

YOUR HOME



No detail left uncovered.

TIPS AND TRENDS TO HELP MAXIMIZE HOME BUYING AND SELLING February 2006

PICTURE THIS

Advances in technology have helped transform the way homes are bought and sold. Still pictures and virtual tours on the Internet are the norm these days and are arguably the best way you and your real estate agent can attract potential buyers.

Keeping this in mind, when putting your house on the market, make sure that the most flattering aspects of your home are in good order.

If your kitchen is in dire need of an update, you may want to feature the built-in bookcases in the den instead. Or the view from your back porch may be more telling of your home's price tag than an architecturally bland dining room. Consult your agent to help you determine which aspects of your home are likely to be attractive to potential buyers.

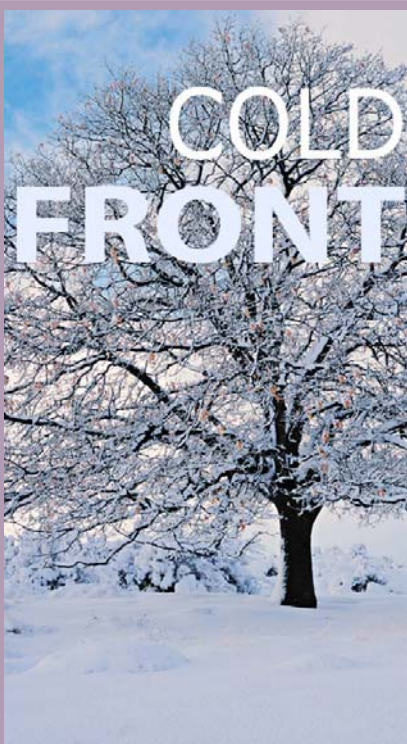
Think about it: The woodwork on the banister that you fell in love with when you bought the house is likely to hit a chord with a potential buyer as well. It's important to set your home apart from others on the market. Helping online home buyers see how your home is unique in a virtual environment is a great way to do this.



THE PRICE IS RIGHT

If the thought of putting your house on the market leaves you seeing dollar signs around every corner, you may want to slow down.

Seller's intent on cashing in may hinder their chances by pricing their home too high. A price that is deemed too high can discourage potential buyers from even viewing your home and can set high expectations for those who do come to check it out. Taking a realistic and objective approach when valuing your home isn't always easy, but it may save you heartache and disappointment in the long run. Be sure to consult your REALTOR® and listen to their advice. Consider what other homes in your neighborhood have been listed at — not what they've sold for. And weigh the costs and benefits of your final listing price with your own circumstances. Is your house in as good condition as other homes in your area? Are you in a hurry to sell? Can you afford to offer other incentives to potential buyers? These are just some of the issues that your REALTOR® will use to help you price your home at the right dollar figure.



Are you ready for the coldest months of the year?

As the season sets in, your home's durability will really be put to the test. Roofs must hold against rain and snow, windows and doors must stop the cold, and fireplaces must keep our bodies warm. Follow these steps before the winter season blows in, and you won't be caught out in the cold.

Inspect your roof. Look for any cracked spots, missing shingles or other open places, which might cause leaks. Most simple repairs can be done yourself using roofing cement.

It's also important to check your home's gutters and siding. If the gutters are clogged with leaves or debris, clean them yourself or hire a gutter specialist. Blocked gutters may lead to basement flooding or leaking. Also be sure the siding does not have any cracks or damage.

Before lighting a fire in your fireplace, sweep the chimney of creosote buildup, which can cause chimney fires if not removed. Be sure to hire a professional chimney sweep to do this.