



## **Company of the Month: National Standard Abstract navigates through COVID-19 pandemic**

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Osei and Nadir Rubie of National Standard Abstract

New York, NY No one could have foreseen the economic downturn in the first quarter of 2020 as the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) made landfall in the U.S. this past January. With millions of lives at stake, gubernatorial executive orders were issued to shutter non-essential businesses and construction projects across the state of New York.

As days turned into weeks, we began to see the virus' impact on the infrastructure of the public and private sectors. Despite the uncertainty of the economy, with business owners grappling with huge financial losses. The commercial and residential real estate industry has a constant service provider known as title insurance.

National Standard Abstract (NSA) is a title insurance agency owned by father-son duo, Osei and Nadir Rubie, widely renowned as industry leaders after closing over \$1 billion in commercial and residential real estate transactions in less than five years.

### **Commitment to Service Flexibility Industry Knowledge**

"These focus areas are relevant today as National Standard Abstract remains open for business, closing real estate transactions during the COVID-19 pandemic," said Osei Rubie, president of National Standard Abstract.

A title search is a critical component in every real estate transaction. However, amid the ongoing pandemic, we have had to re-evaluate how we produce title reports; secure clearance on title issues; assess our responsiveness due to telecommuting, the potential risk of exposure to all involved parties in a real estate closing, and recording of documents in NYC, Nassau and Suffolk Counties.

With increasing concerns and questions regarding the capability of title insurance companies to perform day to day activities` during a global pandemic, The New York Real Estate Journal (NYREJ) spoke with National Standard Abstract and several of their clients to explore how their firm is navigating through these unprecedented challenges.

NYREJ: What changes and adjustments has NSA made during the COVID-19 time period?

“First and foremost, our staff is working remotely in compliance with governor Andrew Cuomo’s executive order to help stop the spread of the coronavirus. This structural change has challenged our team to expand our firm’s accessibility and expediency, enhance our client’s experience, while maintaining our efficiency,” said Nadir Rubie, partner at National Standard Abstract.

“Real estate is an industry that consists of face-to-face interactions and personal contact. Due to the life-threatening COVID-19 pandemic, we have had to adapt to social distancing of at least six feet and refrained from the most basic human behavior – a handshake. We have to identify innovative ways to close transactions without losing the human element that has already been curtailed due to the health crisis. National Standard Abstract’s team has continued to provide excellent feedback to update our files and clear exceptions on the title report. Their openness to new ideas on arranging closings have been essential during the last stages of the transaction as we finalize a deal.” said Rashidah Siddiqui Esq, of Serpico, Serpico & Siddiqui, P.C.

“As a real estate development firm in affordable housing it’s imperative that our title insurance service provider have the capacity with all of the immediate changes happening daily; to perform all of the necessary functions to lead us seamlessly through what at the moment is not a closing table but rather a remote commercial closing. In the height of the pandemic, NSA has continued to deliver high quality customer service throughout the closing process,” said Ericka Keller of Brisa Builders Development.

“Our real estate development firm is in the process of preparing for multiple closings with NSA in 2nd and 3rd quarter of 2020, their ability to maintain their focus on high quality of responsiveness and resolution of outstanding title issues has not wavered during the COVID-19 pandemic,” said Christopher Bramwell of CB Emmanuel Realty

NYREJ: Is there a limitation regarding performing searches in Downstate N.Y., please elaborate?

COVID-19 has prompted several closures of not only businesses, but also the suspension of government services. These limitations have impeded our ability to conduct searches within the affected counties. Despite the uphill battle, National Standard Abstract continues to work diligently to obtain all the necessary searches for each transaction from the county clerk offices that are functional. As this crisis continues to evolve, we plan to monitor the day-to-day changes and adjust our business practices accordingly to move forward.

NYREJ: How important is it to your firm to be accommodating when conducting closings during this time period?

National Standard Abstract is based in New York State, the epicenter of COVID-19, as it continues to spread both locally and globally. Our priority during this difficult period is the safety of our employees and clients. It is very important that during each closing, we ensure all involved parties

are safe and feel comfortable with the proceedings. Communication with our clients is critical and the best way to streamline every transaction.

“During these uncertain times, it is great to have a partner with years of experience like National Standard Abstract who can help us navigate through uncharted waters. They have remained consistent and flexible in making closing accommodations to allow us to meet the needs of our clients and business. Their knowledge and ingenuity has been instrumental in overcoming the many hurdles that we have had to face in this new climate. For this, we are grateful and look forward to continued business,” said Sabine Franco of Franco Law P.C.

“Having practiced real estate law for the past 20 years; the COVID-19 pandemic effects on the business landscape is unprecedented. NSA has performed well by maintaining quick response time and resolution of title issues,” said Lincoln Walters II Esq.

NYREJ: How has COVID-19 impacted your ability to conduct business with your clients?

The list of county closures is ever-changing and dependent upon the progression of COVID-19. While some offices are closed and only allow e-filing as well as e-recording, other offices have significantly reduced their personnel resulting in recording delays.

While conducting real estate transactions during the uncertain economic climate caused by COVID-19 National Standard Abstract maintains a daily knowledge of all prevalent information to title insurance, by coupling this necessary information with their strong client relationships, NSA is able to communicate with each client about the safest and most productive way to conduct their real estate transaction.

“My team has continued to close transactions and National Standard Abstract has been the backbone of communications for clearance of outstanding issues,” said Conrad Higgins of Higgins Realty Group LLC.

“Our team is grateful for the responsiveness of National Standard Abstract during a time period when the business landscape is changing daily. The title company can be the make or break of our clients closing,” said Arthur Briscoe and Marlon Briscoe of HomeSmart CrossIsland.

“It’s great to know during these uncertain times, the real estate community can rely on National Standard Abstract. They continue to provide stellar service and are a valuable resource for all title insurance needs. Real estate transactions still need to close, and the reliability of NSA has proven to overcome any challenge,” said Nadine Morency-Mohs of Jaymore Realty.

“With unbelievable business circumstances, we are still closing real estate transactions. National Standard Abstract continues to add-value to our ability to close on behalf of our buyer clients,” said Nacole Grogan of Gotham Properties.