VLTA Members in Motion â?? June 2025

Description



Share with VLTA what youâ??re doing in your community, your new jobs, promotions, retirements, milestones, professional accomplishments, good deeds, events, awards, or even a member advocacy story, or testimonial while youâ??re at it! News can include a relevant link to an article, blog post, press release, video, landing page, or website.

New Stewart Underwriting Counsel in Richmond



Jessica Snead Tate joined Stewart Title as a Virginia Underwriting Counsel on April 14, 2025. Jessica is a graduate of the College of William & Mary and the University of Richmond School of Law. Jessicaâ??s extensive background includes conducting closings for a residential lender, working as a staff attorney for SunTrustâ??s commercial loan closing department, and most recently, managing a foreclosure practice for a mid-sized law firm. Jessicaâ??s career has exposed her to complex real estate and title issues, estate law, bankruptcy, and much more. Jessica is based in the Richmond office of Stewart Title.

New Stewart Agency Representative in Virginia

Jessica Ausura joined Stewart Title as an Agency Sales Representative (ASR) on June 9, 2025. Jessica is based in Hampton Roads and will be supporting and developing Stewart Titleâ??s agency network throughout Central and Southern Virginia. Jessica has an extensive background in sales, marketing, business development and community outreach. Her masterâ??s degree in education has influenced her roles leading and training sales teams. As a published writer, she enjoys creating content and training material and has supported efforts in technical arenas, including the Coastal Virginia Offshore Wind project.

Westcor Land Title Insurance CompanyÂ® Announces New Addition of Underwriting Counsel and Agency Representative Laura Wakefield



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Westcor Land Title Insurance CompanyÂ® proudly welcomes Laura Wakefield as an Underwriting Counsel and Agency Representative on the Virginia team in the Mid-Atlantic region.

Wakefield has over 35 years of experience in the real estate industry. She began her career as a recorder and title examiner at Real Title Company in Fairfax, Virginia and went on to work for Commonwealth Land Title Insurance Company as a residential and commercial title examiner, underwriter, and eventually as a legal assistant to underwriting counsel.

After her first year of law school, Wakefield began working at K. Hovnanian Homes (formerly Washington Homes) as a law clerk and then as in-house legal counsel once she passed the bar. Later, she transitioned to Shulman Rogers in Potomac, Maryland as an associate counsel working on land acquisition agreements and sales contracts for another national home builder.

Wakefield left the law firm life to go in-house again and joined InSite Wireless Group, a telecommunications company in Alexandria, Virginia, as Senior Legal Counsel on the acquisition team reviewing title and survey and obtaining policies as well as drafting documents to facilitate acquisitions, closings, and securitizations. When the company was acquired, Wakefield rejoined the Fidelity National Financial Family of Companies as one of the Virginia underwriting counsels at Fidelity.

Wakefield is a graduate of George Mason University, where she studied International Studies. She also graduated from the University of Baltimore School of Law.

â??Laura is a dedicated professional with a unique blend of legal expertise and a vast understanding of the title industry,â?• said Matthew Cunningham, Mid-Atlantic Regional Agency Manager. â??Her ability to connect with agents and provide practical, solution-focused support will be a tremendous asset as we continue to serve and grow our market.â?•

Westcor Land Title Insurance CompanyÂ® Welcomes Liz Dunlap as Agency Representative



Westcor Land Title Insurance CompanyÂ® is proud to announce Liz Dunlap as a new Agency Representative to join the Virginia team. Dunlap will work with title agents in central and southern Virginia to grow their market footprint, increase their wallet share, and stay compliant and up to date on the latest technology available.

Dunlap has been in the industry since 2001 and understands the challenges facing title agents. For over a decade, she worked as a sales representative for title agents, including tenures with Doma Title Insurance and WFG National Title Insurance Company. Prior to that, she spent 13 years working for an engineering and surveying company, assisting title and escrow companies, attorneys, lenders, and developers. She knows how important title insurance is for homeowners and what it takes to facilitate everything to handle a transaction from beginning to end.

Dunlap studied engineering and technology at Lakeland Community College and pursued studies in industrial technology at Kent State University. She is a member of Commercial Real Estate Women (CREW) Network as well as past president of its Cleveland chapter. She also served on the Lake County Development Council as a board trustee and secretary and has been a member of both the Lake Geauga Area Association of Realtors and the Cleveland Realtist Association.

â??Liz brings a wealth of experience, deep industry insight, and a strong history of success that will be instrumental as we continue to expand,â• said Matthew Cunningham, Mid-Atlantic Regional Agency Manager. â??Her unwavering commitment to supporting title agents sets her apart, and her positive impact will be felt across the local market.â•

FNFâ??s Agency Division Welcomes Industry Leader William A. Oâ??Connell, Esq. as Vice President and Mid-Atlantic Underwriting Counsel

Columbia, MD â?? May 2025 â?? Fidelity National Financialsâ?? (NYSE: FNF) Agency Division is pleased to welcome William A. â??Billâ?• Oâ??Connell, Esq. as Vice President and Mid-Atlantic Underwriting Counsel. A recognized leader in the title and legal community with more than two decades of industry experience, Bill joins Fidelity as a trusted resource to agents and attorneys across Maryland, D.C., Virginia, and beyond.

Bill is known throughout the Mid-Atlantic for combining deep legal expertise with an unwavering focus on service. For more than 16 years, he led underwriting, legal, and regulatory efforts in Maryland for a national title insurance underwriter. His approachable style and agent-first mindset have made him a go-to partner for real estate attorneys and title professionals navigating complex commercial and residential transactions.

â??The reception I received here at FNF has been unbelievable,â?• Bill shared. â??Truly, Iâ??ve never felt more welcomed and wanted from a team or on a team in my entire career. At the end of the day, this industry is about people â?? every stakeholder in the transaction, from the agent to the client to the underwriter. Thereâ??s a lot we can do with technology, but what matters most is how we make people feel. We must leave people in a better place than when we found them.â?•

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Bill believes agents need empowermentâ??not just answers. â??They need to know they can pick up the phone without feeling inadequate. They need to feel like the underwriter is glad they called. Thatâ??s how you build confidence and keep transactions moving. We always want to find a way to say, â??Yes.â?• Sometimes that requires creativity and problem-solving skills. Itâ??s our job to help our customers understand the solution, be able to explain it to others, and get to the finish line. Itâ??s all about how you treat people.â?•

Join us in welcoming Bill to the Mid-Atlantic team: Bill.OConnell@fnf.com

News You Can Use ~ Consumer Education

The Real Property Section of the Virginia State Bar has published online a series of short articles explaining various legal issues, including information about Fraud, Powers of Attorney, HOA Issues, Tenancy in Deeds, Title Insurance, Transfer on Death Deeds, and What Happens to Real Estate When You Die. The information is written for the benefit of the general public but can be used by any settlement agent to help inform their customers of legal issues that affect real estate in Virginia.

If you have other topics on which you would like informational brochures developed please let VLTA know. We will pass the request to the Real Property Section of the VSB.

https://vsb.org/RP/groups/RP/rp-pubs.aspx

If you have any questions or would like to submit your own member news, please reach out to Emily Stephens at membership@vlta.org.

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