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Corporate Profile

Hive MLS: An MLS built on a smarter model of cooperation, not consolidation

Before it was [Hive MLS](#), it was simply an idea. A working model scribbled on napkins, discussed in hallways, and passed around by a tight-knit group of Realtor Association Executives in North Carolina who believed that real estate professionals deserved something better. Something more equitable. Something that fosters collaboration over competition.

Most Multiple Listing Services don't grow by design. They grow by merger. Two or three MLSs combine, with the smaller ones surrendering their name, brand, and identity. Control shifts. Local voices get quieter. The result often is scale before soul.

The Origin Story

The launch of North Carolina Regional MLS in 2016 wasn't clean. It wasn't easy. It wasn't even fully stable. But it was intentional.

NCRMLS was formed by a handful of REALTOR® associations in North Carolina who believed that working together could serve brokers and agents better than the patchwork systems they were trying to hold together. They didn't want a traditional MLS merger. They didn't want to give up local control. They wanted to build something shared. Something that worked.

The model was radical for its time: a wholesale MLS structure where multiple Associations could align on systems, data standards, and tools – without being absorbed or losing their autonomy. It was never about consolidation. It was about cooperation.

But by early 2019, that cooperation was on the edge. Three shareholder Associations had already submitted withdrawal notices. More were privately expressing concern. Trust was shaky. Leadership was changing. And that's when Daniel Jones stepped in.

A new kind of MLS leader

When Daniel Jones became CEO in the spring of 2019, he walked into an MLS that was three years old and already carrying scar tissue. The organization had never been audited. The accounting system had to be rebuilt from scratch.

There were only two employees – Daniel and one staffer managing compliance and pilot support. Board relations were fragile, with 18 managers and 9 shareholder AEs overseeing operations, some openly skeptical that the model could hold.

“I thought you all wanted transparency,” Jones recalls asking after introducing a more open leadership style. “Well, yeah... but sometimes it’s best to hold back,” they told him. “Just let us know you got this.”

Alone and with no roadmap, he got to work.

Daniel led a full accounting reset in the middle of that first audit – scanning faded receipts, calling hotels about charges from years earlier, and staying up past 2 a.m. to finish compliance and audit prep before his day of operations began. There was no playbook. Just resolve.

Meanwhile, he traveled. He listened. He worked the phones. And slowly, the tone shifted. “We’re rescinding our withdrawal,” one Association said. “We trust you to lead this company.”

That moment marked a real transition – from fragmentation to partnership, from hesitation to trust. Jones wasn’t just keeping things together. He was quietly reengineering how they worked. The biggest shift? A mindset change. The organization wasn’t just a wholesale model anymore. With careful governance redesign, increased communication, and steady reinforcement of each Association’s value, NCRMLS evolved into a wholesale cooperative – something more stable, more inclusive, and more future-proof.

It wasn’t built by chance. It was built on belief – and the determination to prove this model could work.

Crossing state lines

Between 2019 and 2025, Hive MLS tripled from around 6,000 subscribers to over 19,000. Its growth wasn’t driven by mergers or consolidation – it was powered by trust. Associations joined Hive because the model delivered high service standards, local control, and national-level tools without losing autonomy.

The most visible inflection point came in July 2024, when NCRMLS expanded into Georgia, integrating Savannah MLS, the Athens Area Association of REALTORS® and Classic MLS, and the REALTORS® of Greater Augusta. The expansion was significant for its geography and structure: Georgia was welcomed with its charter and full operational independence.

By crossing state lines without sacrificing the cooperative structure, Hive demonstrated a rare feat: rapid growth *and* respect for local governance.

A new name, a clearer identity

That same year, NCRMLS completed a strategic transformation that had been a year in the making. In October 2024, the organization officially became Hive MLS.

The new name wasn't just a rebrand. It was a philosophy. A beehive is a masterclass in coordination built on interdependence and mutual success. Hive MLS embraced the metaphor completely in its look and feel and how it governed, grew, and delivered value.

At the NC REALTORS® Convention & Expo in Wilmington, Hive MLS unveiled its full identity shift to a standing-room-only crowd. The message was clear: this wasn't just a new name. It was the launch of something broader, bolder, and more inclusive.

Unpinning the Hive brand

At the center of this launch was Hive Solutions, a new suite of technology and services created to equip agents and brokers with everything they need to thrive. Rather than building around software licenses or legacy contracts, Hive Solutions was built from member feedback: field-tested, adaptable, and focused on real-life needs.

The tools are designed to sharpen listing accuracy, streamline transactions, and eliminate redundancy. Training programs help agents not just use the tech but master them. And local engagement resources allow Associations to strengthen their presence in the communities they serve.

In every corner of Hive Solutions, the mission is simple: deliver better outcomes by listening to brokers and delivering what they need for their firms and their agents.

Earning recognition

Hive's model and momentum began to turn heads nationally. In 2023, the organization was honored with the WAV Group's Business Generation and Training Awards. It was also one of only two MLSs in the country to receive the prestigious RESO Leadership Award that year.

Platinum RESO certification confirmed Hive's commitment to top-tier data quality and interoperability.

While the accolades are appreciated, Hive's internal culture is still rooted in day-to-day member impact. That includes quarterly copyright audits to protect listing integrity, monthly member

reports to measure progress and performance, and a deep bench of financial stability that's allowed the organization to meet or exceed its reserve goals every single year. Even more telling? In 2023, only a dozen of the nation's top 50 MLSs posted growth. Hive was one of them.

Then, in 2025, Hive's momentum earned broader industry recognition when WAV Group named it one of the nation's Best MLSs, awarding Hive top honors in five categories, including Best Large MLS.

Unlike popularity-based rankings, this award is grounded in performance as it measures how well an MLS delivers tangible results for its members. Hive stood out for its ability to drive real business generation and provide meaningful training that agents actually use. It was a quiet validation of what the cooperative model set out to prove: you don't have to get louder to grow – you have to get better.

Introducing MDX - the data exchange

As Hive grew, the MLS industry focused on traditional data shares. But Hive MLS leadership did not believe in that approach, as it couldn't keep up with mismatched business rules, clunky front-end limits, and the maintenance headache of onboarding new partners. So Hive launched something better: MDX – the MLS Data Exchange.

Created in partnership with SourceRE, MDX replaces patchwork data bridges with a single, vendor-neutral database that supports true interoperability. Listings can be added, edited, and managed through any supported front-end system — no translation issues, no cutovers, and no retraining.

It's not a cosmetic upgrade. It's a structural change.

MDX gives brokers flexibility, vendors cleaner access, and MLSs a way to partner without giving up local control. Each MLS keeps its identity but gains the power to scale without breaking the system. For Hive, it's not just smarter infrastructure. It's the future of how MLSs can better work together.

Built by trust. Powered by people.

Today, broker-centric Hive MLS spans three states – North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia – connecting more than 19,000 real estate professionals across 18 MLSs and REALTOR® associations. It touches 449 cities and towns. And every corner of that footprint is served with the same founding philosophy: humble service, not hubris.

Hive's leadership doesn't talk about disruption. It talks about alignment. It talks about mutual benefit. It also delivers tools that make agents better, brokers sharper, and Associations stronger.

Its name today is also its mission statement. One that reminds every member, every day, that real estate works best when it works together.

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