

DON'T WORRY. BE HAPPY!

Leave your home loan worries to us.

Interim Construction

4.26% APR*

Home Equity Fixed Rates
starting as low as

4.75% APR*



Since 1953
East Texas Professional
A COMMUNITY CREDIT UNION

903.983.2513 • 903.323.0232
800.256.5009 • www.etpcu.org

Your savings federally insured to at least \$250,000 and backed by the full faith and credit of the United States Government.
*ETPCU membership required. Rates subject to change without notice. Not applicable on existing ETPCU loans or mobile home loans. All loans subject to ETPCU's normal credit guidelines. Annual Percentage Rate (APR) may be higher depending upon credit score and length of loan. Rates apply only to first lien mortgages. Some restrictions apply. No other discounts apply. Interim Construction APR based on loan of \$250,000. ETPCU must provide both interim and permanent financing.



+

How to Choose the Right Real Estate Agent

Before beginning a home search, it helps to enlist a pro to guide the way

By ANNA SACHSE
CTW Features

With the government's extension of the first-time homebuyer credit through April, even the most entrenched renters are feeling the urge to become masters of their own domiciles. But like the estimated 1.4 million first-time homebuyers who took advantage of the credit's first incarnation, novices first need to find the right property. Picking the right agent can make all the difference in finding the right home.

There are many benefits to enlisting an expert. Realtors – agents who are

members of the National Association of Realtors and who adhere to its Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice – are versed in which homes are a good value in the current market, what locations are most desirable, and how real estate law and contracts work. "If a buyer doesn't have extensive knowledge of all the aspects of a real estate transaction – such as negotiating price terms and conditions of purchase – they can easily be taken advantage of," says Mark Minnis, a broker/owner and buyer's agent with InSight Real Estate Portland, Ore. "But a Realtor is obligated by law to protect your interests."

Retaining a Realtor usually requires no out-of-pocket expense on the part of the buyer, says Brady Moore, a Dallas-based Realtor with Dave Perry-Miller & Associates. An agent's commission will depend upon the listing and the contract.

To find a licensed broker or real estate agent, your best bet is to start with referrals from friends or family, says Minnis, especially if they are located where you are looking. If new to a city, use the "Find a REALTOR" function at Realtor.org. Sometimes new buyers are tempted to call listing agents for properties they like, but be cautious. Working with an agent who represents the seller may not be in your best interest. Consider finding a buyer's agent and have that person help you find properties, Moore says.

To ensure this process goes smoothly, the experts agree that it's important to find someone who is a good personality fit. "Buying a house is probably the biggest financial transaction most people will make in their lives," says Moore. "You should do it with someone you can trust [and] enjoy spending time with."

A good way to gauge if you will get along is by interviewing potential agents in person. Ask about their areas of expertise, the neighborhoods in which the majority of their sales occur, if they own any real estate themselves and how long they've been in the business.

Keep in mind that many (not all) agents may require you to sign an exclusive-representation agreement, says Moore, the details of which can vary. In addition to reading over the contract, have a friend who understands real estate also read it over. Keep in mind that a good agent will work hard to meet your needs. They may put in a lot of time helping you search, and they won't get paid until the sale. When they see you are committed, they know they can dedicate their effort to your search.

© CTW Features

+



HomesInEastTexas.com

*No matter who's sign
is on the lawn,
I can show it and
I can sell it.*

RAINBOW REALTY
Caryn Couch
CarynCouch@msn.com
(903)987-1242



CMYK