

President's Column

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End-of-the-year holidays are an ideal time to sell your home

With all the activity surrounding the winter holidays, why would you even consider selling a home this time of year? Many consumers think it's not good to list their property in the winter months, but it's not necessarily such a bad idea.

Statistics show that the real estate market slows down a bit in October, taking off again in late January. One of the top reasons for this seasonal slowdown is inclement weather. But here in Texas, things can be quite a bit different than other regions of the country. While we may see an occasional snow or ice storm, we fare better than those living north of the Mason-Dixon Line in the winter. If you are thinking about selling your home, take advantage of the holiday season. You might be surprised.

Use the slow season to your advantage

There are several benefits to selling this time of year. Fewer sellers on the market mean you may find the competition among them is less fierce. Your Texas REALTOR® may have more time to devote to you, and the same may be true for home inspectors, appraisers, title companies, and anyone else involved in the home-buying process. There's another perk to selling a home during the off season: Some movers charge less this time of the year than they do during the peak seasons of spring and summer.

Attracting off-season buyers

Many homebuyers looking in the winter months are more serious than those looking to purchase during peak season. It's pretty safe to assume that someone who wants to view your home December 31 is serious about buying. Maybe they didn't have enough money for a down payment earlier in the year or perhaps couldn't get financing. Whatever the case, there's a reason they entered the market during the off-season, and that reason could be meaningful to you.

The Internet may add a significant off-season dimension to real estate sales as more and more consumers are shopping for homes online. This can mean good news for sellers. Even in the coldest of winters, prospective buyers will be viewing properties for sale from the comfort of their own living rooms.

Holiday marketing opportunities

If you're planning to sell your home this holiday season, you should consider sitting down with your Texas REALTOR® to discuss holiday marketing. Holiday decorations go a long way in showcasing a home to its fullest potential. Homes that are tastefully decorated for the season seem warm and inviting, and that's appealing to prospective buyers. Holiday lights, autumn wreaths, a crackling fireplace and perhaps some warm cider to greet open-house guests can help buyers imagine their own family in the comfortable environment.

Asking price, however, may be more important than staging the home for a holiday sale. Ask your Texas REALTOR® to compare similar homes sold in the winter months. Some homeowners tend to set their asking price too high, basing it on sale prices generated during peak season. Don't let this happen to you. You and your Texas REALTOR® can compare homes that sold quickly during the high season, giving you a chance to adjust your price and terms accordingly.

Don't let the cold weather discourage you from selling your home this winter. As a seller, you can work with your Texas REALTOR® to determine a fair asking price and brainstorm creative marketing ideas to take advantage of the season.

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