Economist Jonathan Smoke departs from realtor.com, housing industry

Jonathan Smoke, who served as Move Inc.-owed realtor.com's chief economist for nearly three years, has left the company for a position of the same title in the automotive industry.

He was the real estate portal's first person to hold that title.

As for his replacement, "there's an active search underway for a chief economist," realtor.com said in response to Inman's request for comment.

Cox Automotive announced Smoke as the company's new chief economist today.

Jonathan Smoke

"I've spent my career working with data to improve the understanding of market trends and how demand and supply come together in purchases that represent the largest investments most consumers make," Smoke said in a statement. "I will help the company lead the industry with data-driven insights into what is happening and what the future holds.

“From wholesale to retail, new to used, manufacturer to dealer to consumer, I couldn’t ask for a better venue for visibility into the automotive marketplace.”

Before joining realtor.com, Smoke was the chief economist for Hanley Wood, a media and market intelligence company, and served in varying positions at Beazer Homes, including senior vice president of strategy and innovation.

Cox Automotive indicated that Smoke’s 21 years of deep housing intel and real estate data and trends work would be an asset to the company.

“Jonathan will provide a fresh perspective as he offers analysis on the automotive industry and the economic and market trends that affect our clients’ business,” said Sandy Schwartz, Cox Automotive’s president, in the announcment. “Many parallels exist between the automotive and real estate industries, and Jonathan is perfectly positioned to offer actionable intelligence that will benefit our clients.”

Inman named Smoke one of its “21 Most Interesting People In Real Estate” in 2016, noting that the data whiz also has a fun side that comes to life via an alter ego — DJ Smokey Smoke.

“Sometimes when he gets up on a stage or sits down at a keyboard to explain what’s happening in the real estate economy, that alter ego emerges, and his audience gets a playlist to accompany the explanation,” *Inman* wrote at the time.

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