

Today's Trends in TITLE

COMMERCIAL EXECUTIVE MAGAZINE recently sat down with Vicki Etherton, president of Landmark Title Assurance Agency, to discuss what's happening in the CRE market and how it's impacting the title industry.

Q. WHAT TYPES OF TRANSACTIONS DID YOU SEE IN 2016?

We work with a broad base of clients, many of which specialize in certain areas of development or investment, so we handled a wide variety of transactions throughout the year. That said, I am sure it will come as no surprise to anyone that works in CRE to hear that multifamily continued to be one of the most active sectors for us. We also handled more closings involving residential land development in both large tracts and infill properties, and office and industrial properties were on the uptick too.



VICKI ETHERTON
PRESIDENT

Landmark Title Assurance Agency

much information is at our fingertips – almost any time from anywhere. Paperless work flow, telecommuting, online availability of government data, and online access to a wide range of mapping resources – We find we use Google in virtually every file we handle now. III While technology enhances how we work and provides tremendous convenience and efficiencies, there is a downside. Cyber crime is something every title company must focus on and take steps to prevent. Hackers and scammers recognize that money moves through title companies, so we

must take additional precautions to protect our client's privacy and identity.

Q. WHAT TRENDS OR TRANSACTIONS ARE YOU EXPECTING IN THE MARKET FOR 2017?

Recent reports are projecting Phoenix to be the top housing market in 2017, and Tucson was also noted as one of the top 10 markets in the country, which bodes well for the commercial sector. If history repeats itself, we expect to see segments of the commercial market to follow the rooftops. In anticipation of continued activity in the new home builder market, we are expanding our team to focus on serving builder clients.

Even emails containing wire transfer instructions must now be encrypted to protect against an email identity theft for the redirection of funds. While it may seem like overkill at times, this practice is going to continue and has become a standard in our business.

Q. TECHNOLOGY IS BECOMING A MAJOR CHANGE AGENT IN EVERY INDUSTRY. HOW IS IT CHANGING THE TITLE BUSINESS?

It's hard to imagine life without Google. It wasn't that long ago that we had to wait to get back to our office to check on things, but now so

Q. WHAT OTHER CHANGES ARE YOU OBSERVING IN THE INDUSTRY?

Coming through the recession was tough for everyone, but it also taught us all the value of working with knowledgeable and reliable industry partners. In title and escrow, the economic recovery has solidified two distinct service providers: the privately held, commercial title agencies that offer more personal attention and flexibility with access to multiple underwriters, and the larger public companies with national production centers. There is a client base for both.