

Fall  
2025



BONITA SPRINGS-ESTERO  
REALTORS®



# THE REALTOR® REVIEW

## FALL FORWARD SWFL REAL ESTATE IN MOTION

- FED Rate Cuts
- Fake Title Company Scams
- SWFL's Commercial Scene
- New Construction vs. Resale
- Fall 2025 Market Stats



YOUR FALL GUIDE TO INDUSTRY TRENDS,  
LEGISLATIVE WINS, AND THE STORIES SHAPING OUR MARKET



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## Fall Update:

## THE Year of Opportunity and Growth

As we wrap up the third quarter of 2025, I'm filled with pride at how our "Thrive in 2025" journey continues. This summer, our REALTORS® family came together in remarkable ways. We enjoyed vibrant membership breakfasts and the launch of our new Sips & Tips series – a monthly happy-hour roundtable where real conversations happen on hot topics. These casual meet-ups have quickly become a hit, blending learning and laughter as we share insights (for example, navigating the new condo laws) over refreshments.

Thank you to everyone who has attended and contributed – your enthusiasm is what makes our 1,300+ member community feel like family.

### Community Highlights: Fun, Fellowship & Service in Q3

We also had some fun and gave back. A shining example was our Fifth Annual Poker Run on August 23. Dozens of members and friends spent the day driving to local spots, picking up playing cards for charity. I'm thrilled to share that the event was a big success – not only in camaraderie, but in impact. All proceeds benefited the Who We Play For organization, which provides free EKG heart screenings to local student athletes. What a joy to combine a great time with a great cause!

Additionally, our "Bad News BERs" kickball team has been having a blast representing us on the field. In fact, interest was so high that we signed up for a second season! I encourage you to come out and cheer on our BER kickball teams – it's a fun way to bond and show that REALTORS® know how to have a good time together.

Follow our social medias to keep up with the kickball schedule and for all our upcoming events and announcements.

### Market & Industry Updates: Adapting to Change

Real estate never stands still, and Q3 brought its share of changes and opportunities. Nationally, we saw a hopeful sign with the Federal Reserve enacting its first interest rate cut in nine months. Lower rates are already beginning to ease mortgage costs and "boost buyers' purchasing power" heading into year-end. Here in Southwest Florida, our market is adjusting to a post-frenzy reality. New construction is playing a bigger role than ever – about 35% of homes for sale in our area are new builds (versus ~16% nationally). With builders offering competitive prices and modern, storm-resilient designs, many buyers are giving new homes a close look. Meanwhile, resale listings need the right pricing and unique value (like that perfect location or character) to stand out. The good news is our market is stabilizing into a healthier balance, and savvy REALTORS® are leveraging data from articles like this to guide clients wisely.

Staying informed remains key. Short-term rental regulations have been a hot topic this quarter – local governments across SWFL have each implemented their own rules for vacation rentals. From minimum stay limits in Cape Coral to permit requirements in Bonita Springs and Estero, it's clear that one size doesn't fit all. In this edition, be sure to check out the rundown on these new short-term rental ordinances. By knowing the latest rules, we can better advise our investor clients and keep deals running smoothly. We're also seeing the real-world benefits of REALTOR® advocacy. Florida's legislature enacted several pro-real estate measures earlier this year, and by Q3 we're seeing those wins come to fruition – from the elimination of Florida's business rent tax to millions in new funding for housing affordability and storm resilience programs. It's a reminder that when REALTORS® speak up, leaders listen. Our voices at Great American REALTOR® Days and through RPAC truly made a difference for our industry and community.

### Looking Ahead: Giving Back and Growing Forward

As we head into the final quarter of 2025, I remain optimistic and grateful. Our association is strong, united, and making a positive impact. In the coming weeks we'll celebrate at our Installation & Awards Banquet, welcoming our 2026 President, Jeanne Drath. Jeanne's theme, "Give Back, Grow Forward," perfectly captures the spirit of service and progress that defines us. I have full confidence that under her leadership we will continue to build on our successes. It has been my honor to serve as your President this year. Thank you for your trust, support, and friendship. Together we have achieved so much – from record participation in events to navigating market shifts – and together we will finish 2025 strong. Let's all continue to give back where we can and grow forward into 2026 with renewed energy. I look forward to supporting Jeanne and seeing our BER family reach new heights. Remember, together we thrive! Here's to a strong finish to 2025 and an even brighter year ahead.



Adam Ruud, 2025 BER President

## THRIVE IN 2025!

### REALTOR® REVIEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

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## Featured Articles

### 8 Vacation Rentals Under the Microscope

From Naples to Cape Coral, local governments across Southwest Florida are tightening rules on short-term rentals. Get the full breakdown of permits, taxes, and stay limits—so you can guide investor clients confidently.



### 13-14 New Construction vs. Resale: Who's Winning in 2025?

Builders are cutting prices and offering incentives—but resale homes are holding value better. Learn why buyers are leaning toward resale this season, and what it means for sellers.



### 15-16 FR/BAR Contract Updates

Learn the new flood disclosure rules (for sales and 1-year+ leases) and the exclusive listing agreement changes—MLS compliance, public marketing, and simplified buyer-broker compensation. Get the quick checklist to deliver the right forms, on time, and keep closings on track.



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## DATES TO REMEMBER:

2026 Installation &  
Awards Banquet -  
November 19th

December Membership  
Breakfast -  
December 11th

Q1 Membership  
Breakfast -  
February 13th

District 5 Bowling  
Tournament -  
April 25th

BER Golf  
Challenge -  
May 8th

# FED RATE CUTS: WHAT REALTORS SHOULD EXPECT AND TELL CLIENTS (Q3 2025)

The U.S. Federal Reserve Building. The Fed's latest rate cut marks a shift in monetary policy, with implications for mortgages and homebuyers.

## National Outlook – Fed Eases Rates in 2025

The U.S. Federal Reserve has reduced its benchmark interest rate by 0.25%, bringing the target range down to 4.00%–4.25%. This is the first cut in nine months and was widely anticipated amid cooling inflation. Importantly, Fed officials have hinted at the possibility of additional quarter-point cuts in the coming meetings if economic conditions permit.

For realtors nationwide, this monetary easing suggests that borrowing costs (including mortgage rates) may gradually decline. In fact, mortgage rates have ticked down from their peaks, improving affordability for many buyers. Lower rates tend to “positively affect [buyers'] budgets” and spur home shopping, which could revive sales activity heading into year-end.



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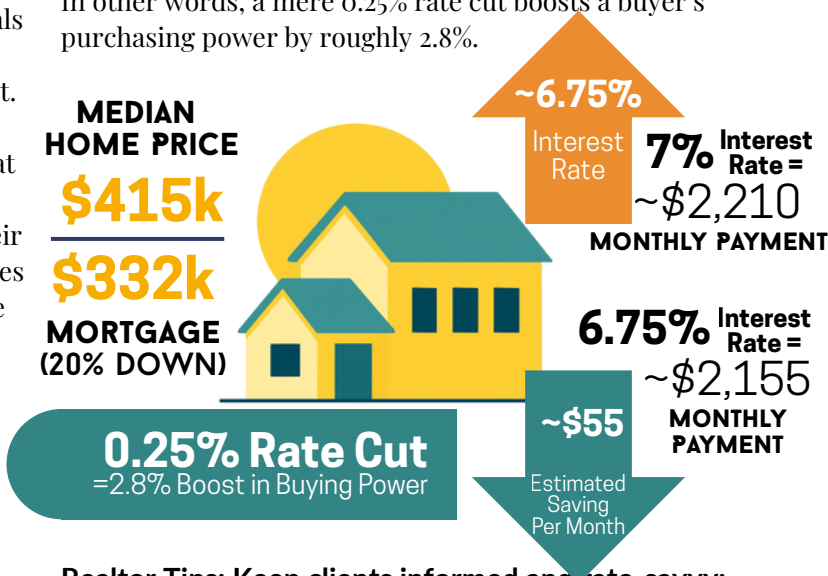


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## Florida & SWFL Impact – What to Tell Clients

Florida's housing market, including Southwest Florida (SWFL), will feel the effects of these rate changes. The median home price in SWFL is about \$415,000 as of Sept 2025, meaning buyers here take sizable loans. Even a small rate drop can make a noticeable difference. For example, on a ~\$332,000 mortgage (approx. a \$415k home with 20% down), a 30-year loan at 7% interest has an ~\$2,210 monthly payment, whereas at 6.75% it's about \$2,155. That \$55 lower payment saves nearly \$20,000 in interest over the loan's life. In other words, a mere 0.25% rate cut boosts a buyer's purchasing power by roughly 2.8%.



## Realtor Tips: Keep clients informed and rate-savvy:

- **Affordability Wins:** Emphasize how even minor rate cuts improve affordability. The above example highlights that every bit counts in monthly budgets.
- **Buying Timing:** With the Fed potentially cutting rates, more buyers may enter the market. Encourage serious clients to get pre-approved now and be ready – falling rates can fuel demand, possibly tightening inventory in popular Florida markets.
- **Stay Informed:** Advise clients not to solely “time the market” for the lowest rate, but to make informed decisions. If they find the right home, they can lock in a rate and refinance later if rates drop more. Remind them that home prices and competition may change as rates fall, so acting sooner rather than later could be wise.

By staying on top of rate news and explaining these impacts, realtors can position themselves as trusted advisors. Clients will appreciate guidance on how Fed moves translate to real-world savings and opportunities in both the national market and here in Florida



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## FAKE TITLE COMPANIES TARGETING SWFL TRANSACTIONS

Fraudsters are targeting real estate transactions in Southwest Florida with a new fake title company scam. In this con, criminals clone legitimate title company websites and pose as sellers of vacant or absentee-owned properties to dupe agents and buyers. They convince Realtors to use their “preferred” (but phony) title/escrow firm for the deal, then disappear with the buyer’s escrow. This scheme is sophisticated and devious – even Florida’s title industry association (FLTA) warned in 2025 about criminals setting up these “ghost” title companies to prey on transactions.

### How the Scam Works

The fraudsters first create a website nearly identical to a real title company’s site – even stealing the logo/branding – and open a bank account in that company’s name. Posing as a property owner, the scammer then contacts a Realtor (often by email or text) claiming to want a quick cash sale of a vacant lot or second home (commonly, a property where the real owner lives out of state). The unsuspecting agent finds a buyer and proceeds with a contract. At the contract stage, the scammer inserts their fake title/escrow company (with the fraudster’s bank wiring instructions) as the closing agent. The buyer dutifully wires the earnest money or closing funds to what appears to be a legitimate title company – but the account actually belongs to the scammer. Once the money is sent, the “seller” and their title company vanish, and the funds are gone. In a recent Florida case, for example, criminals even used forged IDs and a spoofed phone number to impersonate a real title firm. The ruse was only uncovered when a suspicious Realtor independently verified the title company’s contacts – fortunately stopping the fraud before any money was lost.

### Red Flags to Watch For

Realtors should stay alert to warning signs that a supposed deal or client might be part of this scam. Key red flags include:

- **Out-of-Area “Seller” with a Vacant Property:** An unfamiliar person claims to own a vacant lot or rental property and is eager to sell quickly for cash. Often they say they are out of state or overseas, unavailable to meet in person. This is a common profile for scammers targeting absentee-owned real estate.
- **Insistence on Using Their Title/Escrow Company:** The seller strongly pushes you to use a specific title or escrow agency you’ve never heard of (often presented as their “preferred” company). They may discount your usual local title companies. Be very wary if a seller refuses to use any established title company and insists on their own – especially if the company is not local or has a generic name.
- **Unusual Rush and Communication Gaps:** The seller pressures for an unusually quick closing and communicates only via email or text, avoiding phone calls or face-to-face meetings. If someone refuses video calls or in-person signings to verify their identity, that’s a major red flag. Legitimate sellers should be willing to have a Zoom/Facetime call or meet a notary for signing.
- **Too Good to Be True Terms:** The deal seems surprisingly easy or lucrative – e.g. a cash buyer appears out of nowhere at the perfect price, or the “seller” is strangely unconcerned about details. Scammers often dangle great terms to lower your guard. *Remember: if it looks too good to be true, it probably is.*







# How to Protect Your Clients and Yourself

To prevent falling victim to a fake title company scam (or other transaction fraud), use these best practices:

- **Verify Any Unknown Title Company:** Independently confirm that the title or escrow firm is legitimate before sending them any money. Look up the company's official phone number (e.g. via state licensing or known directories) and call them. Make sure the firm really exists at the address/website provided and is aware of your transaction. An extra phone call can expose a fraudulent escrow agent – in one case an alert agent contacted the real title company and discovered the supposed agent was an.
- **Slow Down Rushed Deals:** Don't let anyone force you or your client into skipping due diligence. Scammers rely on urgency to push deals through. If a seller is rushing everything (or won't communicate except by text/email), take a step back and vet the situation carefully. Confirm the person's identity and ownership of the property (check public property records, ask probing questions, etc.). Involve your broker or manager if something feels off – a second opinion can save you from a costly mistake.
- **Insist on Face-to-Face or Video Verification:** As a policy, require some form of identity verification for remote parties. Ask the seller to do a video conference or meet with a notary early in the process. Scammers often will refuse live video or in-person meetings – at which point you should walk away. If they do agree to a video call, verify that the person on screen matches any ID documents. (Be aware scammers have even tried using pre-recorded "deepfake" videos, so stay vigilant for signs of video)
- **Confirm Wire Instructions and Emails Separately:** Wire fraud via email spoofing is an ongoing threat in real estate. Criminals may hack or mimic a legitimate title company's email to send fake wiring instructions, diverting funds to themselves. Always double-check any wire transfer details by calling the title company at a verified phone number – do not rely on phone numbers or links from an email. Scammers often create addresses and websites almost identical to the real company's (perhaps one letter off) to fool. Educate your buyers never to send wires based solely on an email; they should call the known office to confirm instructions.
- **Stay Vigilant and Educate Clients:** Remind your buyers and sellers that fraud is on the rise and verification at every step is essential. Encourage them to ask questions if anything seems strange (like a last-minute change in closing instructions or payments). It's better to delay a closing than to become a fraud victim. If something doesn't add up, don't proceed until you verify with reliable sources.

## Other Real Estate Scams to Beware

While fake title companies are the latest scam, agents should also be on guard against other common real estate frauds:

- **Wire Transfer Email Scams:** As mentioned above, wire fraud schemes intercept or falsify emailed payment instructions. For example, a South Florida buyer lost \$63,000 after unknowingly wiring her condo down payment to scammers who sent her bogus instructions that looked legitimate. Always verify wires by phone – this simple step can prevent catastrophe.
- **Deed Fraud (Title Theft):** Also known as "title piracy," this is when criminals fraudulently transfer ownership of a property by recording fake deeds or forged documents. Scammers pull owner info from public records, forge signatures and notarizations, and essentially steal the title on paper. They target homes that are vacant or rentals (where the true owner isn't around). Once a fake deed is recorded, the fraudster might attempt to sell the property or borrow against it before anyone notices. Realtors should be cautious if asked to list a property by someone who can't prove their ownership. Homeowners (especially absentee owners) can protect themselves by monitoring property records or using county fraud alert services.

**Bottom Line:** Vigilance and verification are the keys to keeping transactions safe. By double-checking information and slowing down when something seems off, SWFL agents can protect their clients' money and their own reputations. Always confirm who you're dealing with – and never hesitate to halt a deal that doesn't feel right. By staying alert to these scams and following best practices, you can outsmart the fraudsters and ensure a safe closing for everyone involved.

# VACATION RENTALS UNDER THE MICROSCOPE: LOCAL RULES IN SWFL



Southwest Florida's vacation rental market is booming, and local governments have responded with a patchwork of new rules. As of Fall 2025, regulations differ widely by city and county. Realtors should be ready to advise investor clients on local ordinances – from permits and minimum stays to taxes and enforcement – before purchasing a short-term rental.

### Bonita Springs & Estero

#### Bonita Springs:

Every non-owner-occupied rental home – even for short stays – must obtain a \$100 rental permit (valid three years) and pass a city inspection to meet housing codes.

#### Estero:

The Village requires short-term rentals to be registered and licensed, with a business tax license and compliance with zoning (STRs only in approved areas). Hosts must collect and remit the 11% rental tax (5% county + 6% state) and meet safety rules. Realtors should ensure buyers budget for permit fees and review HOA restrictions.

### City of Naples

Long known for strict rules, Naples has become more STR-friendly. Properties inside city limits are exempt from Collier County's rental registration law but still require a Florida DBPR license, city business tax receipt, and often a Certificate of Use. Naples no longer enforces old 30-day minimums, but zoning and grandfathered limits still apply. Enforcement is mostly complaint-driven, focused on taxes, safety, and neighbor peace. Realtors can assure clients Naples' high-end market supports premium rates – if they follow the rules.

### Cape Coral

Cape Coral permits STRs but enforces a strict 7-night minimum stay in residential zones. Registration (now \$350 per year, up from \$35) and a local 24/7 contact are required. The city has cracked down on noise and "party house" violations, issuing fines up to \$1,500 per day. Buyers should understand the rules and advertise only legal rental durations.

### Unincorporated Collier County

Outside city limits, Collier County requires all STRs to register and obtain a County Registration Certificate. No minimum stay applies, but every unit must have a 24/7 local contact, display its registration number, and comply with noise, parking, and tax rules (11% total). Fines reach \$500 per day for unregistered rentals



### Lee County & Fort Myers Beach

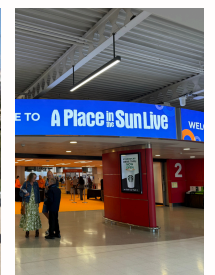
Lee County has no universal STR ordinance but requires state licensing and a 5% bed tax. The Town of Fort Myers Beach is stricter: annual registration (\$300), proof of insurance, occupancy caps, and a new online "Rentalscape" system. Realtors should warn that beach communities often face tougher oversight and more paperwork.

### Tips for Advising Vacation Rental Buyers

Verify the property's jurisdiction and STR rules before buying—requirements vary by city, county, and even HOA. Ensure clients budget for registration fees, safety upgrades, and taxes (usually 11%). Encourage good neighbor practices—noise, trash, and overcrowding complaints often trigger fines. Staying current on local updates—from Naples' enforcement focus to Cape Coral's fee hike—helps Realtors guide clients to succeed legally and profitably in SWFL's growing vacation rental market.



# 「FALL 2025 EVENTS」





# SWFL's Commercial Scene

Retail and Office Market Trends Q2 2025



## Office vs. Retail Vacancy Rates (Q2 2025)

Southwest Florida's office sector continues to post some of the lowest vacancy rates in the state. Charlotte County holds steady around 1–2%, while Lee and Collier counties sit in the 4–5% range. Retail vacancies are similarly tight, averaging 3–4% across all three counties — far below the state and national averages.

## Leasing Activity & Vacancy Trends (Q3 2025)

Office leasing momentum remains strong through Q3 2025, with 136 new leases signed in Q2 (average size ~2,300 SF). Most activity centers on Class A buildings, reflecting a “flight to quality.” Region-wide office vacancies hover near 4%, well below the 15–20% rates seen in other Florida metros. Even as some firms downsize or consolidate, Southwest Florida's office market remains among the healthiest in the state.

## Investment Sales & Cap Rates

Investment activity has picked up modestly.

- Office sales: 42 transactions in Q2, averaging \$245/SF, with cap rates compressing to 6.4%.
- Retail sales: \$286M traded in H1 2025 (154 deals) averaging \$302/SF, with cap rates near 6.5%.

Higher interest rates are being offset by solid market fundamentals. Sellers are more realistic on pricing, and buyers are selectively re-entering, encouraged by regional growth. Overall volume remains slightly below peak levels, but the gap is narrowing.

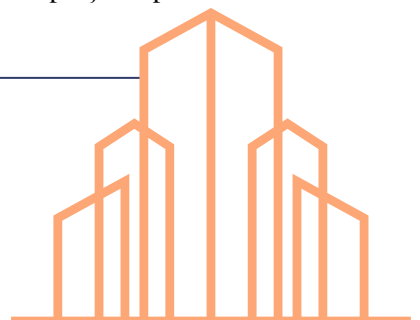
## Development Pipeline

New construction is largely concentrated in retail. Nearly 1 million SF is underway across Southwest Florida — mostly build-to-suit projects pre-leased to major tenants like McDonald's, MarineMax, and regional medical providers. Bonita Springs, Fort Myers, and Babcock Ranch lead development, with over 190,000 SF each and about 55% of projects pre-leased ahead of completion.

## Bottom Line for REALTORS®

Both office and retail sectors remain tight and landlord-advantaged entering late 2025.

- Office rents: up ~17% year-over-year
- Retail rents: holding at record highs
- Cap rates: mid-6% range for quality assets





# DOWNTOWN BONITA SPRINGS REIMAGINED: IMPERIAL CROSSING PROJECT

BARRON COLLIER COMPANIES' "IMPERIAL 41 UPDATE" PRESENTATION (SLIDE TITLED LOOKING SOUTHEAST, FEB 25, 2025)



## Mixed-Use Project Overview

Imperial Crossing is a transformative riverfront redevelopment planned for downtown Bonita Springs. Located on a 5.3-acre site along the Imperial River – directly across Old 41 Road from the Everglades Wonder Gardens – this long-vacant parcel (formerly the Bamboo Village trailer park) will soon host a vibrant mix of housing, commerce, and public space. Developer Barron Collier Companies (in partnership with CAPREIT) plans 120 modern apartments and approximately 19,000 sq ft of retail/restaurant space in two buildings. The north building will be fully residential, while the south building features ground-floor shops and dining with apartments above. Construction is slated to begin in late 2025 with completion expected by early 2027.

## Public Amenities and Community Impact

Beyond the private development, Imperial Crossing's design emphasizes community amenities and walkability. Plans include two new public parks, landscaped walkways, a riverfront plaza, and even a kayak launch on the Imperial River. These features – alongside public parking, bike racks, restrooms, and outdoor seating areas – aim to invite both residents and visitors to enjoy the waterfront setting. Local real estate professionals anticipate that Imperial Crossing will energize downtown Bonita Springs, catalyzing further revitalization. With its blend of housing, leisure, and green space, the project is poised to enhance downtown's livability and draw more foot traffic to area businesses. For homebuyers and investors, the development represents a unique opportunity to be part of a growing, walkable riverfront district that marries modern living with Old Florida.



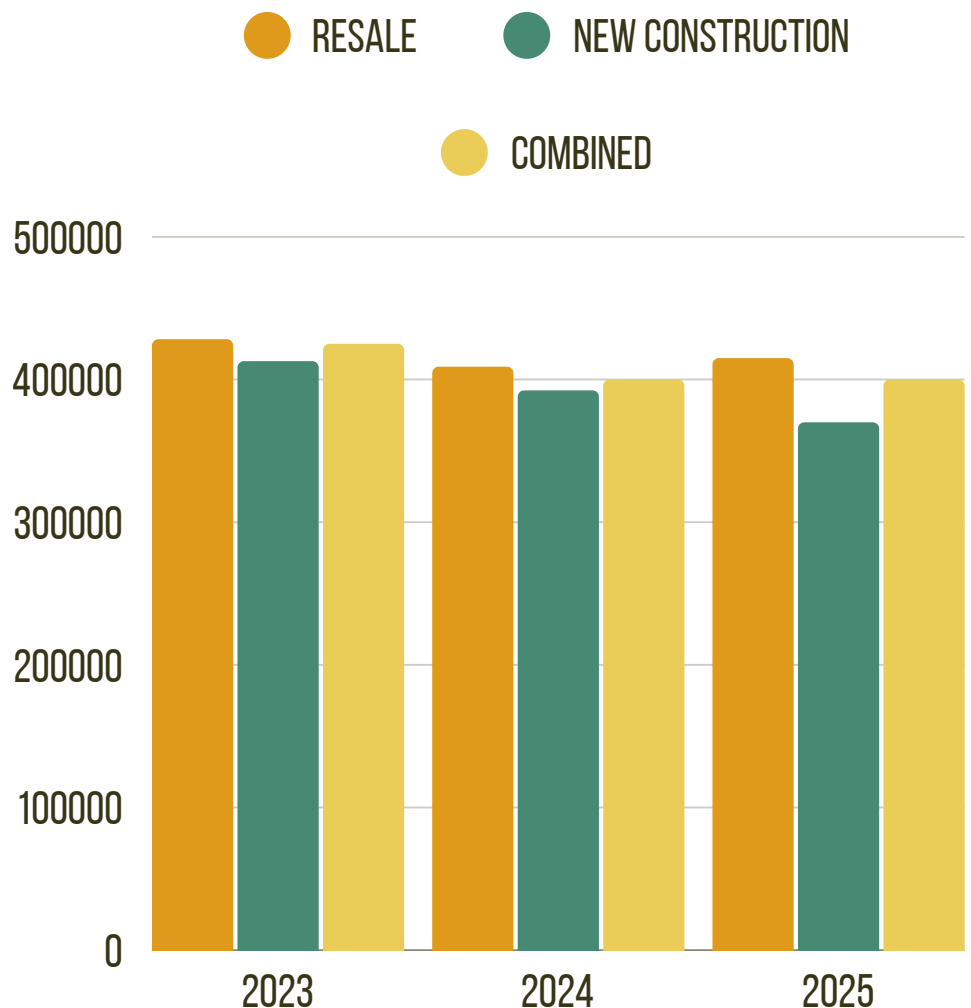
BARRON COLLIER COMPANIES' "IMPERIAL 41 UPDATE" PRESENTATION (SLIDE TITLED SOUTH BUILDING LOOKING NORTH, FEB 25, 2025)

# NEW CONSTRUCTION VS. RESALE: WHAT BUYERS ARE CHOOSING IN 2025

As Southwest Florida's real estate landscape evolves in Fall 2025, a clear trend has emerged: resale homes are outpacing new construction in both price and popularity. Buyers have more choices – and more negotiating power – than in the frenzied pandemic market. Below, we break down the latest data and insights by category, helping you understand why resale homes now lead in median price and total sales, and what it means for buyers and sellers.

- **Median Sale Price:** For the first time in years, resale homes carry the price advantage. September data shows median resale prices around \$415,000, compared to \$370,000 for new construction (regional median: \$400,000). Builders have aggressively trimmed prices and offered incentives, erasing the typical new-home premium. The result: buyers seeking modern builds can find similar prices to resale, but resale properties are holding value better thanks to location and established neighborhood appeal.
- **Market Share:** Resales dominate activity – 1,849 closings in September versus 347 new construction. While builders ramped up supply in recent years, they still face permitting delays, higher costs, and cautious buyers. In contrast, resale homes remain readily available, closer to city centers, and immediately move-in ready. Nationally, about 9 in 10 buyers still purchase existing homes, and Southwest Florida reflects that norm. The draw? No wait times, mature neighborhoods, and tangible value.
- **Days on Market:** The market has normalized from its 2021–22 frenzy. Homes now average 70–75 days on market, roughly double pandemic-era speeds. Builders counter with “quick move-in” spec homes, while resale sellers are learning to adjust prices and presentation. The key: well-priced, well-maintained homes – whether new or old – are still selling within 2–3 months, proving buyers are active but selective.

## MEDIAN SALES PRICE - SWFL AREA



*\*Data Comparing Median Sales prices from the month of September in Each year displayed. Data is pulled directly from Domus Analytics and the SWFLAMLS*



# REGIONAL DIFFERENCES AND MARKET FORCES

## County trends

Each county tells its own story.

**Collier (Naples):** Highest prices (~\$600K) and steady demand, but little new construction due to land scarcity.

**Lee (Fort Myers, Cape Coral):** The region's growth hub, with abundant new builds keeping prices stable around the mid-\$300Ks.

**Charlotte (Punta Gorda):** The most pronounced correction post-Hurricane Ian, with values still recovering.

Across the board, inventory is balanced, creating a true buyer's market for the first time in years.

## Buyer preferences

Buyers are dividing by priorities:

- Resale homes win on location, character, and immediate availability.
- New builds win on energy efficiency, storm-ready construction, and lower insurance costs.
- Builders are offering rate buy downs and closing incentives, while resale sellers counter with concessions and upgrades. The trade-off is clearer than ever — character and location vs. efficiency and peace of mind.

## Resale: How to Win in 2025

- Location = leverage. Shorter beach/commute times and mature landscapes are the differentiators.
- Prep > price cuts. Pre-inspection + wind-mit + insurance quotes up front reduce cancellations and protect contract price.
- Concessions are strategic. Small credits (appliances, flooring, rate buydown points) often beat big list-price drops.
- HOA/CDD math. Many resales carry lower monthly fees than amenity-rich new communities — do the side-by-side for buyers.

## New Construction: What's Working Now

- Spec homes and QMI (quick move-ins) have narrowed the "I don't want to wait" gap; some can close in 30–60 days.
- Lower insurance, higher efficiency. New codes, impact glass, and sealed envelopes keep premiums and power bills down—show annual cost of ownership, not just price.
- Incentives are real. Rate buydowns, closing costs, and design credits are back—coach buyers to capture value without over-upgrading.
- Mind the add-ons. CDDs, club fees, and landscaping/window-treatment costs can surprise; present an all-in monthly.

## Bottom line

Resale homes currently lead in both price and performance, yet new construction has never been more accessible. The Southwest Florida market has matured into a steady, data-driven environment — one where buyers have time, sellers must compete on value, and both sectors contribute to a sustainable housing cycle. In 2025, the winner isn't one or the other — it's whichever home best fits the buyer's needs in this new, balanced market.



## DOCUMENT CHANGES

# NEW LEGAL REQUIREMENTS EVERY FLORIDA REALTOR® NEEDS TO KNOW: FLOOD DISCLOSURES & LISTING FORM UPDATES (FALL 2025)

Florida real estate law continues to evolve, and this fall brings two critical changes every REALTOR® should be ready for: expanded flood disclosures and updated exclusive listing agreements. These updates impact both sales and leases and are already in effect as of October 1, 2025. Here's what you need to know to stay compliant and guide your clients confidently.

### 1. Flood Disclosure Requirements Now Broader Than Ever

During the 2024 legislative session, lawmakers enacted Florida Statute §689.302, requiring enhanced flood disclosure for residential property sales. That law was expanded in 2025 by Senate Bill 948, further increasing what sellers and landlords must share. Effective October 1, 2025, the rules now require:

#### *What's Changed:*

- Sellers must disclose whether they have knowledge of any flooding that has damaged the property during their ownership—not just if an insurance claim or FEMA relief was involved.
- Landlords must make the same disclosures for any lease of one year or longer under a new statute, §83.512, F.S.
- Any assistance received—federal, state, or local—to repair flood damage must be disclosed.

#### *Updated Forms:*

- Residential Flood Disclosure form: Includes new checkboxes and questions. Must be given at or before contract execution.
- Flood Disclosure for Leases: A new, separate disclosure required for applicable rental agreements.

#### *Why It Matters:*

This change is in response to Florida's rising insurance costs and extreme-weather vulnerability. It ensures buyers and tenants understand flood risk—not just insurance history. Failing to comply could result in delayed closings, broken contracts, or legal exposure for brokers.



#### *What Agents Should Do:*

- Provide, but do not complete, these disclosure forms for your client.
- Document when the form was delivered. No buyer signature is required, but broker liability can result if delivery isn't documented.
- Be aware: sellers must disclose knowledge of past flooding even if no claim was filed or assistance received.

### 2. Exclusive Listing Agreement Revisions in Effect

Separately, Florida REALTORS® updated all versions of the Exclusive Right of Sale Listing Agreement in response to new National Association of REALTORS® (NAR) policies titled "Multiple Listing Options for Sellers" (effective September 2025). Key Revisions.



- **MLS Compliance Clause:** Now states that both seller and broker agree to comply with MLS-specific policies. This includes options like delayed entry or "Coming Soon" marketing.
- **Public Marketing Language:** Clarifies that public marketing must comply with MLS policy. Examples now include a note that exceptions apply if alternative marketing options are used.
- **Commission Terms Simplified:** The buyer-broker compensation section now uses a single checkbox format. If no box is selected, default is no compensation.

**Scope:** These changes apply to all four versions of the residential Exclusive Right of Sale agreements (Single Agent, Transaction Broker, Limited Service, and No Brokerage). Additional forms will adopt similar language in 2026. Agent Guidance:

- Discuss with sellers how and when the listing will enter the MLS.
- Ensure you use the latest version of listing agreements. Check Form Simplicity for revision dates.
- Clearly document marketing and compensation plans in your listing file.

## TECH CORNER: 3 MUST-USE MEMBER TOOLS FOR 2025

All three of these are live under MLS » External Links and each has an app on iOS and Google Play. Add them to your toolkit and your listing/buyer playbook today.



**BrokerBay** — Showings, Offers, and Listing Ops (in one place) Book, confirm, and route showings; manage offer registration; automate feedback; and message agents without leaving the workflow. BrokerBay pairs smoothly with SUPRA for digital access control and real-time access logs. Tip: set up smart notifications and saved showing windows on day one—your sellers will notice the professionalism.



**CubiCasa** — Fast, No-Sketch Floor Plans

Create clean, dimensioned floor plans in minutes by scanning with your phone—no laser or tape. Many scans auto-generate GIA/GLA estimates and room labels you can drop into MLS, flyers, and portals. Tip: scan at the listing appointment; having a floor plan in the live listing boosts engagement and helps appraisal conversations.



**TrustedOnly** — Vetted Vendor Referrals, Branded to You

A shareable, trackable vendor hub (plumbers, roofers, cleaners, etc.) you can text or QR to clients—branded with your name/photo. Add your own trusted pros, see request history, and keep post-closing touchpoints rolling. Tip: save it as a Home Maintenance “starter kit” in your buyer handoff and send seasonal checklists with the same link.

# 2025 Year in Review

## Raising the Bar for BER Members



### Member Tools & Tech

We led the region in adopting BrokerBay inside our MLS, with live trainings and side-by-side use alongside existing tools so you could choose what fits your workflow best. Members responded quickly—class seats filled and day-one usage was strong.

Looking ahead, we're actively evaluating an additional consumer search/portal experience to give members options beyond OneHome. We'll share details as soon as we're able—our goal is simple: more choice, more control.



### Global & Regional Reach

We expanded global connections through trade-mission programming and inbound delegations—building referral lanes with partners in Canada, Jamaica and Portugal and hosting an inbound Jamaica trade mission at BER this summer. These efforts open doors for members working with international buyers and investors in SWFL.



### Transparent Evolution

As our market and membership grow, we're also exploring a potential association name update. If we move forward, it will be with full transparency and member input at each step—our commitment is that every member continues to feel at home in BER as we evolve.



### Keep the Feedback Coming

From major tools to small process tweaks, your feedback shaped 2025—and it will guide our work in 2026. Tell us what's working, what's missing, and where a small change could save you hours each month. Together, we'll keep raising the bar for REALTORS® and affiliates across Bonita Springs and Estero.

### Open House Weekend—Back & Better

We brought back BER Open House Weekend with a modern twist: association-wide branding, local ad placements to spotlight member listings, and REALTOR® safety messaging woven through the campaign (sign-in protocols, buddy system, clear exits, office check-ins). We aligned tips with national Safety Month guidance so your teams had up-to-date best practices to share with clients and staff.

We're looking into make Open House weekends an ongoing offering in 2026. In a changing market, we want to make sure your business is noticed!

### Communications, Data & Member Experience

We're revamping how we share information:

- Short-form videos and quick-hit tutorials for “just-in-time” learning.
- A more modernized web experience and deeper market reports so you can advise clients with confidence.
- Cleaner, faster member alerts when forms, MLS features, or regulations change.

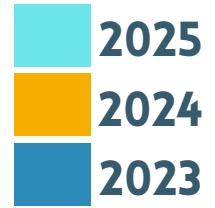
Behind the scenes, we're simplifying internal processes so staff can resolve tickets faster and surface resources in fewer clicks.



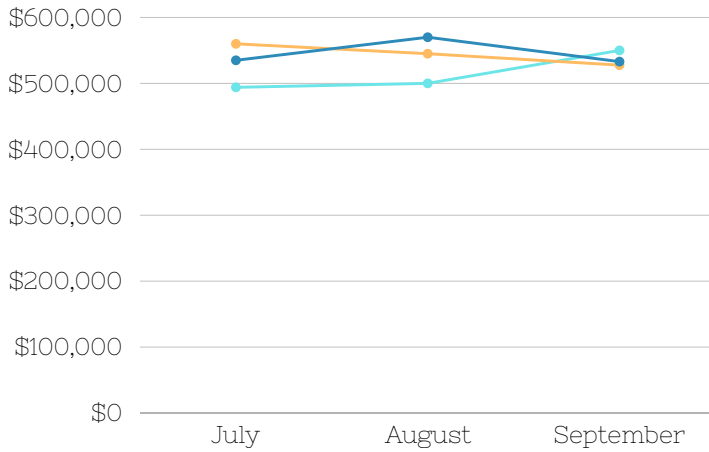


# FALL 2025 MARKET STATS

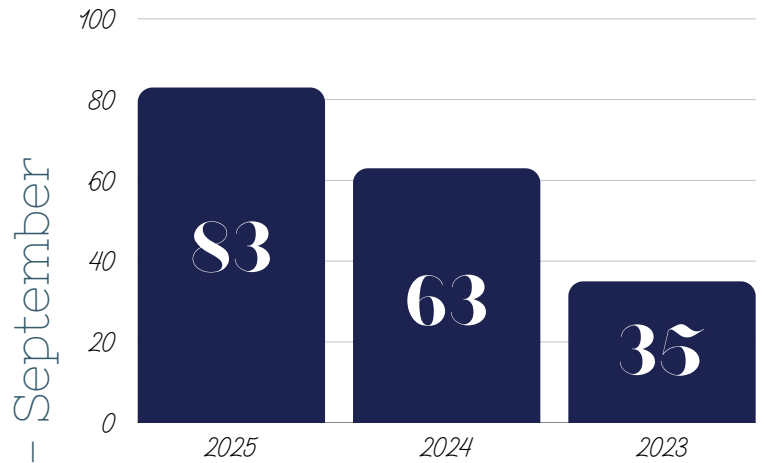
Bonita Springs  
+ Estero Area



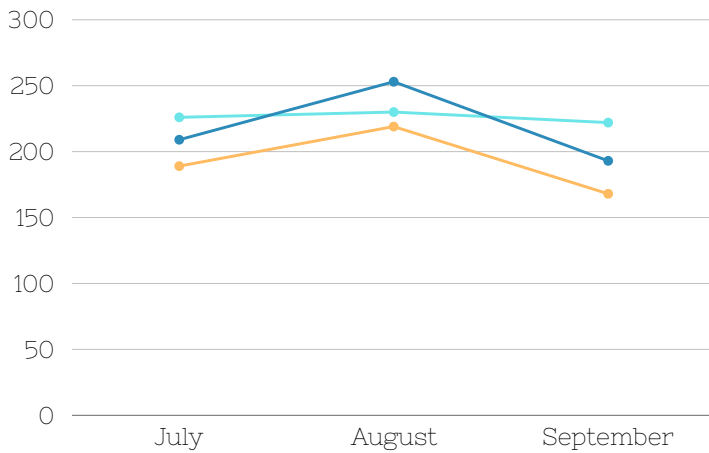
## MEDIAN SALES PRICE



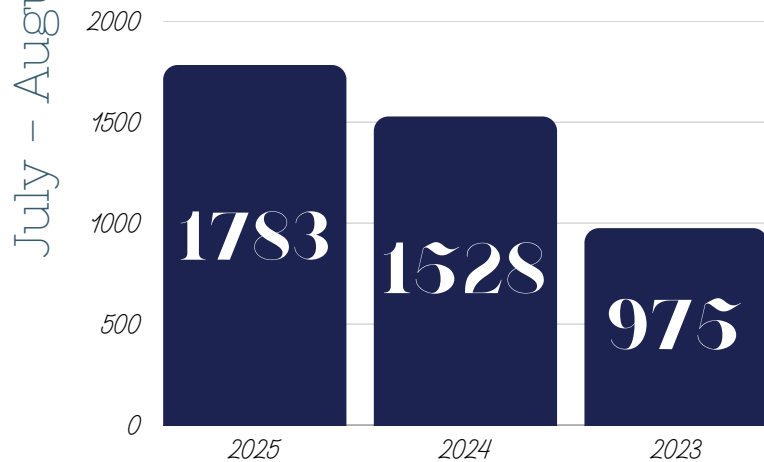
## DAYS ON MARKET (MEDIAN)



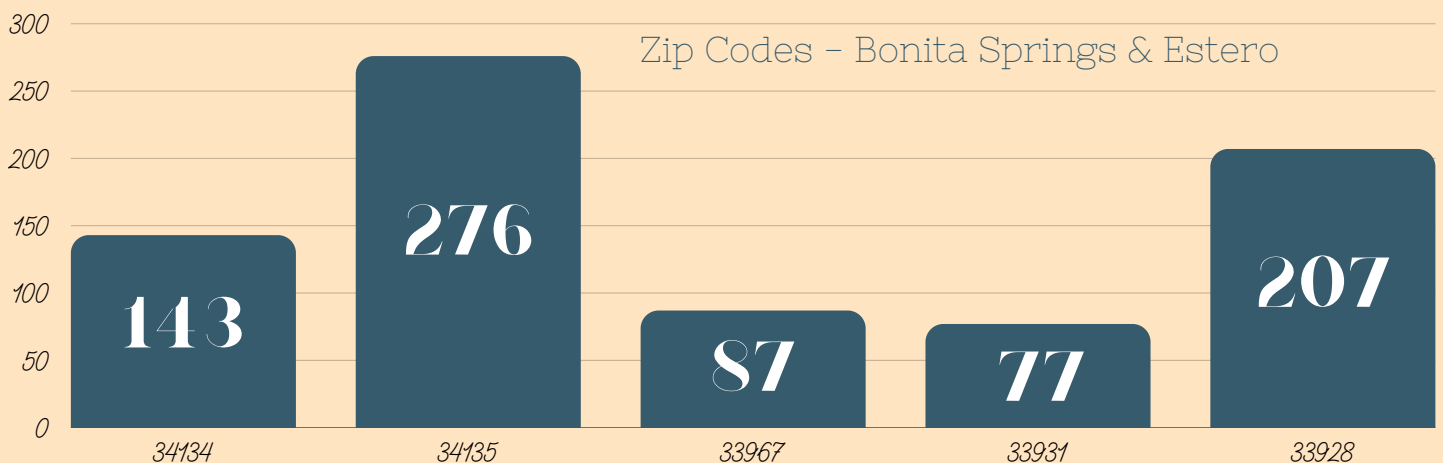
## MEDIAN CLOSED SALES



## HOMES FOR SALE (AVERAGE)



## TOTAL PENDING SALES (3 - MONTHS) Jul - Aug - Sept



Source: Data provided by SWFLAMLS, with analysis and visuals generated via Domus Analytics.

All statistics and insights reflect the most recent available data at time of publication. Data Accurate as of October 17<sup>th</sup>, 2026



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