

## NMHC Cultivates Emerging Leaders In Multifamily

The National Multifamily Housing Council is creating new avenues to teach people about the multifamily industry and build a pipeline of emerging leaders, with a focus on women. Its new podcast offers a glimpse into the business of the multifamily real estate market.

By Alison Johnson / *National Multifamily Housing Council* and Valerie M. Sargent / *Broadband Communities*

### Have You Heard of Code 53?

**D**oes Code 53 sound familiar to you? Perhaps it sounds as though it could be a cousin of the top-secret, off-limits military base, Area 51, in Nevada. Or maybe some will think it's the fastest way to dial loved ones in Cuba via that country code. Microsoft Windows users may muse about the error message received when they try to connect to a network file that cannot be found.

Accountants, however, know that Code 53 is the beginning of the North American industry classification code for "Real Estate Rental and Leasing." It is also now the title of the brand-new podcast the National Multifamily Housing Council (NMHC) recently launched.

NMHC set a goal to evolve programming and communications to cultivate and share knowledge across the sector when exploring new and different ways to connect with multifamily industry practitioners. The new Code 53 podcast is an ideal place for anyone and everyone to subscribe to, listen to and learn about the business of the multifamily real estate market.

Whether someone is a new employee in the industry, a seasoned professional wanting to deepen his or her knowledge, an industry partner who yearns to understand what drives decision-makers, or a person who simply aspires to stay connected to what's happening within the industry, Code 53's informative interviews help people discover more about the multifamily sector and what creating communities involves.

#### PODCAST ORIGIN

Upon contemplating the idea of a podcast in 2021, NMHC saw data showing that approximately 90 million Americans listen

to a podcast every month. More than a third of those listeners were younger than 40, which sparked interest in the idea of representing so many potential multifamily professionals.

In 2011, NMHC founded the Emerging Leaders Group to cultivate future leaders in the apartment industry. The program creates opportunities for the industry's next generation of leaders to develop the peer networks and learn from top industry leaders. Any employees of NMHC member firms who are 40 or younger and have five or more years of multifamily experience may participate. This trendy program attracts an incredible audience.

Connecting the podcast idea to the Emerging Leaders program was an easy first step in creating goals and content ideas for the podcast. NMHC worked with a small group of program participants to set the strategy for a pilot season, deciding to produce four episodes – one each month through May 2022. It will then regroup to create a content plan for the next season.

The series is a mixture of interview and narrative storytelling. In each episode, NMHC will break down topics of interest that impact the investment, development and business operations of apartment communities and housing. Code 53 hosts Alison Johnson and Kevin Cameron, the director of advocacy and strategic engagement at NMHC, will engage with leading business and public policy leaders to hear their outlooks on multifamily topics such as leadership, finance, design, market trends and business strategy.

In the inaugural episode, Johnson and Cameron interview outgoing NMHC chair David Schwartz (Waterton) and incoming NMHC chair Ken Valach (Trammell Crow). How



Code 53 hosts Alison Johnson and Kevin Cameron interview outgoing NMHC chair David Schwartz and incoming NMHC chair Ken Valach for the inaugural episode of the podcast.

often do people get to sit down with two CEOs and talk to them about how they grew in their careers, their philosophies on leadership, or even what books they recommend for upcoming leaders? Look for this and more exciting interviews

to come. Code 53 is available on mobile platforms wherever you subscribe to your favorite podcasts, or you can learn about Code 53 and access podcasts via the NMHC website: <https://www.nmhc.org/code53>.

## Women in Multifamily, Tech and Marketing

According to the Commercial Real Estate Women (CREW) Network “2020 Benchmark Study: Gender and Diversity in Commercial Real Estate” (<https://crewnetwork.org/about/resources/industry-research/gender-and-diversity-in-commercial-real-estate-202>), 32 percent of women now aspire to C-suite positions, an increase of 6 percent since the 2015 report, and respondent participation showed a growing generation of young and emerging women professionals in the industry. The same study reported that women continue to earn less than men, with the salary gap between the genders at 10.2 percent and the bonus gap at 55.9 percent. Women still hold just 9 percent of C-suite positions in commercial real estate.

Women are also underrepresented in the technology sector. According to the Skillsoft 2021 Women in Tech Report, “Women have represented a growing – albeit slowly, from 7 percent to 27 percent in the past 50 years – minority in tech for decades. As we discovered in this study, women crave opportunity. They still encounter inequity compared to their male peers on multiple levels, and that must change.” (See [www.skillsoft.com/2021-women-in-tech-report](http://www.skillsoft.com/2021-women-in-tech-report).)

NMHC has focused its lens on championing women during recent years, creating space for the women of NMHC member companies to network and engage at their regular meetings.

NMHC started the Women in Tech and Marketing Meetup at NMHC OPTTECH in 2018 as a networking program. In January 2019, it launched the NMHC Women’s Event as part of its annual meeting programming, highlighting women leaders and the projects they’re tackling at their companies. It has been an invaluable occasion for visibility, exposing women who are just entering the multifamily space to examples of leadership and the possibilities for their professional growth.

In February 2020, NMHC sought to add events outside the regular schedule to build on this connection for women in the industry at a more regional level. The Women in Tech and Marketing Regional Series invitation was extended to a limited number of in-person attendees. Forty women attended the first regional event at a Gables Residential community in the Buckhead neighborhood of Atlanta, Georgia, called the Ashley Gables Buckhead.

The subject was how technology influences property design and operations. This property was significant because it is an intelligent building and green-certified. A solar array on the rooftop feeds into a Tesla three-battery-pack system that powers the top-floor community amenity space. It was an opportunity for attendees to talk about energy resilience, engineering and infrastructure and discuss how corporate responsibility fits into the design and

development of properties. The tour and conversations that emerged provided great insight and learning opportunities for those present.

Other regional, in-person events were scheduled after that first tour in 2020, but COVID-19 had other ideas. To continue delivering program opportunities virtually, in 2021, NMHC launched the Women in Multifamily Digital Series as a networking series to recognize women who navigate change within their companies, design new systems for business and development, and reimagine the resident experience. This format allowed NMHC women members to get together and talk about new technological innovation and how it’s being deployed at the property level, sharing any lessons learned along the way.

Because NMHC membership is structured at the company (not individual) level, the digital events provide employees of member companies who may not have opportunities to attend regular NMHC member events to grow within the industry, develop professionally and create a network for themselves. Networking events for these valuable women’s groups will continue in the NMHC schedule.

### LEARN MORE AT THE SUMMIT

Suppose you’re not an NMHC member and want to learn about all things related to technology in the multifamily housing industry. In

# MULTIFAMILY BROADBAND TECHNOLOGY

that case, NMHC encourages you to attend the upcoming **BROADBAND COMMUNITIES** Summit in Houston, May 3–5, 2022. NMHC is partnering with **BROADBAND COMMUNITIES** for content in the multifamily track, with a shared goal to connect multifamily industry professionals and their provider partners. This event is an excellent opportunity to ensure both sides of the industry obtain the education to grow together. Content from each source is designed to complement and build off the other.

NMHC will lead the Connectivity Town Hall at the **BROADBAND COMMUNITIES** Summit. This is a fast-paced, interactive examination of tech, connectivity and innovation in the industry. There has been considerable activity at the FCC during the past year, which will shape the business of multifamily communities and broadband operators who work within the industry. The regulatory update about the latest happenings in

Washington, D.C., is significant for business on both sides. Attendees will see highlights of the top tech and telecom trends and needs driving innovation in the multifamily industry today.

If you haven't registered yet for the **BROADBAND COMMUNITIES** Summit, please visit [www.bbcmag.com/events/summit-2022/home](http://www.bbcmag.com/events/summit-2022/home).

## EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES ABOUND

Increasing accessibility through regional or digital events for members and non-members alike is a core focus for NMHC to engage with and support a healthy multifamily industry. Whether that means engaging industry professionals with oral stories or creating regional and digital events, NMHC will continue to provide opportunities for industry professionals to network with one another in safe spaces, talk about their experiences, and learn from them. ❖



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*For more information, visit [www.nmhc.org](http://www.nmhc.org), [www.bbcmag.com](http://www.bbcmag.com) or [www.valeriemsargent.com](http://www.valeriemsargent.com).*

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