



Homes & Neighbors®

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Rising Prices Signal Stronger Market

Home prices continue to show healthy increases across the U.S. this year. *Average property values are 5.5 percent higher over the last twelve months*, according to the S&P/Case-Shiller Home Price Indices.

Nineteen out of 20 cities where S&P/Case-Shiller collects data experienced higher real estate prices over the last year. Some areas which previously had seen greater weakness in values are rebounding sharply. For example, prices in Phoenix have gone up almost 23 percent over the past twelve months, says S&P/Case-Shiller.

"Housing is clearly recovering," adds an S&P/Case-Shiller official.



"Prices are rising as are both new and existing home sales," he adds. Sales of existing homes recently reached their largest monthly total in three years.

BOOSTS TO GROWTH

Sales of new homes also have hit their highest point

since June 2010. New home sales are particularly important for the economy as a whole.

Jobs are created for the people who construct these residences. New homes also require a lot of materials — ranging from windows and carpets to lumber and pipes — and those purchases further strengthen the economy.

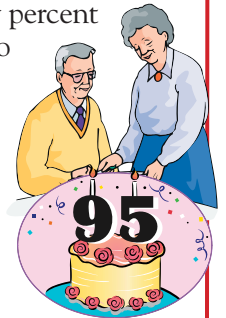


Many economists predict rates will rise in the future. Yet consumers who obtain a home loan now will continue to benefit from our current outstanding conditions. **Call me soon, and I'll help you take advantage of today's great real estate market. ■**

BEARS NOTING



"Americans are aging in place," reports *Forbes* magazine. *"More than half of 95-year-olds are living in their own homes."* Seventy percent of 85-year-olds also reside in their own place, as do 80 percent of Americans celebrating their 65th birthday.



Many of these owners find *they need to make renovations to keep their house safe, comfortable, and energy-efficient* as they grow older. Fixing up a house in ways which anticipate future needs makes it easier to live there for many more years.

One advantage of having a home that's equipped to cope with someone who has recently been ill or injured means it may be possible to avoid a stay in a rehabilitation center. Instead, **a recovering senior can go back to living at home as quickly as possible. ■**

Low Rates Help Americans

Refinance!



Borrowing rates remain near record lows — and well below their levels from a year ago — reports mortgage investment firm Freddie Mac. Lenders also are making it easier for households to refinance if they're living in a property which has dropped in value.

Refinancing homeowners saw their interest rate reduced by an average of 1.8 percent in the fourth quarter of 2012, according to Freddie Mac. Typical refinancing owners cut their rate by one-third, adds Freddie.

That's "the largest percent reduction recorded" over the 27 years data has been collected, says Freddie Mac. About two out of five homeowners increased their monthly savings further by using cash to shrink their mortgage balance when refinancing.

An average refinancing borrower with a \$200,000 mortgage gained annual savings of \$3,600, Freddie Mac reports. **Contact me to discover how much you can save by refinancing now! ■**