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## **Computers and internet have given us the ability to break down geographical barriers**

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As the New England Real Estate Journal celebrates 50 years of reporting the region's real estate news, we wish them our heartfelt congratulations. As the digital age has changed the way we receive information, conduct our businesses and interact with each other, the New England Real Estate Journal has remained a constant. Today the NEREJ Digital Edition melds seamlessly with their weekly print edition giving us the best of both worlds; the instant availability of news online as well as the irreplaceable feeling of reading a printed paper.

On the occasion of this milestone, it's a good opportunity for us to look back on the last half century in the commercial real estate world. Chozick Realty, having been established just two years after the New England Real Estate Journal, has experienced dramatic changes in the way we do things; the way real estate is bought, sold and financed, as well as the confirmation that as much as things have changed, the bedrock of the real estate industry remains firm.

The Connecticut market has evolved considerably over the past fifty years. In the early 1960s the ownership of Connecticut real estate was dominated by family offices, with institutional investments limited mainly to a handful of regional investors and insurance companies. Today, while family firms are still very active in the state, it is the national and regional funds, REITS and hedge funds that are making the greatest impact on the market.

While market cycles come and go, technology and technological advances have the greatest long term effect on the direction of real estate development and ownership patterns.

At the time the New England Real Estate Journal began publishing, Connecticut's downtown skylines were relatively unchanged since the economic and industrial booms of the late 1800s to the 1920s. However, starting in the 1960s, the state began to experience a substantial shift in real estate development. Downtown areas saw the beginnings of new high rise office construction and urban renewal projects, while the introduction of the interstate highway systems, authorized by President Eisenhower in 1957, created the suburbanization of the U.S. In Connecticut entire new residential neighborhoods were created, multifamily complexes constructed, suburban office parks erected and retail strip centers built. During the 1960s the state's population grew by over 450,000, fueling further expansion of all real estate types.

While the highway system was the technological catalyst for the changing real estate patterns of the 1960s and 1970s, it was computing technology that drove the greatest changes of the 1980s and 1990s in the state's real estate markets. Starting in the early 1980s with the creation of affordable office computers coupled with the fax machine being widely adopted in the mid 1980s, real estate was no longer confined to investors active within a relatively small geographic area. With computing power, ever increasing amounts of property information could be gathered and conveyed to increasingly larger and geographically diverse investors. The ability to gather and share large

amounts of data helped shift the ownership profile within the market, which ultimately became today's regional and national funds and REITS active in the state. These technological advances that widened the markets geographically, also lead to creation of mortgage securitization that could not have been accomplished without standardized data profile sets over a larger area. The securitization market provided greater amounts of funding than the conventional banking system of 1960s and 1970s could have accomplished alone, further expanding real estate growth to meet demand.

The exponential growth of the internet from the late 1990s to today has caused a dramatic change in the real estate industry and in our brokerage business. While there is still no substitution for personal contact with our customers and clients, the internet has given us the ability to reach a national audience of tens of thousands of investors through email blasts and social media, breaking down the geographical barrier to ownership and outreach.

To speed marketing and closing times, we heavily utilize online document sites such as DocumentRoom.com, to provide our clients with detailed property information, giving them the ability to virtually complete their property due diligence prior to making an offer. Through such document centers, every buyer has secure access to the same information so that they are able to provide their highest and best offer with confidence in the level and depth of information provided. Using this technology we are completing marketing assignments in 30-45 days with multiple competitive offers with little to no contingencies.

As new technologies replace old ones and market cycles rise and fall, the real estate market will continue to change, adapt and grow. The basic underlying fact in society is we all need a place to live, work and shop. All of these needs can only be filled by real estate and the men and women who continue to be part of this industry. All of which can be read on the pages of the New England Real Estate Journal for the next 50 years.

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