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Networking: Stirling Properties is now affiliated with the Retail Brokers Network, one of the largest and fastest-growing international commercial real estate networks. RBN comprises more than 60 affiliate offices throughout the United States and Canada, accounting for over 600 brokers within North America. Stirling Properties is part of its 11-state Southeast region and is the only brokerage firm in the RBN to have offices located in Louisiana and Mississippi. "This affiliation with the Retail Brokers Network is an important part of our overall growth plan," says Marty Mayer, president and CEO of Stirling Properties. "Through RBN we'll have the ability to leverage relationships with owners, developers and tenants by working together on a regional and national level with other independent brokers."

Ciao: Monjunis Italian Caf  & Grocery at 7343 Highland Road has closed its doors, and its fate remains unclear. "It was the franchisee's [Jason Graham] decision to close. It really wasn't because business was bad. All the folks on Highland Road were very supportive, and I want to thank them," says Jimmy Rosso, who owns the original Monjunis in Shreveport as well as the location at 711 Jefferson Hwy., in addition to franchising five others in Shreveport, Bossier City, Ruston and Monroe. The Highland Road restaurant has been shuttered for about two weeks, Rosso says. Although he has the option of reopening the restaurant, Rosso says he has no intention of doing so at the moment. "It's a decision I could make if I wanted to do that," he says, "but right now I have decided to concentrate my efforts on this [Mid City] side of town. Our business is booming, and it's a lot to take care of."

Today's poll question: Do you think the Capital Region housing market is in better shape today than it was a year ago?