

Episode #40
Is the Media Responsible for the Real Estate Downturn?
July 9, 2008

Good Morning and welcome to Income Property Investment Talk with host Peter Mosca and co-host Dean Essa. Together they will help you make smart investments in real estate. Now here are your hosts, Peter and Dean.

Mosca: Real estate, if purchased well continues to be the single best investment one can make. Welcome to Income Property Investment Talk, a program dedicated to providing investors eager to invest well in real estate, with the knowledge, the resources and the tools to generate increased wealth. Each week we bring the powerhouses of commercial and residential real estate to our program for you to learn from and to call at 1-866-472-5790. My name is Peter Mosca and my co-host just happens to be one of those commercial real estate powerhouses, Dean Essa. Hello Dean.

Essa: Hey, Peter.

Mosca: Dean, as you may have heard, two former Bear Stearns managers were recently indicted and arrested in the first criminal prosecution stemming from the collapse of the sub-prime mortgage market. Those charges came on the same day that prosecutors revealed hundreds of indictments linked to the nation's housing crisis. While there is no denying that soaring gas and food prices and a stock market that just endured it's worst June performance since the Great Depression are draining consumer confidence, but there is also no denying that there are real estate markets and investments in this country that are performing extremely well. The concern here with this program and what we look to discuss today is the media's preoccupation with reporting the negative news about real estate, and not the positive numbers. Today's guests are Blanche Evans, editor RealtyTimes.com and Donald K. Irvine, chairman Accuracy in Media. Before we

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introduce them to you, if you would like to know more about Blanche and Don and their extensive backgrounds or if you would like to learn more about market timing and location investing principles, please go to their show page at incomepropertyinvestmenttalk.com/070908. I know we are clever, today's date 070908.

Donald, Blanche, welcome to the show.

Evans: Thank you.

Irvine: Thank you.

Mosca: Donald, I'm thinking we're going to get right to it. I know you have an appointment with a Congressperson this morning so let me start out with you. Let's get right to the crust of it. If financial professionals are being held to such a high level of accountability, then should the media be held to similar levels of responsibility? Do sensational headlines and those scrolling messages you see going across the TV of doom, do those equate to similar deceitful practices?

Irvine: I think absolutely in this case. What the media does is that they are not necessarily practicing what they preach to others.

Mosca: What they preach is based on trust, accountability; those things are what you're talking about?

Irvine: Right. The media loves to come across as the one and true authority on everything and anything. They do want you to trust them implicitly for what they say and they do, but there are lots of holes in what they do.

Essa: What would you say is the number one way to combat that barrage of incorrect data?

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Irvine: I think the best thing we can hope for really is an educated public and that is for the public to go out and read multiple sources and look at many different types of things. If they still find that lacking, then they can always use their financial clout and try to put a little pressure on the news organizations themselves.

Mosca: Blanche, in your opinion, do you see a difference between two men allegedly inflating numbers for personal profit and entire news corporations deflating industry like real estate and the values behind real estate for revenue generating purposes, is there a difference there?

Evans: I wouldn't say that there's a conspiracy necessarily but the financial press, let's put it that way, supports Wall Street. They understand Wall Street better than Main Street. Real estate is Main Street; stocks are Wall Street. They don't understand how real estate works and so what they do is they report numbers from indexes that may have another agenda. I wouldn't say that they necessarily carry the same culpability as these Bear Stearns executives or others that were involved in the inflation of real estate for speculative purposes but they certainly sat on their hands and did not report the numbers as quickly as they could have. Hey we've got 1/3 of our homebuyers buying real estate that are non-occupying homeowners. Isn't that a little bit scary. Or we've got 20% of our mortgage borrowers buying homes with 0% down, isn't that scary? In other words, those are the kinds of stories that they should have been doing that could have put a lid on the bubble a lot sooner.

Mosca: Donald, when Blanche talks about Wall Street versus Main Street and maybe there's not similar culpability between the media, as opposed to the media versus these

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two gentlemen, I struggle with the fact that if there are news corporation owners, the folks at the top of the pyramid who are sending down messages whether they are direct messages, memos, or just the managers working their way down to the editors and so forth, saying listen, we need to bring down real estate as an investment option and pump up Wall Street instead, I find that might be happening behind the scenes. Do you have a similar take on it or what is your take on it?

Irvine: I guess that's a possibility. I mean there have been studies in the past that show when it came to the press in general, they are not very pro business and I think Blanche's distinction really between the financial press and the regular press, people on Main Street don't understand all these financial things. It is a very complex world and as she mentioned, the indexes and everything like that. Not everybody understands what all of that means and yet it is being thrown out there as all this information that we are supposed to understand and it scares a lot of people to death. Do they have an agenda in terms of trying to push down real estate? I'm not so sure about that except I do feel that they love negative news and it just feeds on itself. They see these things happening with the housing crisis, with the bubble that happened. They were fine in general, I didn't see them doing a whole lot of questioning as things were going up as fast, but every time something crashes they are on it like white on rice and they can't make enough of this. Who are the big bad people behind it, all of these real estate investors, etc. etc? They are the ones that were behind this whole thing; it was a big scheme and really changes public perception about how things are operating.

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Essa: One thing that we have struggled with for I would saying going on almost 19 years now, because we have been doing what's called location investing where we take investors all over the country only into markets where they're on the upswing. We have been very, very methodical using economists in order to determine that. Our potential investors have been barraged over the years with headline news from some of the major publications saying real estate's up, real estate's down and never taking into consideration that real estate may be up in one place and down in another even within a state depending upon sub market to sub market. I can't tell you the investors who have sat on the sidelines because they read an article in one of the major publications saying that real estate's down, so they just back out. In the meantime, we're getting incredible returns in about 13 different states.

Irvine: I think that happens in general on Wall Street. When the market's down, they make a huge deal about how much the market has fallen, we go into bear market territory. It is almost as if we are going to get images of 1929 or something like that, yet there are plenty of companies, plenty of stocks that are doing quite well plus there are plenty that are probably now at this stage bargains at a great time but they now have really tied investors hands and put them on the sidelines when they really should be out there investing.

Evans: Well, the bottom line is that no matter what market you're talking about stocks, real estate, whatever there's always good news for one side of the transaction and bad news for the other. Sometimes, there is good news for both. When prices are falling,

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that's good for buyers and that's what makes markets stabilize and go up again. The same thing will happen with real estate.

Essa: That's exactly right. We have to try to help our investors and ourselves to be on the other side as often as possible. For example, me on the market, I've always invested high and sold low but I've tried to make it up on volume.

Blanche: Housing investors should be celebrating right now because there are so many, even good markets are softening because of the credit crunch and buyers sidelined by fear. Markets that are adding jobs are seeing softer real estate, like Dallas. Dallas has added more jobs than any other metro in the country. As far as economic health goes, it's on the upswing yet real estate has been softer for the last couple of months because people are scared. That's very unusual. That never happens. Usually when you add jobs, that equates to higher real estate prices almost immediately and I think we will see a mini boom in Dallas real estate very, very shortly but that's just one example. Even in good markets I think investors can make out really well right now.

Mosca: Yes, no doubt about that. One thing I wanted to touch on with you Don before we lose you is the Internet. The Internet is wonderful, it offers a lot of things to a lot of different people but in this age of the Internet we were told that a new level of journalistic integrity is on its way or is here. The bloggers with pod casts, e-mail, "reporters" that have cell phone cams and other audio and video devices out there reporting to us what is happening in the world and I feel that just the opposite has occurred. The net has very few professional journalists in relation to the number of content providers that exist online and we're even seeing hackers and data manipulators getting into websites and

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changing and attempting to change history. Of course, I just right away turned to Wikipedia and some of the things that have been happening on that site and I know they have people who are responsible for maintaining the accuracy of the website but is there hope for more journalistic integrity and accountability to return to this country or are we just too focused on profit and profit centers?

Irvine: I think for profit and profit centers in the media that's becoming a very hard thing for them to locate now. The newspaper industry is really in the doldrums, advertising is down, and circulation is down. Their Internet traffic is up, but they can't figure a way to really monetize that effectively. You have a good point about this expansion of the Internet and what it does to integrity. We love the net here at AIM to a certain extent, but it has been very disruptive to our print publication so we've had to learn to adapt to the Internet to try to get our information out where we have far more visitors, viewers, etc. reading our material online. The problem is now that even though I post a blog to our site and we encourage others to do so, there really isn't a good check and balance in the blogging world. Anybody can hang their hat as that and they try to call themselves journalists. The definition of journalists, I don't even know what it is anymore in today's world. It has just been stretched. The problem with the Internet too is that you continue to get all this stuff going through and I think people have to realize you better take a lot of stuff that you see with a grain of salt at the very least and better try to find two other or three other sources to verify it because bad information, wrong information spreads very, very quickly. It can do a lot of damage. It's far worse in that sense than the printed word, which comes out once a day. It takes a while for it all to filter through. People used to

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have to photocopy or clip a newspaper article and send it on; it doesn't have that rapid-fire effect. With the Internet, in five seconds your reputation could be destroyed.

Mosca: Donald Irvine, chairman Accuracy in Media, we thank you for coming on the program. I know you have to run, go to the Hill, is there any last piece of advice in 30 seconds that you'd like to leave our audience with?

Irvine: Like I said at the beginning, I think the best thing you can do is just try to be educated. Use different sources, read all that you can and obviously if you're still confused or need help, visit our website or give us a call and we'd be happy to try to give you a hand and try to help you learn a little bit more about how the media slices and dices things.

Essa: Tell our listeners what your website is.

Irvine: It's www.AIM.org.

Mosca: We'll be back with Blanche Evans, editor of Realty Times.com after this short break.

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Mosca: Is the media responsible for the real estate downturn? We still have on the program with us, Blanche Evans, editor of Realty Times.com and we want to thank again Donald K. Irvine, chairman of Accuracy in Media for being with us for this first part of our program. Blanche, we were talking about the Internet and the exponential growth of

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blogging and bloggers. In this host's opinion, the fact that a lot of I believe Internet surfers will go online and they will see these entries and see these posts and read them and read them as if they were factual. Some of them are and obviously there are professional bloggers who are journalists out there reporting on the news of their particular industries or businesses. My concern is and I say this in workshops that I give that the Internet is information. There's a difference between information and knowledge. Can you talk a little bit about that and your experience as editor of Realty Times, the premier real estate online site?

Evans: What we're seeing basically is Fahrenheit 451 where people are sharing information because they can in new virtual environments and ignoring the sources that are more knowledgeable that are based on research, fact-finding, et cetera. Everybody has an opinion but the Internet and the chat rooms; blogs, etc. allow everyone to voice their opinion and they do. Sometimes those opinions come with an agenda. Like for example, a person may like to see a particular stock go up or down or they may want to see real estate in their area go up or down in price based on whether they are buying or selling. When they add an opinion, what they'll try to do is couch their opinion in a way that may seem authoritative but actually isn't because it's only based in conjecture.

Essa: We asked Don Irvine in the first segment what he thought was the number one way to combat that false data. I want to ask you the same thing. As you're going through these blogs and trying to sift through what's true and what's not how do you do it? Help our listening audience to know when they're being told something is not true.

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Evans: You almost can't but I think the one thing you can do is discount the ones that generate into name calling and flaming. That's what usually happens with a blog. The opinions become personal attacks, so those you can discount. I think any place that you read online where you can actually see a name and contact information and other ways to verify the data, links to reports and so forth, those are going to be more verifiable than just somebody who...

Essa: ... is hiding behind something.

Evans: Yes, is hiding behind an avatar and a made up name like Snoopydog or something like that. Are you going to believe Snoopydog or are you going to believe the head of research at a certain think tank? Even they might have an agenda based on who's funding the think tank. You have to take everything with a grain of salt.

Essa: I need to tell my secretary to change my name from SnoopDogg to something else.

Mosca: I think what happens too, Blanche, a lot of times is even the media and I want to stay focused on this a little bit, even the media can control what type of information gets sent out there and if they have an agenda than these bloggers or these comments can actually be stopped if they don't agree with that agenda.

Evans: Or the media can also set the bloggers up as authorities. You can call it the Drudge phenomenon, from the Drudge Report. I nearly fell out of my chair a year or so ago one day when I was reading the Wall Street Journal. They actually quoted a blogger. The topic of the article was something about David Lerea, who was the former chief economist for the National Association of Realtors and how his outlooks were always on the sunny side. Well, I know David and he is an optimistic, upbeat kind of guy, he's a

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glass half-full sort of a person. There may have been that kind of thing where he is writing what the realtors would like everyone to understand that there are positive sides to the market and so forth. Well, there was a blogger who had a blog called David Lerea Watch and whoever was running the blog was viciously sarcastic about Lerea's findings. Things did happen in the real estate world that people didn't know about, didn't foresee, nobody knew that the sub prime problem was as pervasive as it was because the banks were actually hiding what they were doing. They were hiding the sales of so many sub prime loans into securities packages. The people who were making the securities packages were hiding how many of them were weighted with prime loans, calling them triple A rated when they obviously had no business being called back. So there are a lot of bad guise associated with this thing. David Lerea Watch may have done a little forecasting that was correct, things did get worse.

Mosca: Blanche, we do have somebody on the line right now that I would like to bring in because he has an experience that he would like to share with our listeners right now. His name is Greg Griffin, and Greg is from Utah. Greg are you on the line?

Griffin: I am.

Mosca: Greg, I would like to hear what you have to say.

Griffin: Well, I'm out here in the desert Southwest and we obviously are one of those areas where we had very high growth during the boom and have had a bit of a fall from grace if you will. We have a blog for Utah CEO Magazine and we've worked very hard to try to keep it balanced. We had a major metropolitan newspaper publish really a detrimental article and as I looked through it the data that they were using was close to a

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year old. So I blasted them back just in their blog and said shame on you and got into a pretty heated discussion with another blogger who turned out to be the author of the article. My editor of my magazine eventually found out. As we kind of picked him apart and showed them this is just battery, is what we call it, this isn't even journalism, eventually they went and they pulled my comments out of the blog. This is a major metropolitan newspaper. What I've seen as I look around and I'm certainly not tracking anything empirically is that the number of mainstream publications that are starting to use regurgitated data that's older is increasing. For me that seems to indicate that we've got some positive traction happening in the market because there is less and less juicy, current stuff. So they are going back to recycle the '07 and '08 versus the peak of '05 stuff. That was a sobering experience to have a major newspaper going and delete my comments out of their blog, leaving the negative ones there.

Mosca: That's the problem I think right now and Greg, I don't know if you can hang with us, we're coming up on a break in about 30 seconds. But that is the problem we're seeing right now is that information is so available that people don't do the due diligence necessary to make sure they're accurate with their reporting.

Griffin: I think there is a lot of statistics being tossed about with no grounding, there's no comparison, the numbers aren't attached to anything and they can mean whatever you want them to mean and that seems to be the modus operandi of a lot of those negative bloggers.

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Mosca: Welcome back. We're talking about the media and the media's responsibility or accountability in it's reporting of real estate, commercial and residential real estate markets. We do have on the line still a caller. His name is Greg Griffin. Greg, you were talking about how your blog entries were pulled off. Talk a little bit about who you are specifically and your relationship to what business and the reporting that you did for that magazine.

Griffin: I'm a 25-year commercial veteran. I practice in Southern Utah and Southern Nevada, Las Vegas to St. George area. I've been a corporate blogger for Utah CEO Magazine and a self appointed watchdog for the blogs in our area trying to fair it out to people who are just throwing mud against the wall. I had a blog that was actually deleted by a major metropolitan newspaper leaving the negative stuff there. They didn't like being chastised for using outdated information and the sources they quoted were less than credible, minor players in the market, people who have no access to any kind of empirical data nor any experience or any skin in the game for that matter. I think that's an important thing to contemplate as you look at someone's blog, what do they have to lose or gain? As Blanche said, do they have an agenda that's out there and tends to be a bit challenging.

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Mosca: Greg thanks a lot. Blanche, have you come across any of this? Have you seen or heard about in your experience with Realty Times and your books that you're publishing, are you seeing anything in and around the experience that Greg just talked to us about?

Evans: Absolutely. I get calls all the time from reporters who are either looking to use me as a source or they call to ask me to help them find sources for their stories. What I found is a real shift that the editors are asking their reporters to look for the negative and I'll call them on it and point out that there is another side to this. Then when I see the articles published that side is not represented. I've actually talked to one editor a couple of years ago who told me that he felt that it was his job to bring up negative things about housing because he felt that housing was in a bubble. It was just interesting that that was an editorial perspective.

Mosca: It's a little scary in and around because there's examples of what you just said Blanche, about reporters wanting to create news and then you hear about the heads of news organizations that send memos out to their employees saying if there is no news here, let's create the news. I believe this is happening because of an apathy that exists within the American public. Basically its if you're not affecting me personally, if it's not in my backyard then I don't care type of an approach. I believe the media is taking advantage of that. They're in a position now where they're almost influencing and shaping public opinion the way they want it to appear. Maybe I'm being too cynical here but it almost appears to me that we're having media that's similar to Al Jazeera.

Evans: Information is potent. It's just like fire. It can be used to heat in the cold or be used to burn. Information needs to be used wisely and it's not. We were talking about the

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proliferation of blogs and information on the Internet. Well, these reporters have access to those reports as well. For example, over the last five years there has been a proliferation of housing indexes of various kinds, the PMI index for example, which is a risk assessment, the Case-Shiller Index, I could go on and on. There are dozens now. They each have a different perspective or even an agenda and how that information is used by the press is very important. For example, the Case-Shiller Index, this is my favorite example. I have a lot of respect for Robert Schiller who is one of the founders and this index basically tracks same housing sales, in other words the same house sold over and over in a period of time. They use 20 of the most volatile markets but what the Case-Shiller Index was basically created for is data to be used in products that are sold as hedge funds. The Case-Shiller Index is used by macro markets, which Dr. Schiller also founded. Macro markets create hedge fund products that are traded on the Chicago Mercantile exchange. So when he's quoted as saying something like, which he did a month or two ago, that housing is going to drop 30% and that it's going to be the worst housing crash since the Great Depression, it creates a self-fulfilling prophecy. If people read that and say this corduroy pant wearing Professor says that housing prices are going to crash, well my gosh, they're going to. What you never see printed in any article that quotes Dr. Schiller is that he has this relationship to hedge funds. You don't buy hedge funds unless you're terrified that prices are going to crash.

Essa: I've always said that when you look at a blog or any article for that matter or even any report, always look to see to try to tie it back into economics because usually they are almost exclusively economically driven. You want to know who's going to benefit.

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Evans: Exactly.

Mosca: That is the bottom line and that's I guess the foundation for why we even develop this program. We love having you on obviously Blanche. If there's anyone in this industry who has their finger or their pulse on real estate more than you I don't know that person. The idea is we wanted to talk about the media in terms of what is their agenda? I do public speaking and media training workshops across the country and one of the things I always focus on is agenda. Realtors, commercial and residential will tell you I was misquoted and I try to explain to them you probably weren't, the idea is that what you said maybe didn't match with what the media wanted to say. They have an agenda and you need to have an agenda and agenda I believe is the key. Trying to find out where these stories are emanating from and what the agenda behind the story is I think is a part of due diligence that most Americans do not want to go through.

Evans: Exactly. I'm not saying necessarily that Dr. Schiller has an agenda but it needs to be considered because he has another business that makes money on hedging. If you're going to read Dr. Schiller's figures, you must also take into consideration other entities that may also have an agenda to and get a sense of balance. First of all, there is no national market so the idea of averaging all of these numbers is really not that useful. It's not useful to any investor certainly except to just get a trend of how the nation's economics are going. That's really all that it's useful for.

Mosca: This is where I almost feel for my friends over at the National Association of Realtors because they have an obligation to report because they are a national association; they have to report on a national perspective right?

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Evans: Well, that's true but they also get their information from local MLSs and other localities. Their agenda is not to just keep people revved up about selling all the time; there is also the buying side. You have to keep both sides informed.

Mosca: Right, and my point is when they report those national numbers, they do let you know that they can break it down by state, regionally, and locally but the problem is that the media across the country tends not to take the extra effort to get those numbers that relate specifically. In other words, Peter Mosca here in Howell, New Jersey, if I owned a Howell, New Jersey media, I more than likely if something were coming across the wire from the National Association of Realtors and I'm on a deadline and I don't have a lot of time, I'm going to pull that off, copy it, and paste it right in. It's national numbers and this is what upsets not only the professional realtor but also serves to be injurious to potential investors here in my particular area or regional areas across the country that we're not, the media is not, or in my case I'm not, reporting what's actually happening in my area.

Essa: Yes, because it keeps them on the sideline whereas they really should be jumping in the game.

Evans: That goes back to we're not using the fire that is information correctly. Using it for good rather than what we're doing right now is we're basically burning down housing by misusing information. When you see a report from a reporter, they haven't done the homework in so many ways to put the report in perspective. In other words, when you get a monthly sales report from the National Association of Realtors or a quarterly report from Case-Shiller Index, you can go and drill down to individual cities. You can also drill

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down to when the information was gathered and you may find that what you're looking at is three months out of date.

Essa: The market can change significantly in that amount of time.

Evans: It surely can. It can catch wind and go up, it's amazing how quickly it can change.

Mosca: So Blanche, when we get back from this short break, perhaps we can talk about what are some of the answers. What's in the future for accountability, trust and responsibility in the media?

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Mosca: Before we get back to Blanche, I want to thank Greg Griffin for calling in with that excellent story. He is a blogger with Utah CEO Magazine. Blanche, recently Frank Sibley who is the senior vice president of communications for the National Association of Realtors was quoted and was talking about a psychological block to buying a home or to purchase investment real estate right now because of this negative media coverage. I guess what exists out there is whenever someone from the NAR, the National Association of Realtors gets out there and tries to explain basically what we've been talking about now for about 45 minutes, consumers, investors, buyers, sellers look a little ensconced when an NAR spokesperson gets out and speaks. I know my friends at the NAR deal with this on a regular basis. I can tell you since 1992 I've been working with residential and commercial realtors and I've been saying for a very long time, if there's one Association

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in this country that can work consumer into their name it could be the Realtor Association because they almost do as much for the consumer that they do for their Realtor Association member.

Evans: That's exactly right because they are one of the largest lobbying groups in the world. We owe a lot of our homeowner benefits to work that the NAR has done on Capitol Hill. When FHA loan limits get raised, that's largely due to lobbying the NAR has done. They have done so many things. Every year, for example, somebody on Capitol Hill tries to get rid of the mortgage interest rate deduction and that's a wonderful tax benefit that enables people to own homes profitably. Do you remember two decades ago when we had the tax deduction when you bought a car? Well, the American car lobby wasn't as strong but the NAR has managed to keep that tax deduction in place despite efforts to get rid of it. I think you're exactly right. They are very pro consumer. They need to get that story out more, the things that they do to support homeowners, home buyers, and home sellers.

Mosca: Now, knowing what you do at Realty Times, I know that you have a tool that can help set the record straight in terms of what is happening on a local level. We have our sponsor of this program, RealSource, that does nothing but analyze the markets across the country, the 363 MSAs across the country for its commercial real estate investors. You have a tool for realtors and real estate agents, brokers, to help counteract or enhance what's being said in the media about their particular markets. Can you talk a little bit about that?

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Evans: At the risk of a shameless plug, I'd love to. We've observed that the media has basically crushed and drowned out anything that the real estate industry has to say that's positive about the market or even realistic about the market. Like we said earlier, if it's bad for somebody, it's good for somebody else. What we've done is we've created a video newsletter and also video listing broadcast that surrounds listings with news, what's happening in your local market. Of course, Realty Times is a leading news authority in the real estate space so it lends authority, credibility and the wow factor to any listing presentation because it's a video just like the virtual tourism whatnot. You've got a Realty Times anchor talking about the market in that area. We work with the realtors in their markets about that. It's a way to shout back and shout out that there's a reason to buy this particular house and here is what the reasons are.

Essa: How can our listeners tap into that?

Evans: All you need to do is go to RealtyTimes.com and on the left-hand side menu you'll see the video newsletter right there and you can investigate it. It gives you an additional voice and credibility. I feel that that's what realtors need right now because I think they are largely misunderstood and largely at the hands of the media.

Essa: I think you brought up a really good point earlier that bad news for one is good news for another. Some of the markets may be very, very soft and when you're sitting there trying to list a property when you're competing with the short sales that are down the street but it could be a phenomenal market for those people who are out there looking for value. Even if it's not an investor, even if it's just a homeowner who couldn't afford to

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get into homeownership a year ago but now can. So like you said there's always the good side to the downside.

Evans: Look what's happening in Detroit. Detroit has supposedly been the poster child for falling housing sales and they are but believe it or not for the last six months in Detroit home sales have risen.

Essa: The American dream is coming true there.

Evans: Yes, but at a price. The median priced home there is a little more than half of what the national median is so it's the bargain factor. When you get to that point where homes are bargains, you will see sales rise. Who's getting that news out? Who's telling that story that we are selling homes here?

Mosca: Like we said earlier, that's from the residential perspective, the commercial perspective is there are markets out there that are outperforming and doing quite well because of the qualitative and quantitative data that exists in those markets and ultimately jobs is a big part of that. Blanche, we only have about a minute and a half left on the program. I don't think government is the answer; they are too consumed with Janet Jackson's anatomy or Howard Stern's fifth grade humor to correct this situation.

Obviously, government is not the answer because the Internet is a global operation. What is the last piece, the golden nugget for this program that you can leave our listeners with right now?

Evans: In this country we're lucky to have freedom of information but along with that comes responsibility. I'm afraid it's really going to be on the shoulders of the consumer to sort out the information that they look at and see what's real, what's not real, how does

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that feel, how does that relate to my local market, and how does that relate to me. Right now it's an excellent time to improve your vantage point no matter where you live. You can buy most likely a better home in a better location with better views etc. right now than you can at any other time.

Mosca: Excellent piece of advice Blanche. We thank you for coming on the program again. We look forward to having you on sometime in the near future. Next week we will be live in Lake Placid, New York where we will meet the students of the CCIM Institute J. Lavine Academy. We will interview them one-on-one and see what's happening in their individual marketplaces.