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 Experience, Service, Results!*



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THE BUZZ Today's Real Estate News

Housing: A Great Time For Bargain Hunters

Whether it's a home just for you, a family home or a retirement place, you'll have many properties to choose from. Market timing is an art, not a science, but you can improve your odds of buying wisely.

Interest rates are favorable, and re-priced properties may allow you to get more in a home than you could afford before.

First, stop paying attention to the national media. Fear has sidelined buyers even in good markets and that's exactly when you need to take advantage. Secondly, be ready to pounce when you see the

home you want.

The time is right to buy when you see these or other similar signs in the market:

- Inventories start to decline
- Days on market reduce
- Mortgage applications increase.
- Sold homes go for closer to list price
- Prices remain firm or rise
- Incentives disappear.

Now is the time to buy a great home while prices and interest rates are low and inventory is still high.

*Call me today to help you find the home of your dreams!
 (970) 224-9234*

July 3rd to August 15th—The Dog Days Of Summer

It's hot. It's humid. The Dog Days of Summer are here.

The term Dog Days dates back to ancient times when people studied the sky and relied on the heavens and the stars for navigation and spiritual sustenance.

These ancients looked into the night sky and imagined that the constellations formed images of bears (Ursa Major and Ursa Minor), a bull (Taurus) and dogs (Canis Major and Canis Minor).

Sirius, called the dog star, was the brightest star in the night sky. It was so bright that the Romans thought it added heat to the earth.

In late summer, Sirius rises and sets with the sun, furthering the notion that the heat of the combined

stars created the muggy, sultry weather. They called the alignment of the sun and Sirius, the Dog Days. This alignment can vary in exact dates with the latitude of the observer and by the annual variances in the equinoxes.



Most of us know only that this period is too hot for a good disposition and we'll be looking for ways to stay cool during those days. We could go for a swim, take a vacation to a cooler climate, go to an air-conditioned theater, or spend time

leisurely shopping at the air conditioned mall. Dress in cool clothes and don't overexert. But if you are still uncomfortable, you can blame it on the big dog and that familiar old star, the sun.

What's New In Northern Colorado Real Estate...

THE BUZZ



July 2008

How Is The Real Estate Market In Fort Collins?

Statisticians and syndicated experts report daily on the trends in the Real Estate and Mortgage Markets and have Buyers and Sellers hanging onto their every word. While other Colorado real estate markets have experienced their share of ups and downs, foreclosures, and even well-know homebuilders liquidating their inventory, Fort Collins, Colorado has been able to weather this market roller-coaster. "Regional Snapshots" provided by IRES, LLC, the provider of Multiple Listing Services (MLS) for the Fort Collins Board of Realtors, shows our housing trends remain at a steady level. Residential units priced in the low to mid-\$200,000 range, 2-3 bedrooms/2 baths with a 2 car attached garage are selling well.

There is the expected seasonal increase in the total number

of homes listed for sale with brisk market activity being seen in the Multi-Family (Condo/Townhome) market as families prepare to house their college students for the fall semester.

While we could see further declines in home prices throughout this year and into 2009, we should be watching for signs of stabilization in indicators of real housing activity, such as a leveling off in home sales, now that the home-buying season is underway. Be sure to read my article on the opposite page, "Housing—A Great Time For Bargain Hunters" for great tips on gauging the changing market and when the time is right to buy.

Mortgage Rates For Week Ending 06/20/08	
30 Year Fixed:	6.62
15 Year Fixed:	6.2
5/1 ARM:	6.24
(U.S. Weekly Averages provided by Bankrate)	

Fort Collins Regional Snapshot of Residential Detached Properties

(Statistics refer to the Fort Collins Area (IRES area 9), single family residential properties and excludes mobile homes and timeshares.)

	January 2008	February 2008	March 2008	April 2008
Active Listings	1314	1405	1502	1664
# Of Sold Listings	124	107	200	215
Median Sales Price	\$222,000.	\$227,000.	\$229,000.	\$235,700.
Average Days on Market	111	113	115	115

Fort Collins Regional Snapshot of Residential Attached Properties

	January 2008	February 2008	March 2008	April 2008
Active Listings	437	446	491	490
# Of Sold Listings	28	30	56	108
Median Sales Price	\$125,000.	\$142,000.	\$150,000.	\$143,000.
Average Days on Market	104	272	147	108



**Mary M. Rhoades,
 CRS, GRI
 Broker/Owner**

Hello, and welcome to the July issue of my newsletter, "THE BUZZ". It's my way of sharing with you pertinent information about today's real estate topics that affect our community.

Buying or selling a home is one of the biggest and most emotional decision you will ever make. So it's important to work with someone who can provide sound advice and a steady, guiding hand when you need it. That's why a CRS agent is the best person for the job.

A Certified Residential Specialist (CRS) is a proven leader in residential real estate. CRS's are among the top 4 percent of all agents in the country. CRS agents have a high volume of transactions and advanced training in areas such as business planning, real estate investing, marketing and technology. They have years of experience, demonstrated success and professional advice to help you make decisions about buying or selling a home.

With so much at stake in the fast-paced and competitive world of real estate, you know you can count on me to provide the best service for your real estate needs. Serving you would be my pleasure!



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Unlock The Wealth Stored In Your Home- Basics Of Reverse Mortgages
By Mary M. Rhoades , CRS, GRI , Robin O'Brien, and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

Of late, there has been a lot of "Buzz" in the mortgage industry about a previously obscure financial product. The Reverse Mortgage has been around since 1989 when the American Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) issued, through its subsidiary, the

Federal Housing Administration (FHA), the first ever Home Equity Conversion Mortgage (HECM) - usually referred to as a HECM or HUD Reverse Mortgage. 76,802 American seniors received an FHA/HUD reverse mortgage in 2006 and that number jumped to over 107,000 in 2007.

Just what is making this new mortgage program so popular? Millions of Baby Boomers, who are between the ages of 42 and 61, are now realizing that people are living longer, more active lifestyles and there is a significant need to fund that lifestyle...Senior's number one fear is to out live their money! Thus a reverse mortgage can be a great way for seniors to unlock the wealth stored as equity in their homes, giving them the extra income or funds to use in any way they want. They are deciding that it is the best way to increase their peace of mind and enjoy better quality of life without selling their homes.

This type of mortgage is a complex financial product and needs to be fully understood so that you are entirely satisfied that you know what you're about to undertake. Make sure that you consult an independent financial advisor, or a lender who is an authority on the subject and a member of the National Reverse Mortgage Lenders Association (NRMLA) or a state governed organization and is qualified to assist you with selecting the program that'll work best for you. There are also attorneys who specialize in Elder Law.

Now for some Basics:

What is a Reverse Mortgage?

A HUD reverse mortgage, which currently are restricted to seniors 62 years and older, permit homeowners to convert their home equity into cash for the balance of their lifetimes as long as they reside in the home. The money, plus interest, need not be repaid to the lender until the borrower sells the property, dies or moves out. Eligible principal residences include single family dwellings and a two-to-four unit property. Townhomes, detached homes, units in condominiums and some manufactured homes are also eligible, however, condominiums must be FHA-approved.

Benefits?

The loans are available via a lump-sum payment, a line-of-credit, monthly check or some combination of all three. The disbursements are tax-free and can be spent however you like with no impact on Social Security or Medicare benefits. There are no income or credit requirements. There are loan origination fees and closing costs, some insured plans charge insurance premiums, while some plans have mortgage servicing fees. You can finance these costs if you want to avoid paying cash for them and they will be added to the loan amount against which interest is levied.

Are there different types of loan programs available?

Yes, there are three main types available: the HECM (government insured), the Home Keeper (FannieMae administered) and proprietary (often call jumbo because there is no limit on the amount that can be borrowed). The FHA/HUD reverse mortgages

are designed specifically so that you can't outlive the loan. When you get the loan, the lender will charge you 2% to purchase mandatory FHA mortgage insurance. That insurance guarantees that even if you live to be 100, you can never owe more than the value of your home and you can never be forced out of your home. Reverse mortgages are rising-debt loans. The interest is added to the principal loan balance each month, because it is not paid on a current basis. The amount you owe increases over time as the interest compounds. Some reverse mortgages have fixed-rate interest, others have adjustable rates that can change over the life of the loan.

How much can I borrow?

The amount you borrow depends on a number of things like the value of your home, where it's located, interest rates and how old you are. There is a cap on the limit of loan amount. Generally, the more equity you have in your home and the older you are, the more money you can borrow.

What about Repayment?

You owe nothing as long as one homeowner lives in your home. Legal Title remains in the homeowners hands and never with the lender. Provided you keep your house in good repair, pay taxes and insurance you will never lose your home. The FHA mortgage insurance ensures that you can never owe more than the sale price of your home, even if the home depreciates. Your heirs are never personally liable for the reverse mortgage since it is secured solely by the equity in your home. You heirs inherit the property and have the option to refinance with a traditional mortgage or sell the property. If the house sells for more than the loan balance, the remaining equity passes to your heirs.

A HUD reverse mortgage is proving to be very popular for seniors who are looking for a way of utilizing the equity in their home to raise finance, without the worry of ever defaulting on repayments, because there aren't any repayments. A HUD reverse mortgage can be a powerful financial tool for seniors. When used wisely, it can help to pay medical costs, supplement pensions and social security, and help towards education costs for family members. In fact, the money can be use in any way you see fit.

When applying for a HUD HECM reverse mortgage you are required to speak to an independent advisor who will talk to you about the pros and cons and help you decide if it's right for you.

Look for activity in this segment of the lending industry to double and triple in size in the coming years as our Baby Boomer population retires and this industry continues to evolve in an open and competitive marketplace.



Ask An Expert

By Mary M. Rhoades, CRS, GRI



Question: I just bought a home and I'm wondering if you have any tips on maintaining it?

Answer: These are some simple steps that will help you avoid big repair bills.

***Gutters:** Clean them in spring and fall or more often if you have trees. Cleaning is free if you do it yourself. Gutters should last 30 years. Consider a "gutter helmet" for long-term leaf-free gutters.

***Bathroom Caulk:** Watch for cracks or pieces of grout that have chipped out between the tiles and at the corners. Caulk costs about \$3 a tube, but retiling can cost thousands.

***Outside Wood Deck:** Protect the wood with ultraviolet resistant sealer and it will last a least 15 years. Sealer costs about \$25 a gallon. Replacing the deck will cost \$3,000 or more.

***Water Heater:** It should last 15 to 18 years. Test the temperature-pressure relief valve once a year. Sediment at the bottom can be drained annually, or do it twice a year if you have well water. Open the drain valve and let water flow until it runs clear. Cleaning is free, the cost of a new water heater is about \$600.

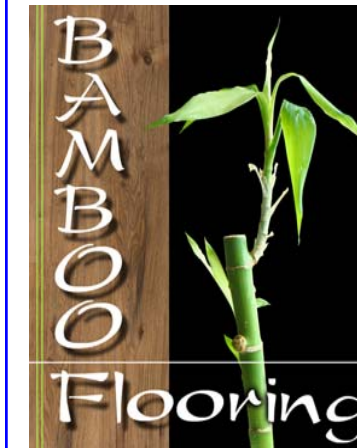
***Furnace and Central Air Conditioning:** These should last 20 to 25 years for a gas furnace, or 15 years for a heat pump and air conditioner. Change filters every one to three months and have the units inspected annually. If not maintained, it will cost more than \$3,000 for a new furnace and another \$3,000 for a 3-ton air-conditioning unit.

Keep your maintenance tasks on schedule, call me at (970) 224-9234 to receive your free copy of my home maintenance calendar.

Showcase Your Home's Interior

You've taken care of the exterior curb appeal and now it's time to stage your home for sale and get it in tip-top condition. When potential buyers enter your home, it's vital that they can picture themselves living in your home. Therefore you want to make sure the home is free of clutter and personal belongings and absolutely clean. The following 6 tips will help you prepare your home for sale.

1. Begin by making the home as clean as possible, because there is nothing more attractive than a clean home. If you're not into cleaning yourself, hire a professional. Pay special attention to the windows, floors and bathrooms. Your home should be "white glove clean".
2. Make necessary repairs. Enlist the aid of a professional home inspector. He can provide you with a list of necessary repairs and maintenance issues. Take the time to repaint any walls that are showing wear and stick to neutral colors like beige, taupe or soft green. This lets potential buyers know that you valued your home



Beautiful, Renewable Bamboo Makes Its Way Into Flooring... and much more!

In this age of "green" shopping, more consumers are looking for products that preserve the earth's resources instead of contributing to depletion or pollution.

Bamboo has a lot going for it in the green world. It can be used in products such as flooring, clothing and paper and it can help preserve hardwood forests.

With high sustainability and environmentally sound origins, bamboo floor coverings have become the ideal choice for those looking to adorn their homes with the beauty of a hardwood floor while considering environmental issues. They are increasingly choosing a bamboo floor in place of traditional hardwood.

Floor retailers have been quick to catch on to the consumer lean towards greener products. Many now offer high-quality bamboo floors in various styles and colors. It's easy to color coordinate the floor with the color scheme in your home or office. Bamboo is also used to make dishes, sheets, towels, rugs, baskets, window shades and bath mats.

One of it's greatest strengths is that it is a renewable resource. Plants can produce several crops a year. They grow rapidly in a wide range of climates and are considered eco-friendly because they are naturally pest resistant. They don't require the use of pesticides. They require little water and can grow as much as a foot in one day.

Bamboo is often blended with organic cotton to make underwear, T-shirts and other articles of clothing. Fabrics made with it are said to have a silky texture and are biodegradable.

Another factor in bamboo's favor is its contribution to reducing global warming. Bamboo's canopy releases 35 percent more oxygen than a comparable group of hardwood trees. There are drawbacks to the use of bamboo. For one thing, while easy to grow, it is nearly impossible to stop. Some say nothing short of a herd of hungry pandas will keep it out of your neighbor's yard.

and have taken care of it.

3. Now is a good time to depersonalize your home. Make decisions now about what is essential and what won't be making the trip to your new home. Clean out your closets and hold a garage sale or donate to charity. Arrange for a rented off-site storage unit to hold large items, extra furniture and seasonal clothing. In other words, de-clutter.
4. Get the right amount of furniture in each room. Less furniture makes spaces seem larger, so remove what's not necessary and improve traffic flow. Showcase special home features, like a beautiful fireplace, and make it the focal point of the staging in that room.
5. Bring in the light! Leave drapes and blinds open during the day and leave on a few lights at all times during showings. Turn on additional lamps for evening showings. Windows should be crystal-clear.
6. And lastly, don't hesitate to call upon a professional staging company to assist you. For a nominal fee, they will help you organize your home, de-clutter and if necessary, can bring in a piece or two of furniture to add just the right touch to a room for showings.