

## Coalition to help industry job-seekers

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*Last updated December 22nd, 2008.*

TAMPA - A new non-profit organization in Hillsborough County is being formed to help unemployed real estate professionals and staff affected by the industry downturn to find counseling, retraining and job placement opportunities.

The group is seeking information from employers about job openings that can be added to the group's rapidly growing job bank.

Real Estate Lives was formed in November when a group in the industry became concerned about their friends, family and former colleagues who were being laid off and otherwise impacted by the real estate recession.

"We want to do what we can to help our friends and fellow real estate professionals and staff to get back on their feet," said [Ron Weaver](#), one of the initial founders of Real Estate Lives and a land use attorney with Stearns Weaver Miller in Tampa.

Dozens have already signed on to help launch the leadership core team, including current and former local chapter presidents of the National Association of Industrial and Office Properties (NAIOP), Commercial Real Estate Women (CREW), and the League of Women Voters. Local support agencies including Hillsborough Community College, United Way, the Tampa Bay Workforce Board Alliance and SunTrust have also agreed to provide guidance for the group.

If you would like to volunteer - or have jobs to offer the job bank - contact Weaver at [rweaver@swmwas.com](mailto:rweaver@swmwas.com) or Elaine Kennedy of GVA Advantis at [ekennedy@gvaadvantis.com](mailto:ekennedy@gvaadvantis.com).

Real Estate Lives will launch a Web site - [www.Realestatelives.org](http://www.Realestatelives.org) - as the resource for those in need and those who can help. The site will offer useful links, job offerings, scheduled programs and direct connections to the people and groups that are coordinating the effort. The project is being led by [Brenda Dohring Hicks](#), CEO, The Dohring Group/Real Wired Inc.

Meanwhile, the organization is assessing the current needs of the people it intends to help, screening opportunities for immediate job placements and connecting those in need with those that can help. [Pam Winchester](#) of Focus Real Estate Services is receiving requests and offers of social services at [pwinchester@focusreservices.com](mailto:pwinchester@focusreservices.com).

<http://www.frej.net/news/tampa-bay/2008-12-22/coalition-help-industry-job-seekers>

# Real Estate Lives Helps Those Unemployed To Find A New Career

December 22nd, 2008 • [Related](#) • [Filed Under](#)

I am loving the concept of the Tampa based Real Estate Lives. It's goal is to find those who have lost their livelihood in the real estate industry jobs and opportunities in different professions.

Let's face it, the real estate industry at it's peak employed many more people than it traditionally has. From agents to construction workers we have experienced peak [employment](#) of a sort that will most likely not come back.

And in it's wake many families are out of work and struggling to make ends meet. New [construction](#) has slowed down to the point many small builders are not doing anything they can to find any [handyman](#) work, and the handymen are returning your calls the same day.

Now that is indicative of big problems.

But seriously, organizations like Real Estate Lives are a great idea and can help many a family across the country. If you have the inclination or time, see if you can help start a chapter in your neck of the [woods](#)

The 2-month-old organization, which hopes to soon obtain nonprofit status, is the brainchild of Tampa lawyer Ron Weaver. He sought out leaders from the professional group Commercial Real Estate Women as the organization's other founders.

"They Real Estate Lives have been trying to make me aware of [job fairs](#) and professional meet-and-greets," said Brown, of Riverview. "They also have gotten me a [resume](#) review and a mentor who is an [architect](#)."

"We are focusing on how I can transfer my construction management experience to other types of management," Brown said. via [msnbc.com](#).

<http://www.therealestatebloggers.com/2008/12/22/real-estate-lives-helps-those-unemployed-to-find-a-new-career/>

Tuesday, December 16, 2008 | Modified: Wednesday, December 17, 2008



Tampa Tribune

## ***Group Aims To Reverse Real Estate Job Losses***

By LENORA LAKE

llake@tampatrib.com

Published: December 22, 2008

TAMPA - Jon Brown is finishing a [room addition](#) - and that's all the work in the pipeline for his 41/2-year-old construction company, which used to build custom homes.

Like many in the real estate and construction business, the [market downturn](#) has hit the 31-year-old owner of JPB Construction hard.

But Brown, a married father of two young children, is being helped by a new group, Real Estate Lives. The organization is trying to place anyone who has lost his or her real estate-related job in another job or career.

The 2-month-old organization, which hopes to soon obtain nonprofit status, is the brainchild of [Tampa lawyer](#) Ron Weaver. He sought out leaders from the [professional group](#) Commercial Real Estate Women as the organization's other founders.

"They Real Estate Lives have been trying to make me aware of [job fairs](#) and professional meet-and-greets," said Brown, of Riverview. "They also have gotten me a resume review and a mentor who is an architect."

"We are focusing on how I can transfer my [construction management experience](#) to other types of management," Brown said.

Weaver said he started hearing about architects, planners, construction managers, brokers, real estate agents, [skilled tradesmen](#) and other professionals leaving Tampa to take unrelated - and often menial - jobs across the country.

"We were sending them to mine coal in Colorado," Weaver said. "We decided there had to be something we could do."

Real Estate Lives founders began calling people in various businesses and asking about any jobs or other contacts. It grew to a network of about 150 contacts.

Weaver said the organizers had come across 72 jobs as of last week. "But if they didn't have a job, they would offer to help us in other ways," including giving leads to more contacts and providing information about available resources, he said.

One of Real Estate Lives' founders, Pam Winchester of Focus Real Estate Services, said the group has four goals:

- Help meet immediate financial needs of families by working with social service agencies
- Restore a sense of hope
- Retrain the individual for another position
- Place them in a job

Winchester is working directly with Brown.

Winchester is "on top of everything and very motivated. It has been a good, uplifting thing for me," Brown said.

Real Estate Lives has worked with Tampa Bay Workforce Alliance, United Way, Hillsborough Community College, the Hillsborough County school district and other groups to seek referrals and training opportunities.

It meets every two weeks to plan and share information and leads. The group hopes to place 300 people in jobs in six months and continue to call and look for all options.

"It's a personal contact thing," said Brenda Dohring Hicks of The Dohring Group, another founder of Real Estate Lives. "About 80 percent of the businesses employ less than 20 people. So it's not like we can go to one big builder or one big architectural firm."

Elaine Kennedy of GVA Advantis said she got involved "because people were hurting out there."

#### HOW TO HELP

Those wanting to volunteer with Real Estate Lives can attend the organization's meeting 10 a.m. Jan. 7 at 2918 W. Kennedy Blvd. For information, visit [www.realestatelives.org](http://www.realestatelives.org).

Correspondent Lenora Lake can be reached at (813) 865-4851.

<http://www2.tbo.com/content/2008/dec/22/na-group-aims-to-reverse-real-estate-job-losses/>

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St. Petersburg Times:

# Jobless get a chance to rebuild their lives

Published Thursday, December 18, 2008 8:55 PM

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For Ron Weaver, Tampa power lawyer and big wheel in local development circles, the prick of conscience came when he learned about laid-off Tampa construction workers plying Colorado shale mines for work.

As the son of a father forced by the Great Depression to drive a truck through treacherous Appalachian passes, Weaver knows all about the philosophy of feeding families first. But an open pit in Colorado seemed like an unusually bleak and frigid destination for skilled laborers accustomed to working in shirtsleeves and sunshine.

Weaver is one of the co-founders of Real Estate Lives, which seeks to find jobs for up to 300 out-of-work colleagues from the real estate industry. Its services are not just for manual laborers, but also for brokers who aren't brokering and civil engineers with nothing to engineer.

In some of these fields, it feels more like depression than recession. Florida has shed more than 70,000 construction jobs in the past year as the sickness that started in housing has bled into office and shopping center development.

The way Weaver sees it, all these people helped his law firm, with its 100 attorneys in three Florida cities, thrive during the real estate boom. Now it's his turn to return the favor.

The group's Web site, realestatelives.org, is already up and running. But before they start job placement in earnest, Weaver and his colleagues have been hitting the phones and the social circuit to scrounge up scarce employment opportunities.

Their efforts have borne fruit: at least 72 jobs, many in construction. Some positions demand a nomadic life. One cache of jobs entails repairing dikes on Lake Okeechobee in Clewiston and sinking pylons in Mobile, Ala.

The group hopes, perhaps overconfidently, that its services won't be needed after about a year. As Weaver puts it: "Our goal is to go out of business quick."

But the Web site could live on with a new name befitting more prosperous times: Real Estate Rocks.

<http://www.tampabay.com/news/business/realestate/article942755.ece>

# Ron Weaver leads coalition to give back to housing market victims

Tampa Bay Business Journal - by [Michael Hinman](#) Tampa Bay Business Journal

Federal data shows Florida lost 71,900 construction jobs from September 2007 to September 2008. An overbuilt housing inventory has been slow to burn off, and that's left the industry's local employment outlook bleak.

But as hard they are to find, there are jobs out there, and attorney Ron Weaver has a plan to find them.

Weaver, of **Stearns Weaver Miller Weissler Alhadeff & Sitterson PA**, has joined 30 other business and government leaders to create **Real Estate Lives**, a nonprofit coalition planning to counsel, retrain and even find jobs for employment victims of the housing collapse.

"This is our way of saying thank you for 13 years of taking care of us and our families; now it's our turn to take care of you and your families to help you get back on your feet," said Weaver, chairman of the effort.

## Help in abundance

Between now and the end of the year Real Estate Lives is building a database of companies nationwide to help place people in jobs.

"We've already found about 70 jobs, and we're recruiting more and more every day," Weaver said. That includes opportunities at the **University of South Florida**, a half-dozen engineering positions around the region, and some labor positions with construction projects in Charlotte, N.C., and Dallas.

Finding jobs hasn't been easy, however, and only about one in 10 companies contacted even have any available, Weaver said.

"We'd like to have more jobs in our reservoir before we take in too many resumes," Weaver said. "Our first focus is to accumulate as many jobs as possible."

Other local practitioners joining Weaver's effort include Elaine Kennedy of **GVA Advantis Real Estate Services** in Tampa. She is helping to mine for available jobs. Pam Winchester with **Focus Real Estate Services** is handling requests and offers of social services, and Brenda Dohring of **The Dohring Group** in Tampa is building the coalition's Web site at realestatelives.org.

Other help is coming from groups including the National Association of Industrial and Office Properties, Commercial Real Estate Women, **League of Women Voters, Hillsborough Community College, United Way Tampa Bay, and the Tampa Bay Workforce Alliance.**

### **Meeting for the motivated**

There is room for more in the business community to join the coalition, Weaver said. A meeting is planned for Jan. 7 at 10 a.m. at the **Greater Tampa Association of Realtors** office, 2918 W. Kennedy Blvd., Tampa.

“We have that whole large auditorium that seats about 200 people, so we’re expecting a lot of people to come if they are motivated to help,” Weaver said.

Those seeking more details on Real Estate Lives can contact Weaver at [rweaver@swmwas.com](mailto:rweaver@swmwas.com).

<http://www.bizjournals.com/tampabay/stories/2008/12/15/daily24.html>