expect to see mass retirements over the next 10 years, making the talent shortage even more critical.
- Fear of entry â?? After the 2008 crash, hundreds of talented professionals left the land title industry because of economic conditions. Many are unwilling to return because of their fear of returning to a potentially unstable job.
- No industry hiring nexus â?? While VLTA hosts an online careers page, itâ??s not well-known yet. Companies looking for talent, and professionals seeking jobs have a hard time connecting.

There is no quick solution to these issues, but VLTA continues to strive to put forward excellent training both live and online, and we continue to promote our online career center.

Whatâ??s going on with Best Practices?

In 2013, ALTA put forward industry Best Practices in response to their dialogue with lenders and the CFPB. In 2014, VLTA took up the cause of educating our Association about the ins and outs of Best Practices. Rumors of required certifications spread like wildfire, and many companies took the time to

draft Best Practices manuals and contract for audits and certifications. Then, suddenly, everything went quiet. It seemed like the Best Practices fever had abated. Whatâ??s up with that?

ALTA continues to encourage title and settlement companies to engage in the Best Practices framework, along with the new Maturity Model available through ALTA. Indeed, it appears that over time, adherence to Best Practices, and a demonstration that your company is managing its liabilities adequately may become more and more important to lenders as ALTA completes its national registry. VLTA encourages all title and settlement companies in Virginia to continue to operate with Best Practices in mind. These guidelines protect both you and your clients. Learn more about ALTAâ??s newest guidance on Best Practices in this great online session (2 hours CE/CLE) from Steve Day.

Where can I get help with cybersecurity?

Wire fraud scams are up 480% since 2016, and approximately 40% of cyberattacks affect companies with fewer than 500 employees. Cybersecurity is the most critical industry concern of our time. Unfortunately, most title insurance professionals donâ??t have a tech background, and feel particularly vulnerable to cybersecurity threats. Take the time to educate yourself and your staff on cybersecurity â?? VLTA can help!

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- Get discounts on cyber-education with SME
- Take classes online
- Train your staff â?? contact Melissa Ellis for staff training at melissa.ellis@smeinc.net
- Connect with Virginia resources

When can we expect to see the new VCTSA program?

Itâ??s almost here! The new VCTSA course will be released on **September 15** at www.pathlms.com/vlta. VCTSA is a comprehensive course offering detailed instruction and insight into the modern settlement process. Approved for 16 hours of CE and CLE credits, you can knock out a lot of continuing education in one fell swoop with this online class. The course will be priced at $260 for members, $520 for non-members. The course covers: Licensing & RESA Registration; Regulatory Agencies; The Real Estate Contract; Loan Closing Instructions; The Title Commitment; Pre-Closing Activities (Opening the File, Closing Protection Letters); Closing Activities (HUD-1 Settlement Statement, Closing Disclosure, ALTA Settlement Statement, Buyer & Seller Papers); Special Problems encountered during closing; Special Closing Types (REO, Estate Sales, 1031 Exchanges, etc.); Post-Closing Activities (Policies, Recording, Releases, Escrow, etc.); Escrow Account Management, Reconciliation, and Escheat; Attorney Settlement Agents â?? Special Topics, UPL; Marketing Statutes, CFPB; Additional State and Federal Regulatory Issues; Fraud & Theft Prevention, Data Security.

Thatâ??s all for this month, but keep those questions coming! Weâ??re here to serve you!



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Category

1. Columns

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