



**More Listings.  
More Deals.  
More Experience.**



**SOLD!**  
1-29 Gateway Center, Loc. 5/Bldg. 1, Johnstown, CO  
\$1,894,000 (\$5,000/SF)



**LEASED!**  
1040 N. Madison Avenue, Loveland, CO  
Ward Industrial Park, 25,500 SF



155 Boardwalk, Fort Collins, CO  
9,762 SF

Fort Collins 970.229.9900    FC Downtown 970.407.9900  
Greeley 970.344.9900    Loveland 970.593.9900  
[www.realtec.com](http://www.realtec.com)

# Northern Colorado BUSINESS REPORT

Log In  
Subscribe  
Register For E-Newsletters  
Submit News Or Data  
Search:  
Site   
Archives



**DataBank**  
*The Vault's Always Open*

Need Sales Leads?  
Search For Valuable Lists,  
Directories And Articles

2011 Book Of Lists  
In Excel Download  
NOW ONLY \$119.



## PODCASTS

Kate  
Hawthorne

Jeff Nuttall

Brian  
Schwartz  
What's  
Working

## DEPARTMENTS

- Briefcase
- Corrections
- Economic Indicators
- Events
- ExecStyle
- Leads/Public Records
- Letters
- On the Job
- Stocks
- The Edge
- Time Out

## CALENDAR

« May 2011 »

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31	1	2	3	4

- 5/6/2011 - Grand Slam Scholarship Breakfast
- 5/11/2011 - Business Before Hours
- 5/14/2011 - HighCraft Remodeling Expo 2011

Submit an event  
Register for an NCBR Event

**WEATHER**  
Fort Collins, CO

## NCBR ARTICLE

### From real estate selling to real crime solving

By Steve Porter

Share |

April 21, 2011 --

FORT COLLINS - When Nick Christensen started his new job with the Larimer County Sheriff's Department, he literally "hit the ground running."

Christensen, along with new Sheriff Justin Smith and several other department members, ran from the sheriff's office in east Fort Collins to the Larimer County Courthouse in downtown Fort Collins for their swearing-in ceremony, about four miles.

And that was on Jan. 11.

"It was a pretty cold day," recalled a smiling Christensen. But the former commercial real estate broker said he's found a warm welcome amongst the close-knit sheriff's department. "I've got to say the support has been impressive to see."

Christensen is a familiar face in the Northern Colorado real estate community, the co-owner of Chrisland Commercial Real Estate Inc. in Loveland, a company he founded seven years ago. Before that, he was with Realtec and then head of real estate for McWhinney for five years.

But the Minnesota native has had a long fascination and interest in law enforcement, going back to his law school days. While studying for his law degree, Christensen volunteered in local law enforcement and focused on narcotics investigations.

After law school, he moved to Colorado and began practicing law in the Vail Valley and Aspen areas. But being stuck in an office didn't suit him, and he decided to take an opportunity to work in commercial real estate in Fort Collins in the mid-1990s.

That move started him up a ladder of success, but his passion for law enforcement never left him.

#### Eye-opening experience

Christensen, entering his 40s, thought any chance of transitioning into law enforcement might have passed him by. But still wanting to be involved, he began quietly working with sheriff's investigators on cold cases.

"Where they really needed help was in cold-case investigations, so I got



Steve Porter, Northern Colorado Business Report  
**NEW FOCUS** - Nick Christensen, owner of Chrisland Commercial Real Estate Inc. in Loveland, is in the first months of his job as executive officer in the Larimer County Sheriff's Department. Christensen decided to return to law enforcement when Sheriff Justin Smith offered him the newly created position. Both Smith and Christensen were sworn in on January 11.

## MARKETPLACE

**Northern Colorado's  
Highest Quality  
Sign  
Builder**



Talk to us about  
your sign needs!

**YESCO**  
(970) 472 5466

43°F  
FairGreeley, CO  
39°F  
Fair**NCBR Poll**

Money no object, would you pay \$300K for a luxury vacation membership?

 Yes No

Results | More polls

**SPECIAL PUBLICATIONS**

15th Anniversary  
2010 Bravo! Entrepreneur Awards  
40/40 Leaders  
Blueprints  
BOOMERS: A Guide to Life after 50  
Commercial Real Estate Source Book  
Event Planning Guide  
Giving Guide  
Green Book  
Green Summit  
Links Golf Guide  
Market Facts  
Mercury 100  
Northern Colorado MD Portfolio  
Small Business Guide: 2010  
Square Feet  
Technology/Manufacturers Directory  
Webinar Series  
The Green Book

**SERVICES**

About NCBR  
Advertising Info  
Contact Us  
Editorial Calendar  
FAQ  
NCBR Store  
Reprints  
Site Map

follow us on



involved in that as a volunteer," he said. It was an eye-opening experience, working on cases that had come to dead-ends, with families still yearning for answers.

"It gave me a lot of empathy for our investigators who work on these cases all the time," he said. "They're very difficult cases to work on and can be very draining. You think of Northern Colorado as a fairly safe area - and it is - but unfortunately there are things going on every day that are pretty tough."

Christensen said he didn't publicize his volunteer activities because he "didn't want it to be a distraction from real estate or make it a big deal."

But in 2010 a twist of fate offered him an opportunity to change gears and enter law enforcement full-time. During the election campaign, he became a supporter of candidate Smith, an officer he got to know while volunteering.

After Smith was elected in November, conversations began as to whether Christensen might bring his business and people skills to Smith's new leadership team.

"I shared with him how to take business principles to increase or improve efficiencies, and not to do things just because they've always been done that way," he said. "Sheriff Smith agreed with that approach and created a position as executive officer."

As executive officer, Christensen is an administrator who handles public relations and oversees accounting, finance, evidence storage, concealed handgun permits and internal affairs. His salary matches that of Patrol Captain John Manago - \$111,711.

One of Christensen's first - and biggest - assignments was literally a baptism by fire. He helped with public relations and interagency coordination in connection with the Crystal Fire that eventually burned more than 3,000 acres west of Fort Collins and destroyed at least 13 homes earlier this month.

"That's the biggest thing that's happened so far," he said, adding that there hasn't really been a dull moment in the three months he's been with the department. "But there's always something."

**Still part of Chrisland**

Christensen said he still checks in with Chrisland once or twice a week and remains a co-owner with Ryan Schaeffer, who was named company president in December and runs the day-to-day operations.

Christensen said the arrangement is so far working well. "I think the change has brought some new energy to the company," he said. "And it's allowed me to do something I'm passionate about."

Schaeffer agrees with that assessment. "It's been extremely good," he said. "In 2011 our activity has been very strong. I'm as busy as I've been in my career right now, although the transaction sizes are smaller."

Schaeffer said he is very happy for his partner, who had another opportunity to take a position in Minnesota law enforcement in 2006 but passed on it because he didn't want to leave the area. "He thought long and hard about taking that position, and he probably thought another opportunity like that wouldn't come along again. But one did, and it's kind of a dream come true."

Sheriff Smith said he's happy to have Christensen on board.

"I never thought I'd have a chance to bring someone like him into the agency," he said. "I was looking for a wild card, someone who would shake things up and be really out of the mold. When I saw how committed Nick



was in the community, I saw that as a real boost. And it is."

Smith said Christensen's initial jitters about the new job were soon dissipated. "When he walked in he wasn't sure how he'd be received as a civilian brought into a top-tier level. But the feedback I'm getting is that they're really appreciative of what he's bringing to the agency."

And that's a shared feeling, Christensen said. "I feel very fortunate to have the opportunity to do this," he said. "I'm very glad to be here."

comments (0) | print | email

### FROM REAL ESTATE SELLING TO REAL CRIME SOLVING


submit a comment

URLs are not allowed. \* denotes a required field.

**Your Name**

**Your Email**

**Your Location**

 **comment text** (maximum 1000 characters)

Submit Your Comment!

©2011 Northern Colorado Business Report. All Rights Reserved. | Powered By FLEX360

This Service Is Provided On NCBR's Standard [Terms & Conditions](#).

Read Our [Privacy Policy](#).