



Selling your home in a challenging market

The most recent report from the National Association of REALTORS® (NAR) explains that approximately one in three metropolitan areas in this country enjoyed rising home values during the first three months of 2008. That's good news. Still, more than 100 areas saw either a drop in value or no change at all.

NAR President Richard Gaylord said about these latest figures, "it's more important than ever to examine what's happening with home prices at the city and neighborhood level. The old real estate mantra of 'location, location, location' is perhaps more relevant today than ever before as all real estate is truly local."

If you are a seller in Colorado and have had your home on the market for any significant period of time you already understand how today's market is different – even from a year ago. Many sellers report that they are getting a lot of interest in their properties but no offers. REALTORS® confirm that the buying public is taking much longer than in recent years to decide to make that first offer. When offers do come in they are usually lower than might be expected and buyers are asking for a variety of concessions and benefits they might not have the courage to seek in a stronger market.

It may be as easy as this to understand these variables:

- prices have dropped
- inventory (the number of available homes) is high
- the economy is weak
- there are a large number of available foreclosed properties; and
- housing prices could go down even further.

If you are a buyer, these are pretty good conditions. You have a lot of choices, bargains abound in foreclosed properties and, if you can afford to delay the decision, you may be able to get a great property at an outstanding value.

As a seller you have to rely upon the attractiveness of your property to break through these obstacles. You may even find yourself competing with foreclosed properties at much lower rates in the same neighborhood as yours.

To give yourself the best opportunity in the current market, make sure your home is as appealing and competitive as it can be. If repairs are needed, take care of them before you put the home on the market. Buyers may be discouraged if they feel they have to fix plumbing, roofs or door locks which they expect to be in good condition.

New paint, working on your “curb appeal,” upgrading to energy efficient heating and cooling systems, investing in some interior upgrades (like kitchen counters or an updated bathroom) will all help your home stand out from the crowd.

Being patient is the most common advice REALTORS® are offering their clients today. You may be fortunate and sell quickly but more likely you could be on the market for a while longer than you originally expected. Sometimes sellers may be tempted to accept a “low ball” offer simply because they are anxious about how long their property might be on the market.

While many people are comfortable trying to sell a home without professional assistance, this may not be the best time to try and do it all yourself. Marketing a home is a skill, as is the negotiation process, and in both cases a REALTOR® can assist you in reaching the largest possible audience and getting the best price for your home.

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