

There are three areas of the real estate section that are open for submissions: Real Estate Briefcase, Highlights and Buy My House, Please!

To submit anything to the real estate section, please email realestate@express-news.net.

If ever you have questions, please feel free to contact Deputy Business and Real Estate Editor Emily Spicer at (210) 250-3231 or espicer@express-news.net.

Real Estate Briefcase

This runs every Saturday and Sunday on Page 2 of the Real Estate section. It's devoted to industry news: new staff joining an office, promotion announcements, new certifications earned, awards won, model homes opening, etc. Submissions can come from official managers, etc. or direct from the agent/employee/etc.

We do not cover open houses (there are simply too many) but we have covered open houses where there have been several different houses and agents all coordinated together to make it more of a neighborhood open house or event.

Deadline:

The Friday the week before the weekend you are hoping it will run (8-9 days before publication.)

Caveats:

1) We love to get photos, and we make every attempt to publish them, but it completely depends on space, so there is no guarantee. Photos should be sent as jpeg attachments (not embedded in a Word doc, not a pdf, not a gif)

2) The submission most likely will not run verbatim as submitted. It will be edited for spelling, grammar and usually trimmed of flowery language as well as for space.

Highlights

These are the three homes that appear on the bottom of the front page in Real Estate every Saturday and Sunday. This section is not advertising and there is no cost to be included, as these are my personal picks for the week based around a theme.

How do I pick my themes?

It's a fluid and organic process that varies depending upon the amount of caffeine that has been ingested. Themes are inspired by a variety of things: news events, holidays, time of year, works of literature or theater, etc. They can be based on street names, price, a specific type of amenity, part of town, architecture style, age of home, color of exterior, etc. There is no way to announce themes in advance as changes in listing status, price, etc. may make it necessary to tweak the theme.

Caveats:

- 1) I give preference to agents who have submitted houses and only start cold calling agents once I have reviewed by submissions email folder and not found what I was looking for there.
- 2) There is an implied recommendation to readers by picking a house for Highlights. As I do not have time to visit all the homes I select, I do as best I can by looking at interior photos of homes. If a listing does not have interior photos of a home, it will not be considered.
- 3) We do not consider raw land or lots. The space for each listing is small, and pictures of land simply do not look good, and to make the space attractive we need to keep with the description format under each image.
- 4) I keep all submissions and only delete in three circumstances: once I have used a listing, it does not meet the requirements (there's no home on the land, no interior pics, etc.) or the link to the listing has become inactive and there is no other reference to what the listing is in the body of the email (see tips).
- 5) Because I keep all submissions for so long, my email folder for highlights usually has 150-200 submissions. With only six spots a week, and about 10-15 coming in each week, it is simply not possible to highlight everyone. But I do strive for a wide variety of homes, regions, agencies, etc.

Submission tips:

- 1) To submit a listing, email to realestate@express-news.net the link to the MLS page of the listing. Also, in the body of the email, please include the MLS number, the address and your contact info. This is important because MLS links go inactive after 2-3 weeks, and if there is no clue in the email what the listing is so I can find it on mysa.com, it will be deleted.
- 2) With 150-200 submissions for me to go through every week, you increase your chances of getting noticed if you list some of the amenities of the house in your email. That way, if I am looking for a specific price point or amenity, and the MLS link is inactive (meaning that I do not access to agent remarks) I will still know what's great about the house.

Buy My House, Please!

This section appears on Page 2 of Real Estate every Sunday. Again, this is not advertising and there is no cost to have a listing appear here.

Submissions **must come from the seller**, not the agent. Homes must have been on the market **at least 90 days**.

Why you should convince your seller to submit:

I have a waiting list of 150-200 submissions for Highlights. At the most I have had 6 for Buy My House. As long as the information is in order, the house **will** get picked.

Once picked, the home will have an entire article about it, complete with three pictures. Agent feedback consistently reports increased traffic, showings, and, in the case of more vintage homes, several offers accepted within a week of the feature – and those offers were at or close to asking price. This is not a guarantee that this will be the response, but it's free and what have you and your seller got to lose?

To submit:

Sellers can submit their homes by e-mailing to realestate@express-news.net the MLS number, home address and the seller's daytime contact information, plus a brief description of what makes the house or neighborhood an overlooked treasure, and how long it's been on the market.

Selected sellers will be contacted and interviewed by our freelancer Karen Davis.