



# CRAVER'S COMMENTS

MAY 2007

by **TONY CRAVER** EXIT REALTY SOUTHPOINT

## EXIT REALTY IS GROWING

Last November when I first told you about why I chose to purchase an Exit Realty franchise, Exit had around 31,000 agents in its system. Today there are nearly 37,000 agents proudly claiming Exit as the mother ship. That is phenomenal growth. Already the fastest growing real estate company in the history of the business, at the present rate Exit will be the largest real estate company on the continent in just five years.

How are they doing it? Mostly it is the Exit philosophy. The founder and owner, Steve Morris, has created the most

family-oriented, agent-friendly, and least greedy real estate franchise out there. The Exit system is designed to reward agents for growing the organization, create retirement plans for agents, beneficiary plans for agent's families, support for office administrators, funds for charities (Exit has given over a million dollars to Habitat for Humanity in the last five years), and medical plans. This is all accomplished by Exit International not taking the big cut that other companies do.

What does this mean to you? The Exit family of agents is hard working, dedicated to the profession, and happy in their work. This translates into a better experience for you the customer. You'll be dealing with people who are making real estate their career and will still be doing it when you call them the next time you need a Realtor.

## GOOD IDEA

When you have been married as long as Cathy and I have, you hope that you have learned to talk to each other and share ideas. Being empty nesters tends to encourage this exercise as well. For years I have helped fight Realtor and home owner political battles. There is always some group wanting to take away what you have worked hard for over the years. Local home owners who already pay property taxes as high as any in the state are being constantly bombarded with higher property taxes, impact fees, and now, proposed land transfer taxes. Local and state politicians are unable to curb there insatiable spending habits so they continually go after the home owner in an effort to redistribute the wealth. Part of a Realtor's mission statement is to protect the homeowner and preserve private property rights.

The home owner is not entirely blameless in this scenario. Thousands of folks have moved to Durham over the years and don't bother to participate in the governing process. They send children to our excellent schools, eat in our wonderful restaurants, walk in our parks, shop in our nationally ranked malls, and watch our many and varied sporting events.

What they don't do is vote.

As a result, all you have to do in Durham to get elected is to get endorsed by at least two of the old political caucuses and you are in. And we certainly know to what extent some people will go to gain a few endorsements.

Now you know what our conversation was about one night last winter. In a far-ranging discussion on how to get people to participate and what a Realtor's role should be in the process,

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## CONTACT US

OFFICE : 919-493-3100    CELL: 919-604-5289  
1415 NC 54 WEST, SUITE 104, DURHAM, NC 27707  
EMAIL: [TONY.CRAVER@VERIZON.NET](mailto:TONY.CRAVER@VERIZON.NET)  
WEBSITES: [EXITREALTYSOUTHPOINT.COM](http://EXITREALTYSOUTHPOINT.COM)  
[TONYCRAVER.COM](http://TONYCRAVER.COM)

## THINGS TO BE PROUD OF

BREAKING NEWS: WE JUST LEARNED THAT 10 IS A NICE NUMBER. THAT'S RIGHT, OUR 10<sup>TH</sup> GRANDCHILD IS DUE TO ARRIVE IN DECEMBER AT JEFF AND KIRSTEN'S HOUSE IN COLUMBIA, MO. WOW!!!

## DID YOU KNOW?

RALEIGH AND DURHAM HAVE BEEN DIVIDED INTO SEPARATE METROPOLITAN AREAS BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT. IT WAS RECENTLY ANNOUNCED THAT RALEIGH'S METRO POPULATION WAS 1,060,000 AND DURHAM'S WAS 496,000. YOU DO THE MATH.

my wife suggested that we get new folks to register to vote at the closing table. We discussed the fact that it involves more than just newcomers to the area. Every time someone buys a home in another part of town, they change precincts, and, judging from the turnout in most elections, forget to register in the new precinct.

Our solution to increase involvement in the political process is to encourage every Realtor to take a voter registration form to each closing and encourage the new homeowners to fill it out. We will furnish the stamp, see that it is properly addressed, and mail it. This will be a completely non partisan program. Our only goal is to increase participation in the governing process.

I first presented the idea to the Legislative Committee of the Durham Regional Association of Realtors. Our committee asked for a received an endorsement from local election officials. Next the proposal was presented to the Board of Directors, who adopted it, and then to the general membership. The next stop was to obtain the approval of the leadership of the North Carolina Association of Realtors. They want me to present it to the entire executive committee in June and then to the state convention in September. At that point they want to try to make it a national effort. I applaud the Realtors for their willingness to champion this effort on your behalf.

## BILLION WITH A “B”

At a recent Realtor luncheon we were treated to a

talk by the Director of the Economic Workforce for Durham. What is going on in downtown Durham is simply amazing. According to him there is a total of one **billion** dollars worth of public and private money being spent in an effort to make downtown something very special. The key phrase here is “public and private”. You could argue that the current effort goes as far back as when the Sanford’s developed Brightleaf Square, but the present surge actually began with Jim Goodman of Capital Broadcasting and his vision to restore the American Tobacco Complex. Next throw in the investments made by Christian Laettner and Brian Davis and their partners in Blue Devil Ventures into the West Village and now the Leggett Tobacco project and you are half way there.

We often criticize local officials when we think they mess up but they also deserve a lot of credit for recognizing the rare opportunity to partner with these and many other investors to make Durham special. The city is currently building the third of three parking garages it promised to erect near the ball park complex. Also the new \$46 million Performing Arts Center is coming out of the ground. Diamond View Two is a steel skeleton behind the left field wall of the DBAP. Phase Two of the American Tobacco Historic District is finishing up and will be primarily a residential part of the complex. City officials say June will see the end of a major renovation of downtown streets and sidewalks complete with trees and parks. One local investor has purchased 17 downtown buildings for renovation.

The future of downtown Durham is so bright that when it is complete, you will see the glow from all over North Carolina.

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DURHAM, NC 27707

