



HOME BUILDERS ASSOCIATION of Dayton

Dayton Once Again Ranks High in Housing Affordability

By Walt Hibner, Executive Director
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For the first quarter of 2007, Dayton was listed near the top of the recently released National Association of Home Builders/Wells Fargo Housing Opportunity Index. The nation's most affordable major housing markets included Indianapolis and Youngstown where 89 percent of new and existing homes that were sold during the first quarter of this year were affordable to families earning those areas' respective median household incomes of \$63,800 and \$51,400. The median sales price of all Indianapolis homes sold in that time frame was \$116,000 and the median sales price of all Youngstown-area homes sold was just \$78,000. The Dayton area was followed in affordability by Detroit-Livonia-Dearborn, Mich., and Grand Rapids-Wyoming, Mich., respectively.

Once again at the bottom of the affordability scale was Los Angeles-Long Beach-Glendale, Calif., where just 3 percent of homes sold in the first quarter were affordable to families earning the metro's median household income of \$61,700. The median price of all homes sold in that area was \$525,000. As usual, Los Angeles shared the bottom of the affordability scale with other major California metros including Santa Ana-Anaheim-Irvine as the second-least affordable, San Francisco-San Mateo-Redwood City as the fourth least affordable and Modesto as the fifth least affordable large housing markets in the nation. As the third least affordable major metro, New-York-White Plains-Wayne, N.Y.-N.J. was the only non-California location within the bottom five.

What does all this mean for us in Dayton? Dayton has been consistently near the top of this list. The affordability factor does not only pertain to the median priced homes, but also across the many new home price points.

Take for example a newer home with approximately 2,500 square feet and 4 bedrooms, 2.5 bathrooms situated on a ½ acre lot. In Long Beach, California the current asking price is \$695,000. A similar home located 30 minutes outside Washington D.C. in Glenn Dale, Maryland has an asking price of \$609,900. The same size home on a similar wooded lot located in Sugarcreek Township and 17 minutes from downtown Dayton has an asking price of \$372,500.

This means that the Dayton area is very attractive to homebuyers looking to relocate. Ask anyone who has moved here from either the west coast or the Washington D.C. area and they will tell you how much more home can be built here for what they previously paid. They can get more amenities or a better building lot or more square feet in a quality location. Combine this fact with the area's variety of lifestyle communities, housing types available, proximity to other metro areas and recreational resources, lack of highway congestion (except for a few orange barrels), several quality higher education institutions, a fantastic park system, and the local hometown flavor we can provide and you have a great story that should be included with all the regions economic development presentations and told to any company considering relocating operations here.

Since the price of homes in the southern regions has increased in recent years, many retirees are finding it difficult to relocate south on a fixed income. Add in the extreme heat and dense populations of Florida and many retirees are finding our region much more affordable and appealing. With Wright Patterson Air Force Base being the areas largest employer, it is quite clear that thousands upon thousands of people have worked at the Base at some point in their careers. Many have returned to retire in the Dayton area because of the affordability, quality of life and access to the amenities that the Base can offer.

So we should all go out and tell those that aren't as fortunate to live here that besides all the very good reasons above, the Dayton area is a great place to raise a family, enjoy the four-season climate and have a quality of life that can't be found in many other places.