Judy's News You Can Use January

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Homes for Heroes

http://www.homesforheroes.com/affiliate/judy-goldberg
Gratefully Giving Back to Teachers, Firefighters, EMS, Law Enforcement, Healthcare Professionals, and Military Because they deserve it.
30% of my Commission is returned to my Buyers And Sellers because they are my Heroes
(Click the link above for more information)

Judy Goldberg
REAL ESTATE

Judy's Corner

Be the Change You Want to See in the World

~Mahatma Gandhi

I have reached a point in my life where I want to make a difference to the people who have made a difference in my life and the life of my family and my country, who have sacrificed so much to serve our community by putting others before themselves with little recognition or thanks.

I am an approved & vetted affiliate for Homes for Heroes, an organization started after 9/11. I have often found myself living in the wrong place at the wrong time! As a single mother with a 2 year old in tow, I lived in LA during the Rodney King Riots, the San Fernando Valley during the Northridge Earthquake, and Carlsbad during the 2014 Fires.

If it weren't for all the men and women putting their lives on the line, I don't know what I would have done.

So, if you, a family member or friend are a hero and want to Purchase or Sell a Home, I gratefully will give you 30% of my Commission after your closing on the property. (No red tape, no strings attached. This is NOT an offer that is open to the public.)

You will need to contact me through http://www.homesforheroes.com/affiliate/judy-goldberg or Call 760.274.5910 and I will register you.

This is my thank you for all you have done. I wish you Happy Holidays and a Safe and Healthy New Year to you and your family!

Til next month,

November Home Sales & Price Report

www.CAR.org, December 18, 2018

California housing market sputters in November

California home sales remained on a downward trend for the seventh consecutive month in November as prospective buyers continued to wait out the market, according to the California Association of REALTORS® (CAR).

Closed escrow sales of existing, single-family detached homes in California totaled a seasonally adjusted annualized rate of 381,400 units in November. The statewide annualized sales figure represents what would be the total number of homes sold during 2018 if sales maintained the November pace throughout the year. It is adjusted to account for seasonal factors that typically influence home sales.

November's sales figure was down 3.9% from the revised 397,060 level in October and down 13.4% from home sales in November 2017. This marked the fourth month in a row that sales were below 400,000.

"While many home buyers continue to sit on the sidelines, serious buyers who are in a position to purchase should take advantage of this window of opportunity," said CAR President Jared Martin. "Now that interest rates have pulled back, home prices have tapered, and inventory has improved, buyers' prospects of getting into a home are more positive."

The statewide median home price declined to $554,760 in November. The November statewide median price was down 3% from $572,000 in October and up 1.5% from November 2017.

"The slowdown in price growth is occurring throughout the state, including regions that have strong economic fundamentals such as the San Francisco Bay Area," said CAR Senior Vice President and Chief Economist Leslie Appleton-Young. "The deceleration in home price appreciation should be a welcome sign for potential buyers who have struggled in recent years against low inventory and rapidly rising home prices."

Other key points from CAR's November 2018 resale housing report include:

- On a regionwide, non-seasonally adjusted basis, sales dropped double-digits on a year-over-year basis in the San Francisco Bay Area, the Central Coast, and the Southern California regions, while the Central Valley region experienced a relatively small sales dip of 3.9%.
- 41 of the 51 counties reported by CAR posted a sales decline in November with an average year-over-year sales decline of 16.8%. 26 counties recorded an annual double-digit sales drop.
- Sales for the San Francisco Bay Area as a whole fell 11.5% from a year ago. All nine Bay Area counties recorded annual sales decreases, with Marin, San Francisco, San Mateo, and Sonoma counties posting double-digit annual declines.
- The Los Angeles Metro region posted a year-over-year sales drop of 10.1%, as home sales fell 11.2% in Los Angeles County and 14.4% in Orange County.
- Home sales in the Inland Empire decreased 6.7% from a year ago as Riverside and San Bernardino counties posted annual sales declines of 9.0% and 3.2%, respectively.
- Home prices in the San Francisco Bay Area are no longer climbing at the double-digit pace that occurred throughout much of this year. On a year-over-year basis, the Bay Area median price ticked up 0.6% from November 2017. While home prices in Marin, San Francisco, San Mateo, and Santa Clara counties continued to remain above $1 million, all but San Mateo County recorded a year-over-year price decline.
- Statewide active listings rose for the eighth consecutive month after nearly three straight years of declines, increasing 31% from the previous year. November's listings increase was the largest since April 2014.
- The unsold inventory index, which is a ratio of inventory over sales, increased year-to-year from 2.9 months in November 2017 to 3.7 months in November 2018. The index measures the number of months it would take to sell the supply of homes on the market at the current sales rate.
- The median number of days it took to sell a California single-family home edged up from 22 days in November 2017 to 28 days in November 2018.
- CAR's statewide sales-price-to-list-price ratio declined from 98.9% in November 2017 to 97.9% in November 2018.
- The 30-year, fixed-mortgage interest rate averaged 4.87% in November, up from 3.92% in November 2017, according to Freddie Mac. The five-year, adjustable mortgage interest rate also increased in November to an average of 4.11% from 3.24% from November 2017.

January HomeWork

☐ Organize home improvement files. Review warranties and check for recommended maintenance on furnaces, equipment, appliances and tools. Mark calendar to track scheduled upkeep and service.

☐ Inspect furniture, cabinets and vanities for loose knobs, pulls and hinges; repair as necessary. Lubricate squeaky door hinges; free sticky doors by trimming edges or shimming hinges.

☐ Fix squeaks in floors and stairs by applying weight to the area and driving an 8d or 12d galvanized finish nail through the flooring into a floor joist or stringer.

☐ Look for bargains on discontinued appliances and tools. Before buying, make sure that warranties are valid.

☐ Make a room-by-room inventory of everything in your house. In the event of fire, flood or other disaster, it will be important in filing an insurance claim. Photographs or video of your possessions can also be helpful.

☐ Don't close vents to crawl spaces. If you live where pipes can freeze and the floor becomes very cold, insulate pipes and under the floor. Vents play an important role in controlling condensation beneath a house.

☐ Double-check insulation around exterior pipes that are exposed to freezing weather to be certain that water cannot seep under the insulation.

Source: www.weather.com

January is Birth Defects Awareness Month

Birth defects are health conditions that are present at birth and affect about 120,000 babies each year in the US. There are thousands of different birth defects, with the most common being heart defects, cleft lip and cleft palate, Down syndrome and spina bifida. While there's been lots of research, we still don't know the causes of some birth defects. Contact the March of Dimes for more info and ways to help: *www.marchofdimes.com*

January Observances...

New Year's Day is January 1. For many, it's the chance to reflect upon the previous year and set up a plan for the coming year.

January 21st is Martin Luther King Day, a federal holiday celebrating the life and achievements of the influential civil rights leader.

Nothing in the world is more dangerous than sincere ignorance and conscientious stupidity.

~ Martin Luther King, Jr

Tax Deductions That Disappeared in 2018

The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 is poised to have a significant effect on income tax returns in 2019.

Some of the best news from the tax reform law is an increase in the standard deduction. The single taxpayer standard deduction will nearly double in 2018 to $12,000 for individuals. Married couples will get a standard deduction of $24,000 for 2018, and head of household filers will see their standard deduction go up to $18,000 in 2018.

Since the majority of Americans are going to fall under the standard deduction, that may save taxpayers time as well as money. Finance experts say there may be no need for many people to save receipts or document spending since they likely won't be itemizing deductions under the new law.

However, it isn't all good news. Here are some deductions and exemptions that have been eliminated or changed for the 2018 tax year, at least until some provisions of the tax law expire in 2025.

Personal exemptions. The increased standardized deduction will be welcome news for many households, but there's a catch. Taxpayers are losing their $4,050 personal and dependency exemptions. While not technically a deduction, the exemption allowed taxpayers to subtract $4,050 from their taxable income for each dependent they claim. An increase in the child tax credit may help some taxpayers offset the loss of personal exemptions, but it won't help everyone. For example, for children in college there's no child tax credit.

State and local tax deductions. Starting in 2018, deductions for state and local taxes will be capped at $10,000. For people in areas where property taxes are high, this is huge.

Mortgage interest deduction. Starting in 2018, the mortgage interest deduction will be capped at $750,000, a change that will disproportionately affect those living in states with high home sales values.

Deduction for home equity loan interest. The home equity line of credit interest deduction is completely gone with no grandfathering. That means even those who have an existing home equity loan can't deduct the interest after 2017 unless they can prove the home equity line was used for home improvement only. Also, the combined total of the mortgage and home equity loan interest deduction can't exceed $750,000.

Deductions for unreimbursed employee expenses and miscellaneous itemized deductions. Unreimbursed work expenses, unreimbursed qualified employee education expenses, costs related to tax preparation services, investment fees, professional dues and a long list of other items are no longer deductible unless the total amount of these miscellaneous expenses exceed 2 percent of a person's adjusted gross income.

Deduction for moving expenses associated with relocating for a new job has been eliminated for everyone except armed forces members.

Unrestricted deductions related to natural disasters. Families impacted by natural disasters could previously deduct at least a portion of any losses that were not covered by insurance or another relief program. In 2018, the deduction now requires that you must be in a presidentially designated disaster zone.

Alimony deduction. The person making payments will no longer be able to deduct that money from their federal taxes for any divorce commencing after Dec. 31, 2018.

While the increased standardized deduction is good news for everyone, the other changes could be disappointing to some taxpayers. The upside: Many provisions of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act will expire in 2025 unless Congress votes to extend them. That means it could just be a matter of time before cost-saving deductions make a comeback.

Source: U.S. News & World Report