

March 2026 message from NYSCAR President,
Mercedes Brien

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

NEW YORK STATE COMMERCIAL
ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®

NYS Commercial Association of REALTORS®
Mercedes Brien, President

NYSCAR Board Meets in Albany

The New York State Commercial Association of REALTOR'S® Board of Governors held their first meeting of the year on February 10, 2026 at the Crowne Plaza-Desmond Hotel in Albany, NY. Past President John Lavelle (Hudson Valley) installed the Officers and Governors. 2026 officers are as follows: President, Mercedes Brien, RAC, First VP, Carolyn Vinci, WNY, Second VP, Andrew Mangini, Greater Capital and Treasurer Hilary Goldman, Hudson Valley; new Governors: William Heussler, WNY, Valerie Port, Hudson Valley, Jessica Richer, Greater Capital, Ronald Gunner Tronolone, WNY, Dawn Carpenter, CPM, SI, Teresa Belmore, Hudson Valley, Tom Lischak, CCIM, Syracuse and Karen Zalewski Wildzunas.

On behalf of NYSCAR, I was pleased to present Bob Strell with a plaque in appreciation of his untiring efforts on behalf of the association while serving as president May 2023 – December 2025!

Committee reports were given along with updates from the chapters and Upstate NY CCIM Chapter.

Government Affairs & RPAC Chairman Mike Johnson (WNY) reported that NYSCAR raised \$9,329.00 for RPAC in 2025 and he thanked all who contributed! He also reported on the Lead Based Rental Registry which pertains to 25 “communities of concern.” He also noted the mid-term elections.

The Communications (Chair Mark Rohlin (RAC) & Tech Committee (Ira Zucker, Chair, NYC/LI) reported that communications will be exploring a social media platform and marketing. Tech will be working on Phase 2 of the website which will include navigational features, improve internal processes and email blasts. Professional Development chaired by Edward Gallacher, CCIM and Jessica Richer reported that courses continue to be scheduled to meet the required courses for NYS license renewal as well as other topics of interest. It was noted that some “advanced” classes may have a nominal charge in the future. The basic and “required” courses would remain free to NYSCAR members.

Congratulations!



Congratulations go out to: Immediate Past President Robert Strell for receiving the President’s Award from the WNY Chapter at the Chapter’s Awards dinner on February 12. Congratulations also go out to Stephen Blake for receiving the C. Stuart Hunt Lifetime Achievement Award and the Honorable Brian Higgins for receiving the Meritorious Service Award.

24th Annual Northeast Regional Marketing Session & NYS Commercial Association of REALTORS® Conference – Rivers Casino, Schenectady, New York

The New York State Commercial Association of REALTORS® (NYSCAR) invites you to the 24th Annual Conference, held **June 8–10, 2026**, at Rivers Casino & Resort in Schenectady, NY. This premier event offers continuing education and the Northeast Regional Marketing Session. Network with industry leaders, earn CE credits, and explore sponsorship opportunities. For sponsorship information click [here](#).

Call for Nominations for NYSCAR’s REALTOR® of the Year!

The New York State Commercial Association of REALTORS® (NYSCAR) is looking for nominations for their NYS REALTOR® of the Year, which recognizes an

outstanding active member of NYSCAR. [Download the qualifications and application form to submit your nominee](#). The deadline for nominations is May 1, 2026.

INVESTING IN DST'S: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW



Alan Geier - 1031 Financial

Investing in DST's: What You Need To Know

Virtual Lunch N' Learn

Join Us for Our Upcoming Lunch N' Learn Presented by Alan Geier of 1031 Financial and Sponsored by NYSCAR

Date: March 26th, 2026
Time: 11:15AM to 12:30 EST
Location: Zoom Meeting
Cost: Complimentary

THE CCIM INSTITUTE
Upstate New York



Lunch N' Learn session, sponsored by Upstate CCIM Chapter and NYSCAR

March 26, 2026 to March 26, 2026 | 11:15 AM to 12:30 PM Via Zoom

Are you looking to transition out of active property management without losing the benefits of real estate ownership? Join us for an introductory Lunch N' Learn designed specifically for investors who are new to the world of Delaware Statutory Trusts (DSTs).

Whether you are approaching a 1031 Exchange or simply looking for a way to diversify your portfolio into institutional-grade assets, this session will provide a clear, jargon-free roadmap to how these structures work.

[REGISTER NOW](#)

Note: This is a Beginner Level session. No prior experience with DSTs or complex tax law is required to follow along!

TICKETS

\$0 Member Ticket

\$0 Non Member Ticket

Professional Development

Please go here to register: <https://nyscar.org/professional-development/>

Please note that NYSCAR classes are listed on the NYSCAR website – www.nyscar.org. Go to Resources and Tools/Professional Development. Here you can find the CE requirements to renew your license and also a list of classes being offered. As classes are confirmed, they are posted to this area.

Thank you Russ!

Many thanks to Russ Gullo, CCIM who did an outstanding job teaching his “How to Invest in Real Estate Wisely” course on February 20, 2026. The course carried three hours of CE credit and was very well received by thirty attendees.

Many thanks to NYSCAR Past President Ed Smith for teaching the NY “Commercial and Investment Real Estate Certification Program” which is being taught March 11-27 (each Wednesday and Friday for three weeks). Over 50 students taking advantage of this opportunity!

Is a Rhombus a Square?

Envisioning Bias and Culture in Real Estate



Instructor: Kim Bullard

Date: Friday, May 1, 2026 via Zoom

Time: 9:00 am – 1:00 pm

CE Credit: 4 hours

Registration fee: NYSCAR Members: free, Non-members \$50.00

**Fulfills NYS Dept. of State licensing requirements for
Implicit Bias and Cultural Competency**



New York State Association of REALTORS® , Inc.

NYSAR releases joint statement with business community on proposed tax increases in State Budget

Following the release of the state Senate and Assembly one-house budget proposals, NYSAR released a joint statement along with other leaders of the business and real estate communities warning that the proposed tax increases will significantly harm New Yorkers and the state’s economy if enacted.

“New York City’s business community stands united in strong opposition to tax increases as part of the State budget under negotiations. New York is the highest tax and spending jurisdiction in the country and New Yorkers already pay among the highest individual, business, and property taxes. This is particularly true in New York City, which is home to the nation’s highest individual, business, and real estate tax rates. The Governor’s Executive Budget prudently recognized this reality. The legislative one-house budgets do not. These ill-advised proposals will only make it harder for families and businesses to live and grow in New York City, deter investment, and continue New York’s electoral decline due to its tax and fiscal policies.”

Governor and Legislature disagree on climate law changes and reforming SEQRA to spur housing

Democratic leaders of the state Senate and Assembly continue to disagree with Gov. Kathy Hochul’s efforts to roll back the state’s 2019 climate laws and institute reforms to the state’s environmental quality review law (SEQRA) to spur more housing development. Neither house addressed the 2019 climate law in their one-house budgets, and the Senate modified the governor’s proposed SEQRA

changes, while the Assembly omitted it entirely from their budget proposal. Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie and Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins did not, however, rule out any future conversations on the issues during budget negotiations. NYSAR supports the governor’s proposed changes to SEQRA to expedite and streamline the process to develop more housing and continues to have serious concerns with the current rollout of the 2019 climate law and its impact on energy affordability and reliability for all New Yorkers.



REALTORS® Legislative Meetings 2026

June 13- 18, 2026 – Washington, DC

Promoting Pro-Real Estate Policies & Protecting Property Rights

The REALTORS® Legislative Meetings in Washington, D.C., bring together thousands of members to conduct the business of NAR and unite for a common cause—advancing the real estate profession through powerful, impactful policy advocacy. For full information go to: [REALTORS® Legislative Meetings](#)

NAR Opens Applications for 2026 Good Neighbor Awards

The National Association of REALTORS® announced the opening of applications for its 2026 [Good Neighbor Awards](#) today. The program honors real estate agents who demonstrate exceptional dedication to volunteer service and have lasting impacts on their communities.

“Service is at the heart of what it means to be a REALTOR®,” said NAR President Kevin Brown. “The Good Neighbor Awards recognize members who strengthen neighborhoods, support families and help communities thrive through volunteer service. We are excited to see the nominations and celebrate the impact REALTORS® are making every day.”

Five winners will each receive a \$10,000 grant for their nonprofit organization

and be honored in November at [NAR NXT, The REALTOR® Experience](#), in New Orleans. Additionally, five honorable mentions will each receive a \$2,500 grant.

See more: [NAR Opens Applications for 2026 Good Neighbor Awards](#)



Save the Date
June 8-10, 2026

Grow your career through:

- » Education
- » Marketing Sessions
- » Networking and more!

Boost Your Brand. Empower Our Mission.

Rivers Casino and Resort, 1 Rush Street, Schenectady, NY 12305

Brought to you by: The NYS Commercial Association of REALTORS® along with the Upstate NY CCIM Chapter, and the Society of Exchange Counselors.

NYS Commercial Association of REALTORS®

is Seeking Sponsors for the

**24th Northeast Regional Marketing Session
and Annual Conference**

Rivers Casino, Schenectady, New York

June 8 – 10, 2026

Phone: 844-9-NYSCAR, Email: info@nyscar.org

[NYSCAR 2026 Conference](#)

2026 NYSCAR Board of Governors

Mercedes Brien, President; Carolyn Vinci, 1st Vice President; Andrew Mangini, 2nd Vice President; Hilary Ryan Goldman, Treasurer; Louis Marocco, Greater Capital Area Chapter President; Karl Ashley, Greater Syracuse Chapter President; Hilary Ryan Goldman, Hudson Valley Chapter President; Ira Zucker, NYC/Long Island Chapter President; Peter Gillett,

Rochester Area Chapter President; Scott Warren, Southern Tier Chapter President; Amanda Hirsch, Western NY Chapter President; Ginny Squire, CCIM Chapter President; Ed Gallacher '26; Dawn Carpenter '26; Karen Zalewski-Wildzunas '26; Teresa Belmore '26; Mark Rohlin '27; John Kelley '27; Mike Johnson '27; Tom Lischak '27; William Heussler '28; Jessica Richer '28; Valerie Port '28; Gunner Tronolone '28; Past President Advisory; Guy Blake, John Lavelle, Joe Rowley.

NYSCAR Past Presidents

David Wallace, CCIM ('96-'97); Jeff LiPuma, CCIM ('98-99); Edward S. Smith, Jr. ('00-'01); Karen Lewis, CCIM ('02-'03); Steve Perfit, CCIM ('04-'05); David Dworkin ('06-'07); Maureen Wilson, CCIM ('08-'09); Joseph F. Rowley, Jr. ('10-'11); Michael Johnson ('12-'13); John Lavelle ('14-'15); Brian J. DiNardo ('16-'17); Guy Blake ('18-'19); James Walker ('20-'21); Dana Crocker ('22-'23). Bob Strell ('24-'25)



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