

Carolina Property GMAC Real Estate: Making BIG HEADLINES in North Carolina

By Kayla O'Brien

When three of Burke County, North Carolina's most respected real estate firms—Walton Realty, Perry & Parham Real Estate and Premiere Properties GMAC Real Estate—announced they were merging last summer, it was more than just a blip on the local media radar screen. A lot more.

The *Sunday News Herald* positioned the story as front-page news of their main news section under the large headline: "Property promoters align. Three Morganton real estate firms become one."

In fact, one local real estate official even went so far as to say, "This is the all-time merger."

The new firm—Carolina Property GMAC Real Estate—serves home buyers and sellers with three offices and, as a result of the merger, is now the area's leading full-service real estate company.

- ▶▶ The Foothills Office serves Burke, Caldwell and Catawba counties.
- ▶▶ The Lake James Office services communities in Burke and McDowell counties.
- ▶▶ The High Country Office serves Avery,

Watauga and Ashe counties.

But what makes the merger even more noteworthy is that the head of each firm will remain with the new company to not only help guide things, but grow the firm even more.

By combining skills, services and programs, Carolina Property GMAC Real Estate is now able to offer a complete spectrum of residential, commercial, property management and relocation services.

"The three firms decided to pool their skills realizing each member had a number of great strengths to offer the other," says Mike Watts, broker/owner of Premiere Properties.

"Each of our companies shared the same goals, vision and commitment to the community," says Libby Walton Stephens, broker/owner of Walton Realty. "The merger means increased exposure on a local, regional and national level, additional services and greater marketing

support for our buyers and sellers," she says.

"We have been friendly competitors and now, working side by side, our teams will be able to provide a much more comprehensive and higher level of service to our customers than we could ever provide on our own," says Marc Parham, broker/owner of Perry & Parham Real Estate.

Stephens, Parham and Watts, who were born and raised in Burke County, point out that while the merger creates a substantially larger firm, it nonetheless retains the tight-knit, small-family character and camaraderie that were hallmarks of their individual firms.

"GMAC Real Estate is extremely excited to welcome these fine firms

to our family," says John Bearden, president and CEO of GMAC Real Estate. "We are quite proud to be a strategic partner of Carolina Property GMAC Real Estate."

As a result of the merger, the company will have access to a variety of tools and marketing services and programs through GMAC Real Estate, including Premier Service.

Following the transaction, GMAC Real Estate agents ask their customers to honestly rate their performance through a survey conducted and tabulated by an independent research firm.

"We look forward to playing a role in Carolina Property GMAC Real Estate's future growth," Bearden adds, "and making even bigger headlines together." **RE**

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