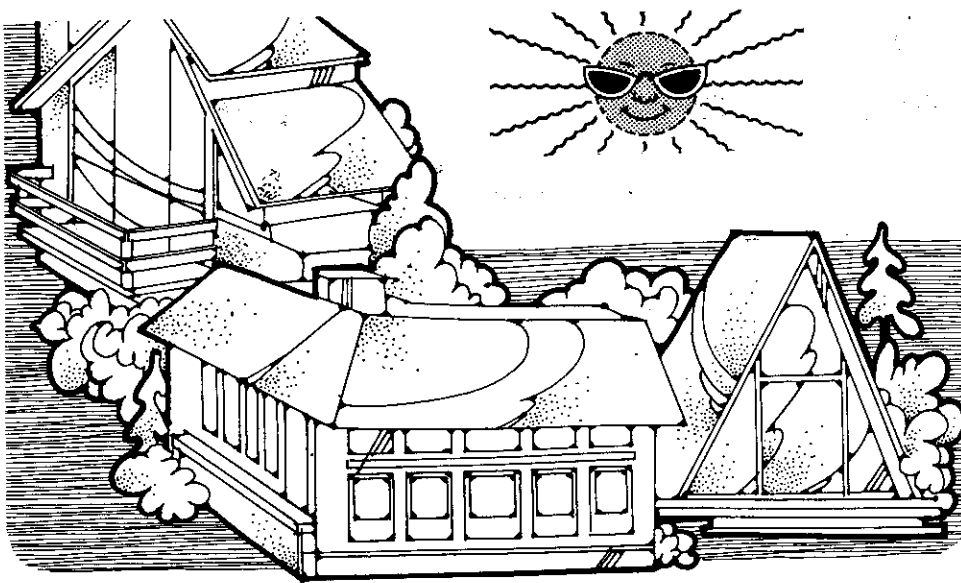


THE SALT LAKE

REALTOR



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The Solar Powered Realtor

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"Hey, I want to buy a home. Can you find me a good deal?" Realtors hear that all the time, but just what is a good deal, anyway? Are there hidden costs and values that the listing doesn't show?

Yes, and the biggest one might be energy. For example, my friend paid \$140 for gas and electricity at his home in December. My home is a little smaller, but my bill was just \$70. Our homes look alike, and the listings would also look the same. I watched a realtor make an appraisal of a large 10 bedroom home recently. I asked him if he knew what the insulation was or how the glass and heating system worked. He said no. He never would have dreamed that the fuel bill for the place in November was just \$35. Shucks.

Predictions are that energy costs are going to skyrocket. What's that? You say that incomes are rising too? Well, look at this. Income rose at 18 percent from 1980 to 1982 while energy costs for housing rose by 40 percent. Moreover, predictions are for even worse increases. New energy technologies in tar sand, geothermal, nuclear, alcohol and other sources are not only expensive but can be messy, dangerous and disruptive to the environment. Air pollution from coal and wood burning stoves is also becoming a problem in many areas and resembles cigarette smoke in its effect on the lungs. Salt Lake City is a prime candidate for this kind of misery because of our temperature inversions.

As a realtor you are in an excellent position to improve your sales competitiveness and help save the community from an energy disaster. By using energy conservation as the key, you can generate tremendous client interest in creative and money saving possibilities. Show your buyer how he can dress up that old home with a solar greenhouse. Open up those dark bedrooms with new windows. Your clients will love the way you bring out the value in vacant land: tell them about solar access, landscaping for natural ventilation and earth berming for beauty and protection. Show them how trees, bricks, glass and natural colors can work in energy saving harmony.

You can even discover energy advantages in homes that look like all the rest. Old utility bills can be like pedigree papers when you show the buyer how he really can afford that home when utility and mortgage costs are considered together. Get back with that seller and show him how attic insulation can help to sell his house for more than he thought, if the marketing is properly done. Tax credit programs can save thousands of dollars in construction costs for certain energy saving devices.

Real estate practices often encourage sellers to concentrate on cosmetic improvements to property in order to strengthen the sales price. While this practice may work when buyers are shortsighted and unimaginative, skilled realtors know that buyers appreciate knowing about hidden values (or hidden liabilities) in property. Since the average homeowner will sell his home before the end of the payback period of some energy devices, the realtor should pro-

vide him with confidence that he will be able to pass on the costs and the value of energy investment to the next owner. If homeowners know that the realtor will strongly advertise energy improvements to potential buyers, then the whole market will approach energy issues more effectively.

If you're in the dark about sunlight and other energy ideas, go to the local library or call the Utah Energy Office (533-5424). You'll discover a mountain of fuel supply saving ideas. The utility companies also have audit programs to point out where just a few dollars can plug a lot of holes.

If we don't conserve energy in housing now, we may face fuel bills in the future that will make our homes seem like dinosaurs. Remember your old friend who still has that '71 Ford Galaxie that he can't afford to drive and can't afford to sell?

Rising energy costs are like new taxes on real estate, because they burden the people who have to pay for them. Even worse, some local governments (in California) are requiring energy saving improvements before homes can be sold. What's worse than taxes and regulation?

In summary, realtors should play a strong role in energy conservation by encouraging buyers and sellers to ask energy questions and by recognizing that everyone loses when energy waste occurs. By dealing with real estate on a full cost to full value basis, the life cycle cost of housing takes precedence over carpet and the color of the kitchen curtains. After all, people think that realtors really know the answers.

In these cool winter days talk may be cheap, but it can also mean hot air. Good luck, Solar Powered Realtor.