

Your REALTOR®



September 2009

REAL ESTATE *Update*

Copyright 2009 Realty Times
All Rights Reserved.

Your Name Here

Your Tagline or Slogan Here!

Note: Simply click on the title of a story below to go directly to that page.

Pages with full header

- [September Real Estate Update](#)
- [Sellers: Know Your Buyer Market](#)
- [Remodeling Increasing: How to Get the Best Value](#)
- [Major Campaign To Extend \\$8,000 Home Buyer Tax Credit Underway](#)
- [Real Estate Investment 101](#)
- [New Disclosures Help Mortgage Consumers Know Risk](#)
- [Making Small Homes Have Big Appeal To Buyers](#)
- [Federal Reserve's Five Tips For Shopping For a Mortgage](#)
- [Blank Template](#)

Pages with footer only

- [September Real Estate Update](#)
- [Sellers: Know Your Buyer Market](#)
- [Remodeling Increasing: How to Get the Best Value](#)
- [Major Campaign To Extend \\$8,000 Home Buyer Tax Credit Underway](#)
- [Real Estate Investment 101](#)
- [New Disclosures Help Mortgage Consumers Know Risk](#)
- [Making Small Homes Have Big Appeal To Buyers](#)
- [Federal Reserve's Five Tips For Shopping For a Mortgage](#)
- [Blank Template](#)

Your Name Here

Your Phone Number
cwarrick@realtytimes.com
<http://YourWebsiteAddress.com>

Your Company Here

Your Company Phone
Your Company Address Here

September 2009

REAL ESTATE Update



Your Name Here

Your Tagline or Slogan Here!

Rates Still Near Record Lows

In Freddie Mac's results of its

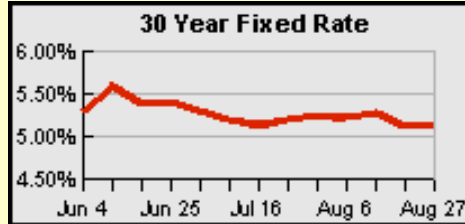
Primary Mortgage Market Survey the 30-year fixed-rate mortgage averaged 5.14 percent for the week ending August 27, up from the previous week when it averaged 5.12 percent.

Last year at this time, the 30-year fixed-rate mortgage averaged 6.40 percent.

Low rates contributed to existing home sales rising for the fourth consecutive month to an annual

Mortgage Rates

Source: Realty Times



U.S. averages as of August 27, 2009:

30 yr. fixed: 5.14%
15 yr. fixed: 4.58%
1 yr. adj: 4.69%

pace of 5.24 million in July, the most since August 2007, according to the National Association of Realtors.

Encouraging Numbers

Encouraging



numbers on the real estate front, including new housing construction and sales of existing homes, continue to point toward a sustained recovery in the months ahead.

Home builders -- who had been the most depressed segment of the real estate industry for the past two years -- are pulling permits again and starting to put up new houses.

The Commerce Department reports that single family starts last month were up nearly two percent over the prior month, while permits for future construction jumped by six percent. Starts and permits are now at their highest levels in ten months.

Meanwhile, existing home sales and price reports from around the country show the breadth of the rebound getting underway.

In five large southern California counties that were near the epicenter of the bust, houses sold in July at the fastest pace in three years, according to MDA DataQuick researchers. The five counties are San Diego, Orange, Los Angeles, Ventura and Riverside-San Bernardino.

But John Walsh, president of DataQuick, cautions against overstating the positive news here though. Walsh believes that "we could bounce along" at this summer's slightly improved levels "for quite awhile" if California's economy doesn't improve.

Some lenders are beginning to take note of the improving numbers and are revising their controversial "declining area" designations that restrict mortgage lending or make it more costly for buyers.

Buyers Rush to Beat Tax Credit Deadline



Real estate

professionals report that first-time home buyers are flooding the sale market, pressed to finalize a deal before the federal government's \$8,000 tax credit offer expires on November 30, 2009.

Because mortgage approvals, residential inspections, and other steps in the buying process typically take about two months, buyers hoping to take advantage of the incentive will need to have a contract by the end of September.

The new flurry of activity now as house-hunters try to meet the deadline, is triggering bidding wars and energizing the property market, which historically is slow at the end of summer.

As a result, more home sellers are getting their full asking price.

Bill Encourages Energy Improvements

A bill that helps home



buyers afford energy improvements and encourages banks to offer a discount on loans to pay for reducing energy usage passed the U.S. House in June and could pass the Senate in the fall.

The American Clean Energy and Security Act of 2009 requires Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac to offer discounts on mortgages that include extra cash for making a home more energy efficient.

These discounts, which are already in effect at some lenders like J.P. Morgan Chase & Co. and Bank of America, include savings on closing costs for homes that have Energy Star appliances.

The Federal Housing Administration is offering a plan that allows borrowers to add the cost of making efficiency improvements into the mortgage.

Your Name Here

Your Phone Number
cwarick@realtytimes.com
http://YourWebsiteAddress.com

Your Company Here

Your Company Phone
Your Company Address Here

September 2009

REAL ESTATE *Update*



Your Name Here

Your Tagline or Slogan Here!

Sellers: Know Your Buyer Market

By Phoebe Chongchua



Before you start a company, the first thing you should do is market research to determine your target market. This important step will help determine how successful you ultimately will be. The same is true when it comes to selling your home. Understanding the buyer market and who might be a good fit for your home will help ensure that you highlight the most vital features.

"Just like the business of television advertising commercials, you need to know who your target audience is," writes Michael Corbet in his book *Ready, Set, Sold!* Before putting your home on the market, you should take time to search for the best agent to handle your transaction. The agent can help you better understand which buyers are most likely going to be interested in your home.

Even though you may have lived in your neighborhood for years, taking the time to drive or walk around it is a good idea. But this time do it with the same viewpoint you had when you were originally considering buying your home. It can really be a very different view. If you're objective, you'll see both the key selling points of the neighborhood as well as the things that may deter buyers. Seeing it all is beneficial because that's exactly what potential buyers will see.

If there is a concern that needs addressing, an eyesore in the neighborhood or a foreclosure that's been sitting boarded up on the block for several months, don't be afraid to talk about it. The potential buyers are going to know it's there (if they do their homework).

Making your home ready for your specific buyer market will help you not waste time marketing it to uninterested buyers. For instance, if your home is a two-story home, you might find that elderly couples or people looking to "age in place" might not be as attracted to it because of the steps to the second story. People seeking aging-in-place homes often want a single story so that the entire home is accessible without the difficulty or exertion of having to travel upstairs. If, your home is located in

one of the best school districts, draw attention to this. Many parents will move to a neighborhood almost exclusively because of a school district's glowing reputation. Don't assume that the potential buyers automatically know this school district's reputation - shout it through your marketing materials.

Corbet writes that there are several common types of buyers: single first-time, working couple, family, retirees or empty nesters, and a growing buyer market is women who purchase homes sans spouse/partner. Taking a closer look at these groups can help identify what's important to each.

Single first-time buyer: Corbet writes, "Since a huge percentage of renters are women, it's no surprise that they represent a large percentage of first-time buyers. The house needs to be spotless, have great curb appeal, and evoke a warm and welcoming feeling with a few amenities." However, Corbet is quick to point out that in this economic era the home must also "be basic enough to be affordable."

Working couple: many times this buyer market is looking for a well-maintained home that offers privacy, and enough space for the couple to have some place to work and relax apart. Dual sinks in the bathroom are a plus, also extra storage and good closet accommodations.

Family: these buyers typically go wild over open floor plans, kitchens that flow into great rooms, lots of storage, backyard space, homes that are set-back off the street, cul-de-sacs, Jack and Jill bathrooms (the bathroom is attached to and between two bedrooms), and good-size laundry area.

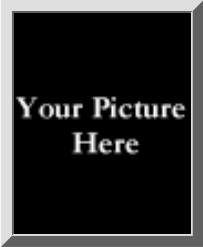
Empty nesters: think ease, comfort, and lifestyle. This group has "been there, done that"! They're looking for comfortable living with a simpler lifestyle. Corbet writes, "They also look for smaller, more manageable backyards and low-maintenance landscaping." Security systems are a plus for this group too. Knowing your buyer market gives you an advantage - you can highlight the features of your home that are most likely exactly what those buyers want.

Your Name Here

Your Phone Number
cwarrick@realtytimes.com
<http://YourWebsiteAddress.com>

Your Company Here

Your Company Phone
Your Company Address Here



September 2009

REAL ESTATE Update

Your Name Here

Your Tagline or Slogan Here!

Remodeling Increasing: How to Get the Best Value

By Phoebe Chongchua



Homeowners who have either decided to stay in their homes or are considering selling may be helping to build momentum in the remodeling market.

According to the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB), the organization's Chairman, Greg Miedema, said in a recent media statement that, "With more calls from homeowners and more projects under way, remodelers are seeing better activity in their businesses."

NAHB reports that indicators for current remodeling market conditions have improved in all regions across the country. "A significant portion of the market improvement came from the measure for major additions and alterations (jobs worth \$25,000 or more with a leap to 38.2 (from 32.7)," according to NAHB. The association's Remodeling Market Index (RMI) measures ranges from zero (very poor conditions) to 100 (excellent conditions) as rated by the remodelers surveyed.

NAHB says several factors could be contributing to better remodeling conditions. "Remodeling does uptick when there are more new homes being built and sold or existing homes being sold because people tend to remodel when they're moving or when they're selling. & The other thing that we could be seeing is an increase in consumer sentiment in that people have been reluctant to spend but now are feeling a little bit more confident and more willing to spend. These are things that some of our researchers think might be part of the influencers right now," says Kelly Mack, Communications Manager for NAHB Remodelers.

Remodeling is, however, a big step for many homeowners. Getting the best value for your remodel shouldn't come from guesswork; instead, knowing how to find a remodeling company with a solid reputation for delivering quality work throughout the entire remodeling process requires research.

Choosing the best remodeler for your project can often be a tedious process and if you don't take the time to explore all your options it can result in frustration and too much money spent. Making sure the company that is doing the remodel asks the right questions, does its homework, and offers full-service design and remodeling under one roof. This will help ensure a quality remodel that meets all your needs. Steve Walton, Senior Design Consultant for Marrokal Design and Remodeling, in San Diego, California helps clients sort through what can be a

complicated process to get the best value remodel.

"When I meet with clients, I have them describe their ideas for the remodeling project. I take a lot of notes," says Walton. The design consultant then sets another meeting at Marrokal's Design and Remodeling center. Prior to this meeting Walton has already done his homework and researched any likely obstacles for the remodel. Some companies take on a project and later discover remodeling barriers.

"I get your set-backs, zoning conditions, and height conditions and try to see if there are any issues. That way when we meet at our design center we can start looking at the architectural process," says Walton.

The full-service home-design remodel company offers homeowners one-stop shopping for their remodeling needs. "I develop a written program based on what my clients' needs and goals are for their remodel," says Walton. He adds, "Throughout this I am digging deep and finding out what's important to my clients. A lot of companies don't ask these questions but this is how Marrokal Design and Remodeling starts to develop a preliminary budget for our clients."

While not all remodelers offer full service (from design to construction), this type of company is often popular with homeowners. A full-service company keeps your remodeling project running smoothly by coordinating all of the necessary design, construction developments, and communication with trade companies through one primary source (removing the unnecessary hassle of trying to get numerous trade companies to work together).

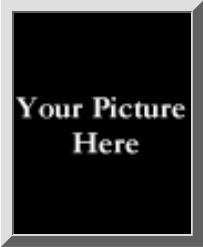
Another approach to remodeling that sets quality remodelers apart from the rest is the use of value engineering to design the remodel. "Value engineering" means refining and sometimes redesigning aspects of the remodel to make it more cost-effective which ultimately saves money for the homeowner. Mack adds that the basic tasks of asking for references, planning your budget, interviewing remodelers, asking about certifications that the remodeler holds, and making sure that all your questions are met will help set your mind at ease before you start the remodeling process. If you're considering a remodel, understanding some of the most popular remodeling trends can help you decide which projects may have the greatest appeal for comfort and sale-ability.

Your Name Here

Your Phone Number
cwarrick@realtytimes.com
http://YourWebsiteAddress.com

Your Company Here

Your Company Phone
Your Company Address Here



September 2009

REAL ESTATE *Update*

Your Name Here

Your Tagline or Slogan Here!

Major Campaign To Extend \$8,000 Home Buyer Tax Credit Underway



By Kenneth R. Harney

The House and Senate may have left Capitol Hill for their Summer break, but housing lobbyists are busy at work gearing up a major campaign to extend the \$8,000 home buyer tax credit.

The credit for first-time purchasers is scheduled to expire November 30.

The National Association of Home Builders and the National Association of Realtors want to persuade Congress to nail down an extension of the credit, and maybe even broaden its coverage, as soon as possible.

The home builders are mounting an aggressive campaign during the congressional recess. The association is sending out local teams of members to meet with congressmen and senators in their home districts, urging not only a one year extension of the credit, but an expansion of the concept to cover all home buyers next year, not just first-timers.

Though the endorsement may, or may not, have been connected with the home builders' campaign, one of the most politically powerful Democrats has already signaled that he favors a one year extension.

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid of Nevada, said he thinks it's something we can get done. According to a report in the Las Vegas Sun, Reid made the comment during a conference call with Nevada reporters.

Meanwhile, the influential chairman of the Senate banking

committee, Connecticut Democrat Chris Dodd, has teamed up with Georgia Republican Senator Johnny Isakson to sponsor a bill that would extend the credit for another year and expand it to a \$15,000 maximum.

In the House, two bills have been introduced to extend and expand the credit for either six months or 12 months. The National Association of Realtors is strongly supporting the extension efforts, and is sending its own delegations to lobby key members of the House Ways and Means committee and the Senate Finance committee.

So with all this going on, is it a sure thing that the tax credit will be available in some form for home buyers next year? Should consumers who can't quite make the November 30 deadline breathe easier?

Absolutely not. There is no sure thing on Capitol Hill whenever legislation looks like it's got a clear path to passage. That's when opponents hijack the bill or filibuster it in the Senate.

Nonetheless, extension of the credit looks like it has growing bipartisan support. Mary Trupo, legislative spokesperson for the National Association of Realtors, told Realty Times that we feel Congress is receptive to the message that the housing tax credit helps create jobs, and stimulates the economy.

But nobody should assume it's a done deal, until it is.

Your Name Here

Your Phone Number
cwarrick@realtytimes.com
<http://YourWebsiteAddress.com>

Your Company Here

Your Company Phone
Your Company Address Here



September 2009

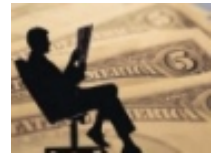
REAL ESTATE Update

Your Name Here

Your Tagline or Slogan Here!

Real Estate Investment 101

By Broderick Perkins



It could be a good time to invest in real estate, given the abundance of foreclosures and other distressed properties with reduced prices. It could also be a bad time to invest in real estate, if you don't know what you are doing. There's the rub.

It's a good time to invest, but it is difficult. Now when you go out to invest you are competing with a dozen offers. The investors are back. Just like buying a home to live in, taking the real estate investment plunge requires taking stock of your financial goals, planning and lifestyle before taking the plunge.

Pretty much like buying any property. If you've got the time, the money and the lifestyle that lends itself to managing a real estate investment, you are just about half way there. However, both halves are pretty big halves. The National Real Estate Investors Association says you've still got a lot of work to do. Here's how much.

● **Buy your own home first.** The general rule of thumb is that buying your own home will not only put a roof over your head, but also background you in the full experience of buying and owning property -- financials, market conditions, maintenance and real estate professionals you'll need along the way.

What's more, your first home could later become your first investment property, a property in a market with which you are familiar.

"You could maintain your current residence as a rental and move up into a larger home or better location yourself. This keeps the basis on your original property intact, but gives you an opportunity to move should your life dictate," says Kim DiBenedetto, president of the Monterey County Association of Realtors in Monterey, CA. There is one exception to the buy-your-own-home-first rule says Cryder. "If you live with Mom or the cost of your rental housing is low, stay there and purchase investment properties first. If you can rent way below market value, I wouldn't disturb that," said Cryder, who has been an investor since 1968, when he purchased his first property. However, in today's market, an existing stake in a home can have a down side.

"You will be required to put more money down, most likely a minimum of 25 percent and also have several months in reserves. If you are upgrading from your current residence, your

lender will require a minimum of 20 percent equity in your current residence before they will loan to you for another property," said DiBenedetto, also an agent with Coldwell Banker Del Monte Realty in Carmel.

● **Go back to school.** Turn to the Internet, reputable books, successful investment groups, college and university level courses, even your state's real estate license program. You don't have to actually get a license, but you can become just as educated as a licensed agent. Individual real estate investors, salespeople and others who you've met on the way to investing are also valuable educational resources.

● **Get professional help.** The same way you find any competent, trustworthy and honest professional is the same way to look for a mentor, investment partner with prior knowledge or investment group. Seek referrals from friends, family, professionals with whom you already conduct business, co-workers and others you trust who've had a satisfactory, successful real estate investing experience.

"Now, more than ever, you need the experience of a competent REALTOR® and lender to guide you through the process," said DiBenedetto.

● **Learn your investment market.** One market's bubble could be one investor's boom and another investor's bust. A home in one market could give you vacation rental income in a half year sufficient to cover the cost of principal, interest, taxes, insurance, home owner association dues, upkeep and other costs, but still not appreciate. Another home in another market may not bring you sufficient rent in a year's time to cover the cost of owning the property, but might appreciate more than enough to make up for your carrying costs over the long term. The variables are endless and you'll need to measure your capacity for risk against market conditions.

● **Exit strategy.** Finally, while some experts say you'll also need to develop an exit strategy in terms of unloading properties when they are no longer viable investments, Cryder says if you buy right and stick it out over the loan haul you won't need an exist strategy. "When you've got the goose that lays the golden egg, be satisfied with the golden egg," he says.

Your Name Here

Your Phone Number
cwarrick@realtytimes.com
<http://YourWebsiteAddress.com>

Your Company Here

Your Company Phone
Your Company Address Here



September 2009

REAL ESTATE Update

Your Name Here

Your Tagline or Slogan Here!

New Disclosures Help Mortgage Consumers Know Risk

By Broderick Perkins



The Federal Reserve is gearing up with more consumer protection on the home loan front, as it continues its overhaul Regulation Z.

Regulation Z is the wide-reaching Consumer Protection provision of Truth In Lending law enforced by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation. The ever-evolving regulation mandates certain detailed disclosures by financial institutions in the realm of home loans and regulates certain credit card practices and credit billing disputes. The greatest collapse in the housing and mortgage market in 70 years was due, in part, to consumer ignorance that caused them to buy homes they couldn't afford. "Consumers need the proper tools to determine whether a particular mortgage loan is appropriate for their circumstances," said Federal Reserve Chairman Ben S. Bernanke in a prepared statement. "It is often said that a home is a family's most important asset, and it is the Federal Reserve's responsibility to see that borrowers receive the information they need to protect that asset," he added. Effective for applications on or after July 30, 2009, first and second home loan customers, as well as those refinancing have a slew of new benefits.

- Lenders must provide you initial truth-in-lending mortgage cost disclosures within three business days of your application. If not, you can back out.
- Until you receive the initial disclosure, lenders can't collect any fees, except for a credit check. Lenders and brokers previously collected appraisal, credit and other charges at the onset of the application.
- A final truth-in-lending disclosure is due three business days before closing.
- Lenders must give you a copy of the real estate appraisal three business days before the scheduled closing. Lenders often failed to inform a consumer of his or her right to a copy of the appraisal.
- The lender can't close the loan until at least seven-days after applicants have or mailed the initial disclosure. That gives consumers more time to mull over the transaction.
- If there's a change that makes the annual percentage rate rise beyond a set level, say because of rising rates or inaccurate initial information, creditors must provide an additional loan cost disclosure and give you an additional three-business-day waiting period before closing the loan.

Days before the July 30 provisions took effect, the Fed pushed another round of regulatory upgrades into the public comment pipeline, this time for so-called "closed-end mortgages" and home equity lines of credit "HELOC" consumers. A closed mortgage is a home loan that can't be paid off until its maturity date -- without substantial prepayment penalties. A HELOC is a line of credit drawn against the equity in your home. You pay back only what you use, unlike an equity loan which grants you a fixed amount upfront and you must begin paying back immediately.

Proposed provisions for these two types of mortgages will be under discussion for at least four months and may not become law until late this year or early next. Closed-end mortgage disclosures will focus on potentially risky features including adjustable rates, prepayment penalties, and negative amortization. Lenders would have to:

- Improve the disclosure of the annual percentage rate so it captures most fees and settlement costs.
 - Show how the consumer's APR compares to the average rate offered to borrowers with excellent credit.
 - Provide final truth-in-lending disclosures so that consumers receive them at least three business days before loan closing.
 - Show consumers how much their monthly payments might increase, for adjustable-rate mortgages.
- Disclosures, however, aren't always sufficient to keep mortgage consumers out of hot water. Closed mortgage rules would also:
- Prohibit payments to a mortgage broker or a loan officer that are based on the loan's interest rate or other terms. Yield spread premiums, mortgage brokers obtained for steering consumers to higher cost mortgages, are targeted by this provision.
 - Prohibit a mortgage broker or loan officer from otherwise steering consumers to transactions that are not in their interest in order to increase the mortgage broker's or loan officer's compensation.

For HELOCs the Fed wants to do away with generic disclosures and mandate more specific information about a HELOC that summarizes both the basics and risks at application. Shortly after application, consumers would receive new disclosures that reflect the specific terms of their HELOC.

Your Name Here

Your Phone Number
cwarrick@realtytimes.com
<http://YourWebsiteAddress.com>

Your Company Here

Your Company Phone
Your Company Address Here



September 2009

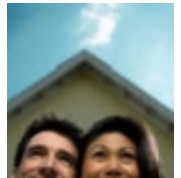
REAL ESTATE Update

Your Name Here

Your Tagline or Slogan Here!

Making Small Homes Have Big Appeal To Buyers

By Phoebe Chongchua



There's a movement away from the McMansions toward smaller homes for convenience and cost-savings. It seems an attitude of less is more, is prevailing in the housing industry; whether it will remain short-lived may depend on the economy.

An article by James Wentling of Wentling/Architects was published this month in Nation's Building News, the weekly online newspaper of the National Association of Homebuilders. According to the article, the median size of a new single-family house sold in the United States actually increased 42 percent over the past two decades. The increase rose from 1,650 square feet in 1978 to 2,335 square feet in 2007. However, Wentling writes, that when this trend is closely examined, it's revealed that there were decreases in square footage during several periods including 1981-1982, 1995, 2003, and 2007-2008. Wentling predicts house sizes will continue to shrink in an ailing economy.

So, if you have a smaller home, now may be a better-than-ever time to market its cozy, less maintenance, and lower-utilities-cost benefits. Here's a look at a few ways to give your small home a big appeal to buyers by creating multi-purpose usage.

Hidden storage: smaller can be better, if you can somehow squeeze all the things you need into it. Think of the electronic devices that are rapidly becoming smaller and smaller. Decreased size is welcome provided that you don't lose functionality and compromise your usage of the device. The same goes for homes. Smaller homes can be exactly what buyers are looking for but the key is to have them well planned to accommodate buyers' everyday needs. Built-in furniture: can provide dual purpose, and if it has convenient hidden storage,

that's an extra value. Some homeowners steer clear of this type of furniture mistakenly thinking that it will look too utilitarian and unbecoming. However, it can be beautifully designed and still be highly functional.

Office niche: these days home offices are prevalent in housing. Nearly everyone, regardless of whether going to an office or working from home, finds a home office useful. In smaller homes, finding that space can be difficult, but if you can create even a small space to showcase where a computer/office has its own niche it may influence buyers. You can create this space even without adding partition walls by using a decorative screen or tucking away a small desk beneath a staircase are just two examples.

Take appliances off the counters: in really tight spaces, some extra-creative homeowners mount appliances under the counters to free clutter from countertops and cabinets. Kitchen tables can double as a work surface for food preparation. Living rooms: the traditional sofa may not be the best furniture for a small living room. Sometimes, depending on the size, shape, and wall space in the room, a few simple chairs may fit better along with a small coffee table with storage underneath.

Built-In Floor-to-ceiling bookcases: I'm a writer and a book lover, so I had to include this one. Those who read and hold onto their books often find space is an issue. But bookcases with adjustable shelves can be custom-built surrounding a doorway or fireplace, providing easy access to the books and also saving space. Some homes have sliding bookcases that resemble pocket doors, tucking away the books and keeping the room clutter-free.

Your Name Here

Your Phone Number
cwarrick@realtytimes.com
<http://YourWebsiteAddress.com>

Your Company Here

Your Company Phone
Your Company Address Here



September 2009

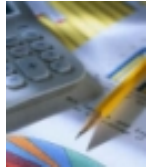
REAL ESTATE *Update*

Your Name Here

Your Tagline or Slogan Here!

Federal Reserve's Five Tips For Shopping For a Mortgage

By Broderick Perkins



Financing the purchase of a home could be the most complex financial decision you'll ever endure.

You need all the help you can get.

To help get you started with the basics, the Federal Reserve offers "5 Tips for Shopping for a Mortgage," because, well, the fundamentals always apply.

Don't bite off more than you can chew. Check your budget. You must have a budget so you can estimate what you can afford to pay for a home, including the mortgage, property taxes, insurance, and monthly maintenance and utilities.

You also have to have enough to save for emergencies. Plan ahead to have enough to afford your monthly mortgage payments for several years. Check your credit report to make sure that the information in it is accurate. A higher credit score may help you get a lower interest rate on your mortgage.

Shop around. Online and off, shop lenders, brokers, credit unions, government (city, county state) programs, even seller financing. Shopping around is a bear, but it can save you thousands of dollars.

Understand costs. Shopping around means scrutinizing loan costs and fees not just the annual percentage rate (APR)

On any given day, lenders and brokers may offer different interest rates and fees to different consumers for the same loan, even when those consumers have the same loan qualifications. Keep in mind that lenders and brokers also consider the profit they receive if you agree to the terms of a loan with higher fees, higher points, or a higher interest rate.

Learn risks, benefits of loan options. Mortgages have many features -- fixed interest rates, adjustable rates, payment adjustments, interest-only payments, prepayment penalties, balloon payments and more. Consider all the features, including the APR and the settlement costs.

Have your lender calculate how much your monthly payments could be a year from now, and 5 or 10 years from now. A mortgage shopping worksheet can help you identify the features of different loans. Mortgage calculators can help you compare payments and the equity you could build with different mortgage loans.

Get advice from those you trust. Ask family, friends, co-workers, professional associates and others you trust for referrals. Talk with a trusted housing counselor or a real estate attorney that you hire to review your documents before you sign them. You can find a list of counseling resources at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) website (<http://www.hud.gov>) or by calling (800) 569-4287.

Your Name Here

Your Phone Number
cwarrick@realtytimes.com
<http://YourWebsiteAddress.com>

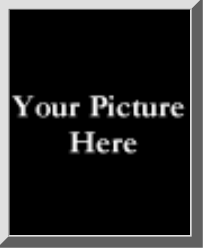
Your Company Here

Your Company Phone
Your Company Address Here

Your REALTOR®

September 2009

Copyright 2009 Realty Times
All Rights Reserved.



REAL ESTATE *Update*

Your Name Here

Your Tagline or Slogan Here!

Your Name Here

Your Phone Number
cwarrick@realtytimes.com
<http://YourWebsiteAddress.com>

Your Company Here

Your Company Phone
Your Company Address Here

September Real Estate Update

Rates Still Near Record Lows

In Freddie Mac's results of its

Primary Mortgage Market Survey the 30-year fixed-rate mortgage averaged 5.14 percent for the week ending August 27, up from the previous week when it averaged 5.12 percent.

Last year at this time, the 30-year fixed-rate mortgage averaged 6.40 percent.

Low rates contributed to existing home sales rising for the fourth consecutive month to an annual

Buyers Rush to Beat Tax Credit Deadline



Real estate

professionals report that first-time home buyers are flooding the sale market, pressed to finalize a deal before the federal government's \$8,000 tax credit offer expires on November 30, 2009.

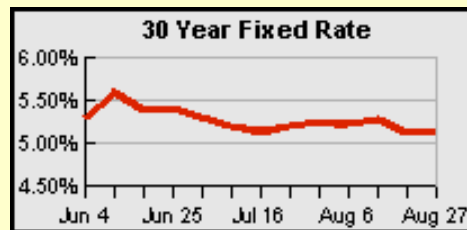
Because mortgage approvals, residential inspections, and other steps in the buying process typically take about two months, buyers hoping to take advantage of the incentive will need to have a contract by the end of September.

The new flurry of activity now as house-hunters try to meet the deadline, is triggering bidding wars and energizing the property market, which historically is slow at the end of summer.

As a result, more home sellers are getting their full asking price.

Mortgage Rates

Source: Realty Times



U.S. averages as of August 27, 2009:

30 yr. fixed: 5.14%
15 yr. fixed: 4.58%
1 yr. adj: 4.69%

pace of 5.24 million in July, the most since August 2007, according to the National Association of Realtors.

Encouraging Numbers

Encouraging



numbers on the real estate front, including new housing construction and sales of existing homes, continue to point toward a sustained recovery in the months ahead.

Home builders -- who had been the most depressed segment of the real estate industry for the past two years -- are pulling permits again and starting to put up new houses.

The Commerce Department reports that single family starts last month were up nearly two percent over the prior month, while permits for future construction jumped by six percent. Starts and permits are now at their highest levels in ten months.

Meanwhile, existing home sales and price reports from around the country show the breadth of the rebound getting underway.

In five large southern California counties that were near the epicenter of the bust, houses sold in July at the fastest pace in three years, according to MDA DataQuick researchers. The five counties are San Diego, Orange, Los Angeles, Ventura and Riverside-San Bernardino.

But John Walsh, president of DataQuick, cautions against overstating the positive news here though. Walsh believes that "we could bounce along" at this summer's slightly improved levels "for quite awhile" if California's economy doesn't improve.

Some lenders are beginning to take note of the improving numbers and are revising their controversial "declining area" designations that restrict mortgage lending or make it more costly for buyers.

Bill Encourages Energy Improvements

A bill that helps home



buyers afford energy improvements and encourages banks to offer a discount on loans to pay for reducing energy usage passed the U.S. House in June and could pass the Senate in the fall.

The American Clean Energy and Security Act of 2009 requires Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac to offer discounts on mortgages that include extra cash for making a home more energy efficient.

These discounts, which are already in effect at some lenders like J.P. Morgan Chase & Co. and Bank of America, include savings on closing costs for homes that have Energy Star appliances.

The Federal Housing Administration is offering a plan that allows borrowers to add the cost of making efficiency improvements into the mortgage.

Your Name Here

Your Phone Number
cwarrick@realtytimes.com
<http://YourWebsiteAddress.com>

Your Company Here

Your Company Phone
Your Company Address Here

Sellers: Know Your Buyer Market

By Phoebe Chongchua



Before you start a company, the first thing you should do is market research to determine your target market. This important step will help determine how successful you ultimately will be. The same is true when it comes to selling your home. Understanding the buyer market and who might be a good fit for your home will help ensure that you highlight the most vital features.

"Just like the business of television advertising commercials, you need to know who your target audience is," writes Michael Corbet in his book *Ready, Set, Sold!* Before putting your home on the market, you should take time to search for the best agent to handle your transaction. The agent can help you better understand which buyers are most likely going to be interested in your home.

Even though you may have lived in your neighborhood for years, taking the time to drive or walk around it is a good idea. But this time do it with the same viewpoint you had when you were originally considering buying your home. It can really be a very different view. If you're objective, you'll see both the key selling points of the neighborhood as well as the things that may deter buyers. Seeing it all is beneficial because that's exactly what potential buyers will see.

If there is a concern that needs addressing, an eyesore in the neighborhood or a foreclosure that's been sitting boarded up on the block for several months, don't be afraid to talk about it. The potential buyers are going to know it's there (if they do their homework).

Making your home ready for your specific buyer market will help you not waste time marketing it to uninterested buyers. For instance, if your home is a two-story home, you might find that elderly couples or people looking to "age in place" might not be as attracted to it because of the steps to the second story. People seeking aging-in-place homes often want a single story so that the entire home is accessible without the difficulty or exertion of having to travel upstairs. If, your home is located in

one of the best school districts, draw attention to this. Many parents will move to a neighborhood almost exclusively because of a school district's glowing reputation. Don't assume that the potential buyers automatically know this school district's reputation - shout it through your marketing materials.

Corbet writes that there are several common types of buyers: single first-time, working couple, family, retirees or empty nesters, and a growing buyer market is women who purchase homes sans spouse/partner. Taking a closer look at these groups can help identify what's important to each.

Single first-time buyer: Corbet writes, "Since a huge percentage of renters are women, it's no surprise that they represent a large percentage of first-time buyers. The house needs to be spotless, have great curb appeal, and evoke a warm and welcoming feeling with a few amenities." However, Corbet is quick to point out that in this economic era the home must also "be basic enough to be affordable."

Working couple: many times this buyer market is looking for a well-maintained home that offers privacy, and enough space for the couple to have some place to work and relax apart. Dual sinks in the bathroom are a plus, also extra storage and good closet accommodations.

Family: these buyers typically go wild over open floor plans, kitchens that flow into great rooms, lots of storage, backyard space, homes that are set-back off the street, cul-de-sacs, Jack and Jill bathrooms (the bathroom is attached to and between two bedrooms), and good-size laundry area.

Empty nesters: think ease, comfort, and lifestyle. This group has "been there, done that"! They're looking for comfortable living with a simpler lifestyle. Corbet writes, "They also look for smaller, more manageable backyards and low-maintenance landscaping." Security systems are a plus for this group too. Knowing your buyer market gives you an advantage you can highlight the features of your home that are most likely exactly what those buyers want.

Your Name Here

Your Phone Number
cwarrick@realtymtimes.com
<http://YourWebsiteAddress.com>

Your Company Here

Your Company Phone
Your Company Address Here

Remodeling Increasing: How to Get the Best Value

By Phoebe Chongchua



Homeowners who have either decided to stay in their homes or are considering selling may be helping to build momentum in the remodeling market.

According to the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB), the organization's Chairman, Greg Miedema, said in a recent media statement that, "With more calls from homeowners and more projects under way, remodelers are seeing better activity in their businesses."

NAHB reports that indicators for current remodeling market conditions have improved in all regions across the country. "A significant portion of the market improvement came from the measure for major additions and alterations (jobs worth \$25,000 or more with a leap to 38.2 (from 32.7)," according to NAHB. The association's Remodeling Market Index (RMI) measures ranges from zero (very poor conditions) to 100 (excellent conditions) as rated by the remodelers surveyed.

NAHB says several factors could be contributing to better remodeling conditions. "Remodeling does uptick when there are more new homes being built and sold or existing homes being sold because people tend to remodel when they're moving or when they're selling. & The other thing that we could be seeing is an increase in consumer sentiment in that people have been reluctant to spend but now are feeling a little bit more confident and more willing to spend. These are things that some of our researchers think might be part of the influencers right now," says Kelly Mack, Communications Manager for NAHB Remodelers.

Remodeling is, however, a big step for many homeowners. Getting the best value for your remodel shouldn't come from guesswork; instead, knowing how to find a remodeling company with a solid reputation for delivering quality work throughout the entire remodeling process requires research.

Choosing the best remodeler for your project can often be a tedious process and if you don't take the time to explore all your options it can result in frustration and too much money spent. Making sure the company that is doing the remodel asks the right questions, does its homework, and offers full-service design and remodeling under one roof. This will help ensure a quality remodel that meets all your needs. Steve Walton, Senior Design Consultant for Marrokal Design and Remodeling, in San Diego, California helps clients sort through what can be a

complicated process to get the best value remodel.

"When I meet with clients, I have them describe their ideas for the remodeling project. I take a lot of notes," says Walton. The design consultant then sets another meeting at Marrokal's Design and Remodeling center. Prior to this meeting Walton has already done his homework and researched any likely obstacles for the remodel. Some companies take on a project and later discover remodeling barriers.

"I get your set-backs, zoning conditions, and height conditions and try to see if there are any issues. That way when we meet at our design center we can start looking at the architectural process," says Walton.

The full-service home-design remodel company offers homeowners one-stop shopping for their remodeling needs. "I develop a written program based on what my clients' needs and goals are for their remodel," says Walton. He adds, "Throughout this I am digging deep and finding out what's important to my clients. A lot of companies don't ask these questions but this is how Marrokal Design and Remodeling starts to develop a preliminary budget for our clients."

While not all remodelers offer full service (from design to construction), this type of company is often popular with homeowners. A full-service company keeps your remodeling project running smoothly by coordinating all of the necessary design, construction developments, and communication with trade companies through one primary source (removing the unnecessary hassle of trying to get numerous trade companies to work together).

Another approach to remodeling that sets quality remodelers apart from the rest is the use of value engineering to design the remodel. "Value engineering" means refining and sometimes redesigning aspects of the remodel to make it more cost-effective which ultimately saves money for the homeowner. Mack adds that the basic tasks of asking for references, planning your budget, interviewing remodelers, asking about certifications that the remodeler holds, and making sure that all your questions are met will help set your mind at ease before you start the remodeling process. If you're considering a remodel, understanding some of the most popular remodeling trends can help you decide which projects may have the greatest appeal for comfort and sale-ability.

Your Name Here

Your Phone Number
cwarrick@realtymtimes.com
<http://YourWebsiteAddress.com>

Your Company Here

Your Company Phone
Your Company Address Here

Major Campaign To Extend \$8,000 Home Buyer Tax Credit Underway

By Kenneth R. Harney



The House and Senate may have left Capitol Hill for their Summer break, but housing lobbyists are busy at work gearing up a major campaign to extend the \$8,000 home buyer tax credit.

The credit for first-time purchasers is scheduled to expire November 30.

The National Association of Home Builders and the National Association of Realtors want to persuade Congress to nail down an extension of the credit, and maybe even broaden its coverage, as soon as possible.

The home builders are mounting an aggressive campaign during the congressional recess. The association is sending out local teams of members to meet with congressmen and senators in their home districts, urging not only a one year extension of the credit, but an expansion of the concept to cover all home buyers next year, not just first-timers.

Though the endorsement may, or may not, have been connected with the home builders' campaign, one of the most politically powerful Democrats has already signaled that he favors a one year extension.

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid of Nevada, said he thinks it's something we can get done. According to a report in the Las Vegas Sun, Reid made the comment during a conference call with Nevada reporters.

Meanwhile, the influential chairman of the Senate banking

committee, Connecticut Democrat Chris Dodd, has teamed up with Georgia Republican Senator Johnny Isakson to sponsor a bill that would extend the credit for another year and expand it to a \$15,000 maximum.

In the House, two bills have been introduced to extend and expand the credit for either six months or 12 months. The National Association of Realtors is strongly supporting the extension efforts, and is sending its own delegations to lobby key members of the House Ways and Means committee and the Senate Finance committee.

So with all this going on, is it a sure thing that the tax credit will be available in some form for home buyers next year? Should consumers who can't quite make the November 30 deadline breathe easier?

Absolutely not. There is no sure thing on Capitol Hill whenever legislation looks like it's got a clear path to passage. That's when opponents hijack the bill or filibuster it in the Senate.

Nonetheless, extension of the credit looks like it has growing bipartisan support. Mary Trupo, legislative spokesperson for the National Association of Realtors, told Realty Times that we feel Congress is receptive to the message that the housing tax credit helps create jobs, and stimulates the economy.

But nobody should assume it's a done deal, until it is.

Your Name Here

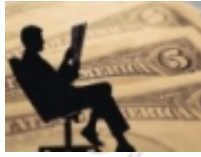
Your Phone Number
cwarick@realtytimes.com
<http://YourWebsiteAddress.com>

Your Company Here

Your Company Phone
Your Company Address Here

Real Estate Investment 101

By Broderick Perkins



It could be a good time to invest in real estate, given the abundance of foreclosures and other distressed properties with reduced prices. It could also be a bad time to invest in real estate, if you don't know what you are doing. There's the rub.

It's a good time to invest, but it is difficult. Now when you go out to invest you are competing with a dozen offers. The investors are back. Just like buying a home to live in, taking the real estate investment plunge requires taking stock of your financial goals, planning and lifestyle before taking the plunge.

Pretty much like buying any property. If you've got the time, the money and the lifestyle that lends itself to managing a real estate investment, you are just about half way there. However, both halves are pretty big halves. The National Real Estate Investors Association says you've still got a lot of work to do. Here's how much.

- **Buy your own home first.** The general rule of thumb is that buying your own home will not only put a roof over your head, but also background you in the full experience of buying and owning property -- financials, market conditions, maintenance and real estate professionals you'll need along the way.

What's more, your first home could later become your first investment property, a property in a market with which you are familiar.

"You could maintain your current residence as a rental and move up into a larger home or better location yourself. This keeps the basis on your original property intact, but gives you an opportunity to move should your life dictate," says Kim DiBenedetto, president of the Monterey County Association of Realtors in Monterey, CA. There is one exception to the buy-your-own-home-first rule says Cryder. "If you live with Mom or the cost of your rental housing is low, stay there and purchase investment properties first. If you can rent way below market value, I wouldn't disturb that," said Cryder, who has been an investor since 1968, when he purchased his first property. However, in today's market, an existing stake in a home can have a down side.

"You will be required to put more money down, most likely a minimum of 25 percent and also have several months in reserves. If you are upgrading from your current residence, your

lender will require a minimum of 20 percent equity in your current residence before they will loan to you for another property," said DiBenedetto, also an agent with Coldwell Banker Del Monte Realty in Carmel.

- **Go back to school.** Turn to the Internet, reputable books, successful investment groups, college and university level courses, even your state's real estate license program. You don't have to actually get a license, but you can become just as educated as a licensed agent. Individual real estate investors, salespeople and others who you've met on the way to investing are also valuable educational resources.

- **Get professional help.** The same way you find any competent, trustworthy and honest professional is the same way to look for a mentor, investment partner with prior knowledge or investment group. Seek referrals from friends, family, professionals with whom you already conduct business, co-workers and others you trust who've had a satisfactory, successful real estate investing experience.

"Now, more than ever, you need the experience of a competent REALTOR® and lender to guide you through the process," said DiBenedetto.

- **Learn your investment market.** One market's bubble could be one investor's boom and another investor's bust. A home in one market could give you vacation rental income in a half year sufficient to cover the cost of principal, interest, taxes, insurance, home owner association dues, upkeep and other costs, but still not appreciate. Another home in another market may not bring you sufficient rent in a year's time to cover the cost of owning the property, but might appreciate more than enough to make up for your carrying costs over the long term. The variables are endless and you'll need to measure your capacity for risk against market conditions.

- **Exit strategy.** Finally, while some experts say you'll also need to develop an exit strategy in terms of unloading properties when they are no longer viable investments, Cryder says if you buy right and stick it out over the loan haul you won't need an exist strategy. "When you've got the goose that lays the golden egg, be satisfied with the golden egg," he says.

Your Name Here

Your Phone Number
cwarick@realtymtimes.com
<http://YourWebsiteAddress.com>

Your Company Here

Your Company Phone
Your Company Address Here

New Disclosures Help Mortgage Consumers Know Risk

By Broderick Perkins



The Federal Reserve is gearing up with more consumer protection on the home loan front, as it continues its overhaul Regulation Z.

Regulation Z is the wide-reaching Consumer Protection provision of Truth In Lending law enforced by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation. The ever-evolving regulation mandates certain detailed disclosures by financial institutions in the realm of home loans and regulates certain credit card practices and credit billing disputes. The greatest collapse in the housing and mortgage market in 70 years was due, in part, to consumer ignorance that caused them to buy homes they couldn't afford. "Consumers need the proper tools to determine whether a particular mortgage loan is appropriate for their circumstances," said Federal Reserve Chairman Ben S. Bernanke in a prepared statement. "It is often said that a home is a family's most important asset, and it is the Federal Reserve's responsibility to see that borrowers receive the information they need to protect that asset," he added. Effective for applications on or after July 30, 2009, first and second home loan customers, as well as those refinancing have a slew of new benefits.

- Lenders must provide you initial truth-in-lending mortgage cost disclosures within three business days of your application. If not, you can back out.
- Until you receive the initial disclosure, lenders can't collect any fees, except for a credit check. Lenders and brokers previously collected appraisal, credit and other charges at the onset of the application.
- A final truth-in-lending disclosure is due three business days before closing.
- Lenders must give you a copy of the real estate appraisal three business days before the scheduled closing. Lenders often failed to inform a consumer of his or her right to a copy of the appraisal.
- The lender can't close the loan until at least seven-days after applicants have or mailed the initial disclosure. That gives consumers more time to mull over the transaction.
- If there's a change that makes the annual percentage rate rise beyond a set level, say because of rising rates or inaccurate initial information, creditors must provide an additional loan cost disclosure and give you an additional three-business-day waiting period before closing the loan.

Days before the July 30 provisions took effect, the Fed pushed another round of regulatory upgrades into the public comment pipeline, this time for so-called "closed-end mortgages" and home equity lines of credit "HELOC" consumers. A closed mortgage is a home loan that can't be paid off until its maturity date -- without substantial prepayment penalties. A HELOC is a line of credit drawn against the equity in your home. You pay back only what you use, unlike an equity loan which grants you a fixed amount upfront and you must begin paying back immediately.

Proposed provisions for these two types of mortgages will be under discussion for at least four months and may not become law until late this year or early next. Closed-end mortgage disclosures will focus on potentially risky features including adjustable rates, prepayment penalties, and negative amortization. Lenders would have to:

- Improve the disclosure of the annual percentage rate so it captures most fees and settlement costs.
- Show how the consumer's APR compares to the average rate offered to borrowers with excellent credit.
- Provide final truth-in-lending disclosures so that consumers receive them at least three business days before loan closing.
- Show consumers how much their monthly payments might increase, for adjustable-rate mortgages.
Disclosures, however, aren't always sufficient to keep mortgage consumers out of hot water. Closed mortgage rules would also:
 - Prohibit payments to a mortgage broker or a loan officer that are based on the loan's interest rate or other terms. Yield spread premiums, mortgage brokers obtained for steering consumers to higher cost mortgages, are targeted by this provision.
 - Prohibit a mortgage broker or loan officer from otherwise steering consumers to transactions that are not in their interest in order to increase the mortgage broker's or loan officer's compensation.
For HELOCs the Fed wants to do away with generic disclosures and mandate more specific information about a HELOC that summarizes both the basics and risks at application. Shortly after application, consumers would receive new disclosures that reflect the specific terms of their HELOC.

Your Name Here

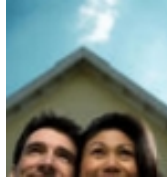
Your Phone Number
cwarrick@realtymtimes.com
<http://YourWebsiteAddress.com>

Your Company Here

Your Company Phone
Your Company Address Here

Making Small Homes Have Big Appeal To Buyers

By Phoebe Chongchua



There's a movement away from the McMansions toward smaller homes for convenience and cost-savings. It seems an attitude of less is more, is prevailing in the housing industry; whether it will remain short-lived may depend on the economy.

An article by James Wentling of Wentling/Architects was published this month in Nation's Building News, the weekly online newspaper of the National Association of Homebuilders. According to the article, the median size of a new single-family house sold in the United States actually increased 42 percent over the past two decades. The increase rose from 1,650 square feet in 1978 to 2,335 square feet in 2007. However, Wentling writes, that when this trend is closely examined, it's revealed that there were decreases in square footage during several periods including 1981-1982, 1995, 2003, and 2007-2008. Wentling predicts house sizes will continue to shrink in an ailing economy.

So, if you have a smaller home, now may be a better-than-ever time to market its cozy, less maintenance, and lower-utilities-cost benefits. Here's a look at a few ways to give your small home a big appeal to buyers by creating multi-purpose usage.

Hidden storage: smaller can be better, if you can somehow squeeze all the things you need into it. Think of the electronic devices that are rapidly becoming smaller and smaller. Decreased size is welcome provided that you don't lose functionality and compromise your usage of the device. The same goes for homes. Smaller homes can be exactly what buyers are looking for but the key is to have them well planned to accommodate buyers' everyday needs. Built-in furniture: can provide dual purpose, and if it has convenient hidden storage,

that's an extra value. Some homeowners steer clear of this type of furniture mistakenly thinking that it will look too utilitarian and unbecoming. However, it can be beautifully designed and still be highly functional.

Office niche: these days home offices are prevalent in housing. Nearly everyone, regardless of whether going to an office or working from home, finds a home office useful. In smaller homes, finding that space can be difficult, but if you can create even a small space to showcase where a computer/office has its own niche it may influence buyers. You can create this space even without adding partition walls by using a decorative screen or tucking away a small desk beneath a staircase are just two examples.

Take appliances off the counters: in really tight spaces, some extra-creative homeowners mount appliances under the counters to free clutter from countertops and cabinets. Kitchen tables can double as a work surface for food preparation. **Living rooms:** the traditional sofa may not be the best furniture for a small living room. Sometimes, depending on the size, shape, and wall space in the room, a few simple chairs may fit better along with a small coffee table with storage underneath.

Built-In Floor-to-ceiling bookcases: I'm a writer and a book lover, so I had to include this one. Those who read and hold onto their books often find space is an issue. But bookcases with adjustable shelves can be custom-built surrounding a doorway or fireplace, providing easy access to the books and also saving space. Some homes have sliding bookcases that resemble pocket doors, tucking away the books and keeping the room clutter-free.

Your Name Here

Your Phone Number
cwarrick@realtytimes.com
<http://YourWebsiteAddress.com>

Your Company Here

Your Company Phone
Your Company Address Here

Federal Reserve's Five Tips For Shopping For a Mortgage

By Broderick Perkins



Financing the purchase of a home could be the most complex financial decision you'll ever endure.

You need all the help you can get.

To help get you started with the basics, the Federal Reserve offers "5 Tips for Shopping for a Mortgage," because, well, the fundamentals always apply.

Don't bite off more than you can chew. Check your budget. You must have a budget so you can estimate what you can afford to pay for a home, including the mortgage, property taxes, insurance, and monthly maintenance and utilities.

You also have to have enough to save for emergencies. Plan ahead to have enough to afford your monthly mortgage payments for several years. Check your credit report to make sure that the information in it is accurate. A higher credit score may help you get a lower interest rate on your mortgage.

Shop around. Online and off, shop lenders, brokers, credit unions, government (city, county state) programs, even seller financing. Shopping around is a bear, but it can save you thousands of dollars.

Understand costs. Shopping around means scrutinizing loan costs and fees not just the annual percentage rate (APR)

On any given day, lenders and brokers may offer different interest rates and fees to different consumers for the same loan, even when those consumers have the same loan qualifications. Keep in mind that lenders and brokers also consider the profit they receive if you agree to the terms of a loan with higher fees, higher points, or a higher interest rate.

Learn risks, benefits of loan options. Mortgages have many features -- fixed interest rates, adjustable rates, payment adjustments, interest-only payments, prepayment penalties, balloon payments and more. Consider all the features, including the APR and the settlement costs.

Have your lender calculate how much your monthly payments could be a year from now, and 5 or 10 years from now. A mortgage shopping worksheet can help you identify the features of different loans. Mortgage calculators can help you compare payments and the equity you could build with different mortgage loans.

Get advice from those you trust. Ask family, friends, co-workers, professional associates and others you trust for referrals. Talk with a trusted housing counselor or a real estate attorney that you hire to review your documents before you sign them. You can find a list of counseling resources at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) website (<http://www.hud.gov>) or by calling (800) 569-4287.

Your Name Here

Your Phone Number
cwarrick@realtytimes.com
<http://YourWebsiteAddress.com>

Your Company Here

Your Company Phone
Your Company Address Here

SAMPLE

SAMPLE

SAMPLE

SAMPLE

SAMPLE

SAMPLE

SAMPLE

SAMPLE

SAMPLE

Your Name Here

Your Phone Number
cwarrick@realtytimes.com
<http://YourWebsiteAddress.com>

Your Company Here

Your Company Phone
Your Company Address Here