

# DOWNER AGENTS EARN CCIM DESIGNATIONS

It's the equivalent of a Masters Degree in commercial real estate. The Certified Commercial Investment Member (CCIM) designation is among the highest achievements in the commercial real estate industry. Benton Downer, owner of Downer & Associates announced that not one, but two of his associates - Mason Graham and Carolyn Betts - have achieved the CCIM.

The CCIM designation requires not only classroom work, but substantial and active participation in commercial real estate transactions as well. The designation signifies both academic and practical knowledge in completing real estate transactions.

Mason Graham began her real estate career in 2000 in Lynchburg. Prior to that, she had spent 15 years in graphic arts and marketing. Later she would join Benton Downer at Downer & Associates in 2003 to help grow his business and to change the marketing direction of the company. Mason specializes in sales and leasing of commercial properties and is delighted to have earned the CCIM designation.

"This was a comprehensive program that took several years to complete," Mason said. "It involves four, core one-week classes, none of which were taught locally, as well as on line instruction."

Participants were also required to submit a comprehensive portfolio detailing transactions completed, before passing a final exam in that was taken in New Orleans in April.

"The CCIM designation is comprehensive in educating brokers in financial and investment analysis, as well as market analysis for their clients," Mason emphasized. "Having successfully completed the program, I feel like I have the expertise to assist my clients in a more professional manner. It was an arduous journey, but one I am glad to have completed."

Carolyn Betts has been a Commercial Realtor for 7 years and does land development, as well as office and retail sales and leasing. She was drawn to the CCIM course because of her strong desire for the investment knowledge the program offers. Only 6% of all commercial realtors worldwide have achieved the CCIM designation "There are so many complicated financial considerations in today's market," Carolyn noted. "Clients want to be able to determine which deals make sense to them and their situations."

Carolyn said that the CCIM was very financially and math oriented and required a great deal of study.

"Mason and I worked together on this for three years," Carolyn said.

"We are now better able to evaluate properties and deals and offer advice to our clients."

Commercial Realtors need every tool in the toolbox in this market to assist their clients in making the right financial decisions in leasing, purchasing or selling commercial real estate. Certainly, Mason Graham and Carolyn Betts are well qualified to represent the interests of their clients.

## Kelly Downer Now an e-Pro

The modern real estate climate demands that both companies and agents are adept in the world of cyber space. It is necessary to reach clients for both sellers and landlords, and most real estate transactions today begin with an on-line search. To stay abreast of the new technologies, Kelly Downer of Downer & Associates recently earned her e-Pro designation to become one of a select few real estate professionals to attain this prestigious honor.

Endorsed by the National Association of Realtors, the e-PRO certification course



CAROLYN BETTS (LEFT) AND MASON GRAHAM, NEW CCIM DESIGNEES

is an educational program unlike any other professional certification or designation course available, comprehensive and interactive. It is specifically designed to provide real estate professionals with the technology tools needed to assist consumers.

"I spent at least 60 hours in studying for the E-Pro designation," Kelly stated "It was really quite an ordeal."

"The real estate industry has undergone a fundamental change over the past several years," Kelly added. "A majority of consumers are taking the time to conduct their own research prior to contacting an agent.

In turn, real estate professionals must be knowledgeable of how technology can assist them in serving the needs of the buying and selling public. It only makes sense to work with a Realtor who is up to speed on today's technology."

For more information on commercial real estate, call the experts at Downer & Associates at 434-296-0545 or go to [www.downerandassociates.com](http://www.downerandassociates.com)