



When it comes to Dayton's housing, there are plenty of reasons to be thankful

By Walt Hibner, Executive Director
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Since it is Thanksgiving weekend and many of us have overcome the indulgence of devouring turkey and dressing, and then braved the masses, shopping for the best possible deals of the season, it seems like an appropriate time to look at where we live and give thanks to how well we have it when it comes to the homes and communities we live in.

First of all, when heat, foul weather and droughts have been in the news, we can be thankful for four seasons and plenty of water, all in proximity to many other wonderful places and larger cities which we can easily experience without the daily grind of actually living there.

Affordability is taken for granted by many of us. Not that long ago, we had a tendency to complain a bit when other parts of the country were experiencing unrealistic increases in the value of their homes as our own home values continued along a modest path. Now those other areas are realizing their increases amounted to a temporary spike and they are now feeling the affects of decreasing home values. We now can be thankful for our steady and modest gains and decreases. Even in these times, home ownership remains to be the American dream. And we can be thankful that many

more people can afford homes in the Dayton area as opposed to many other parts of the country.

We have a strong local homebuilder presence. In many new housing markets the very large, national, publicly traded building corporations dominate the sale of homes. In many markets across the country, national corporations command from 60-70% of the new home sales. In the Dayton area, the national corporations have been unable to crack the 35% market share barrier. Although there is still, very much, a need for production type homes, we can be thankful for the craftsmanship, attention to detail, high quality and reasonable pricing that our local risk-taking builders and developers can provide a homebuyer.

We can also be thankful to have some progressive counties, cities, towns and townships that have come to the realization that housing is an important and vital aspect of the well being of any community. And housing growth can lead to progress and vibrant communities, which create a true desire of people to become active members of those communities.

We can also be thankful for a strong, growing Dayton Area Board of Realtors, with committed members that genuinely present the area well to potential homebuyers.

For their talent and creativity, we can be thankful for the members of the Dayton Society of Interior Designers, without them our homes would possibly be bland, mundane and less livable.

We should also be thankful for all the schools such as ISUS and the many dedicated career technical schools in our area, because they are training young people that a future career in home construction can be very rewarding.

For their passion and adventurous attitudes, we can be thankful for urban developers that provide yet another lifestyle desired by more and more.

Unfortunately, not all of us can buy, build, maintain or sometimes possess a home or even shelter. Because of this very true reality, we can also be very thankful that we have strong organizations in our community such as Habitat for Humanity, County Corp, Rebuilding Together Dayton, St. Mary's Development Corporation, the Homeless Solutions Policy Board, and the many other non-profit organizations and the numerous volunteers that provide much needed housing and repairs for those in need.

And finally, those of us that call the Dayton community our home and are making a living building new homes and communities for others in our community, we can be thankful that a challenging 2007 is almost over...