

A Special Message

I am pleased to present you with the latest issue of Life@Home. Delivered to home buyers, sellers and owners on a monthly basis, this electronic newsletter is designed to give you the real estate information that is important to you. In each issue, you will find practical tips and articles related to buying, selling or owning a home, as well as the latest news on real estate trends. I hope that you enjoy this issue of Life@Home. If I can be of any assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.



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Getting Your House in Tip-Top Shape to Sell



With the spring/summer selling season now here, what can sellers do to maximize the chances of selling their home in a challenging market?

Hiring a qualified real estate agent and setting the right listing price are the first steps to selling your home quickly. But there are other things you can do to help differentiate your home from the competition and attract potential buyers.

Curb appeal. You don't get a second chance to make a first impression, says the old saying. That's why it's essential to "wow" potential buyers from the moment they first lay eyes on your home. It doesn't take much to get curb appeal. Make sure the lawn is tidy and shrubs are trimmed, your front door and porch are clean, the beds are mulched, some flowers are planted for color and the house is freshly painted. According to a 2007 survey by the Virginia Cooperative Extension, good landscaping can increase a home's value by 10 to 12 percent.

Update, but within reason. Some buyers know that they are going to renovate when they purchase a home; others look for a "turnkey" property that is move-in ready. If your house needs updating, consider doing some improvements. Cosmetic improvements, such as paint and wallpaper, help a house show better and are often inexpensive. Repair all appliances to make sure they are in working order. And consider low-priced facelifts to kitchen and baths such as repainting cabinets and replacing lighting fixtures and faucets.

Staging. Staging can help a home sell faster. Move—or remove—furniture to make rooms look bigger. Eliminate clutter and knick-knacks. Warm up rooms by bringing in pillows and fabrics. And don't overlook outdoor living spaces when staging your home.

If you're considering selling your home, give our office a call, and a CENTURY 21 Sales Professional will help you get it in top-notch shape to attract buyers.

A New Reason to Green Your Home



The stimulus package recently adopted by Congress is putting more money into consumers' pockets via the expansion of tax credits available for those who make energy-efficient improvements to their homes.

Making your home more energy-efficient is obviously good for the environment and helps you save money on water and energy bills. But now the new tax credits will make such home upgrades even more affordable, providing a financial incentive for homeowners who go green on their renovation projects in 2009 and 2010.

Under Internal Revenue Code section 25C, tax credits for existing homes expired at the end of 2007. These credits were reinstated by the Bush Administration as part of its economic rescue package passed last fall. Those credits rewarded homeowners who installed energy-efficient windows, doors, roofs, insulation, furnaces, air conditioners and heat pumps.

But that credit was equal to only 10 percent of the cost of each product, with a lifetime cap of \$500, and it wasn't strong enough to encourage homeowners to act.

Now, the tax credit has been tripled—to 30 percent—and the lifetime cap has been lifted to \$1,500. Plus, the list of eligible improvements has been expanded. So homeowners opting to make their homes more energy-efficient will be financially rewarded for doing so.

For more information about tax credits or greening your home, give our office a call.

Mortgage Rates Hit Record Lows



Housing affordability hit an all-time high in early April, as the average 30-year home loan slid to 4.78 percent, the lowest rate since Freddie Mac began tracking it in 1971. These low rates offer buyers unprecedented opportunities to save money on a new home.

Featured Listings



20 Tannery Road White Haven, PA 18661

MLS ID: 09-659

Attractive bilevel home in pretty country setting situated on 1 acre of land. Plenty of space both indoors & out. Enjoy nature on your private rear deck. Detached 26x24 heated 2 sty workshop/garage allows for the hobby enthusiast along w/the single attached garage lends itself to plenty of space. 2 storage sheds also included. Newer roof & furnace. Convenient to Interstates 81 & 476. 2009 taxes are estimated. For more information contact Jim Ellis @ 570-474-6307.



11 Summit Drive White Haven, PA 18661

MLS ID: 08-2791

Perfect country living situated on 1 1/2 acres. New vinyl siding 2008. Hot tub with plenty of outside recreation area. 2009 taxes are estimated. For more information contact Jim Ellis @ 570-474-6307.