
A First-Timer's Perspective: Dale Shoop Reflects on ALTA ONE 2025

Description

By K.I.T.T (Dale's AI sidekick)

When the American Land Title Association brought its annual ALTA ONE conference to New York City in 2025, the energy was unmistakable. Industry leaders, innovators, and professionals from across the country gathered to discuss the forces shaping the future of title and settlement. Among them was Dale Shoop, President-Elect of the Virginia Land Title Association (VLTA) and President of VSTITLE, attending ALTA ONE for the very first time.

Shoop's motivation for going was straightforward: "I was asked to attend by the VLTA board," he explained. As President-Elect, representing Virginia on a national stage felt not only appropriate, but timely. And with an adult daughter living in the city, the trip also became a chance to blend professional development with a family visit. "All I really had to do was book the train and a hotel. I brought my wife along so we could also spend time with our daughter—it turned into a great combination of work and family."

AI: Opportunity Over Anxiety

If there was one theme that dominated ALTA ONE, it was undeniably artificial intelligence. But the tone wasn't doom-and-gloom—it was optimistic.

"The message was clear: let AI handle the repetitive, mundane tasks so our people can spend more time being human," Shoop said. "Not replacing staff—freeing them up."

Conference speakers emphasized that title professionals should craft company use policies and data-safety guardrails, ensuring no confidential customer information ever enters an unsecured AI platform. Shoop noted the balance between excitement and responsibility: "AI is an opportunity, but we need to be smart so we don't compromise sensitive information."

FinCEN's AML Rule: Pushback Meets Reality

Even though Shoop didn't attend dedicated FinCEN sessions, he said the topic surfaced prominently—especially during the keynote featuring the CEOs of the "Big Four" title underwriters.

"Fidelity National made it clear they've filed a lawsuit against the U.S. government to stop the reporting requirement," he noted. "The room applauded, but realistically, I think the rule will stand. Come March, we're all going to have to buckle up and do it."

Vendors at the conference were already demonstrating platforms designed to automate and submit AML reports, signaling an emerging cottage industry around compliance.

A Workforce Turning Point

Another recurring message was the industry's looming generational transition.

"We're about to see a wave of retirements," Shoop explained. "And the title industry has never been on the radar of young people choosing careers. It isn't flashy or at least, it hasn't been presented that way."

Breakout sessions focused heavily on what younger professionals value in a career, and how to position the title industry as a meaningful, stable, and rewarding option. "We have to get in front of them and tell our story. There's real opportunity here for an entire new generation."

A Moment of Humor: Who Said Title Insurance Isn't Sexy?

While ALTA ONE is known for big ideas, it's also known for big personality and this year delivered.

One CEO quipped during a keynote, "Who said title insurance isn't sexy?" Shoop laughed, especially because later that evening, he found himself posing for a photo with three Vegas-style dancers in sequined outfits, top hats, and canes—a light-hearted moment that captured the spirit of the event.

"I think that quote fit the moment perfectly," he said.

The Power of Networking Beyond Virginia

While Shoop enjoyed the sessions, the networking left the deepest impression.

"At home, I'm the guy people come to for answers. At ALTA ONE, I was surrounded by people further down the road—more experienced, more successful, leading larger organizations. That expanded my thinking in a big way."

He intentionally sat with people he didn't know during meals, asked questions, and sought out conversations with leaders who had scaled their companies. "It was enriching and fulfilling to realize how big our industry actually is on a national level."

One quote from the conference stuck with him:

"Real estate is the backbone of the American economy and title professionals are the backbone of real estate."

"We're not well-known," Shoop said, "but we're incredibly important. We make a real difference in the world."

Final Advice for First-Timers

Shoop didn't hesitate when asked what he'd tell the next Virginia professional considering ALTA ONE:

"Go. Mix it up. Sit with people you don't know. Ask questions. The value is in the conversations and the exposure to people doing big things. It changes the way you think about our industry and your place in it."

For Shoop, ALTA ONE 2025 was more than a conference. It was perspective-shifting, energizing, and even a little bit sexy.





Dale Shoop

Serving as Senior Vice President of F&M Bank and President of VSTITLE, Dale Shoop works alongside excellent people finding amazing opportunities every day. He and his team facilitate real estate closings and help protect buyers, sellers, and lenders from the financial risks that come with those transactions. Dale holds a degree in Sociology from Virginia Tech and is a licensed title insurance agent in the Commonwealth of Virginia. He serves on the boards of the Central Virginia Mortgage Bankers Association and the Virginia Land Title Association, where he is also President-Elect. Dale is a board member of Central Valley Habitat for Humanity, chairing the Site Selection Committee, and is a Rotarian who serves on the board of the Rotary Club of Harrisonburg. Outside of work, he enjoys traveling with his wife, Elizabeth, carving up the road course at Dominion Raceway, and restoring his grandfather's 1962 Ford Falcon. He resides in Rockingham County, Virginia.

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