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July/August 2020

P INSIDER

Home is where the heart is!

Inside this issue

Selling Your Home
Tips by Chip &
Joanna Gaines

Lawton Police
Department's
SafeCam Program

Interested in a Career
in Real Estate?

Strawberry Trifle
Recipe

Our Market by
the Numbers

How our Local Real Estate Market is Changing

If you've been toying with the idea of selling your home, but are not yet sure if you're ready to take the plunge, there's one major factor that can help you make your decision: the state of your local housing market. Being in a buyer's market or a seller's market can make a big difference in the length of time it takes to sell, the number of offers you receive, and the price you can get for your home.

You hear the terms "buyer's market" or "seller's market" but what does that mean? Zillow explains it this way: We are in a seller's market if the local inventory is sufficient for less than five months worth of sales. In a seller's market, there are more buyers looking for homes than there are homes available. With between five to seven months of inventory, you have a balanced market, which favors neither buyers nor sellers. Anytime you have more than seven months worth of inventory, you are firmly in buyer's territory. In a buyer's market, there are more homes for sale than there are buyers in the marketplace, so the housing market is favorable to buyers.

Our market currently has 345 properties on the market with 1,471 sold and closed properties in the past 12 months, and that equates to 122 sold properties per month, which means we have slightly less than a three month inventory on the market. Comparing that to two years ago when

we had 824 properties on the market and a seven month supply of homes on the market, you can see how our market has changed. You may wonder why a buyer is wanting to purchase in today's current market. The reasons are simple: money is cheap (3% rate is common) and our prices are still well below the state average for Oklahoma. Our current market may see multiple offers on updated, newer style homes below \$300,000 or investment homes priced below market based upon condition. There are complete neighborhoods with no homes currently for sale (Willow Creek at the time of this article had no homes for sale in the entire neighborhood).

If you have been holding off on selling your home, now is a good time as demand appears strong. In a seller's market, sales prices tend to increase as demand outpaces supply. Please contact Parks Jones Realty for the most up to date information on our market, and for our help and expertise with buying or selling your home.



6927 NW Maple Drive

\$285,000

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"Dedicated to Excellence
Since 1966"

Top Tips for Selling Your Home from Chip and Joanna Gaines

Since 2013, Chip and Joanna Gaines have been helping house hunters, most prominently on their former HGTV hit show *Fixer Upper*, find properties with potential and turn them into their dream homes. The Gaines know what is most appealing to a potential buyer, and here they share their advice about what really matters when you're getting ready to put your house on the market.

DO YOUR RESEARCH

If you have lived in your house for a long time without making many updates, you might assume you're in for a pretty significant rehab before you can put it on the market. But Chip warns that you ought to "do some research to better understand the market and the neighborhood you're selling in. If the majority of the houses are or were outdated, and buyers are opting to get their hands dirty and renovate," then you most likely don't have much upgrading to do since potential buyers scouting your area expect to take on a remodel.

Just be realistic about the market demand. "If it's a neighborhood that is in high demand with a limited housing stock," Chip says, "you'll likely be able to sell without having to do much." On the other hand, if homes in the area are lingering on the MLS, it may be time to call a contractor.

CONSIDER STAGING

Many Realtors will encourage you to stage your home before putting it on the market, but is it really necessary if your home is well decorated? It depends, according to Joanna: "It's important to be realistic with yourself—if your style is very unique, it may turn off potential buyers whose own style differs greatly." On the other hand, "If you have a more classic, neutral style, it might not be necessary to stage it." Consider asking trusted friends or family members with different tastes from your own if they could see beyond your decor if they were shopping for a new home.

SWEAT THE SMALL STUFF

When you're preparing to sell your home, the to-do list can quickly become overwhelming. But you don't necessarily have to tackle every item—particularly the big ones. Instead, focus on little improvements and upgrades rather than large-scale renovation projects. Even Chip, a self-proclaimed "big fan of demoing," suggests spending your resources on single-focus projects like "adding a backsplash in the kitchen, replacing faucets and carpet, switching out cabinetry hardware, or painting the front door." The priority list will

be different for each house, so do a walk-through and take note of which things would catch your eye most if you were shopping for a home. Your Parks Jones Realtor can share expert advice on what upgrades are most appealing to buyers in our market. **PLAY THE LONG**

GAME

Even if you're not looking to sell your home soon, you might want to consider resale value before starting a renovation project. "If you're thinking about potential resale," Joanna says, "it's always best to keep the style and color scheme simple." But she warns not to let that dictate your design choices entirely. If you're planning to live in the home for a while, "choose a design aesthetic that you'll love living in every day," she explains. And remember that some design choices are easily reversed, such as paint.

MAXIMIZE SMALL SPACES

Square footage is always an important factor to home buyers. So how do you compensate when a key room, like your kitchen, is short on space? Joanna advises brightening up these areas to make them look a little larger. "If the wall color is dark," she advises, "consider repainting with a lighter hue or adding a bright tile backsplash. Basic white is the perfect blank slate for potential homebuyers."

IF YOU DO ONLY ONE THING, LET IT BE PAINT

Even if time and budgets are very tight, you should always consider applying a fresh coat of paint to the walls before listing your home. A fun, bold color may suit your style, but your best bet is to go with something crowd-pleasing. "Jo usually selects neutral colors when we're planning to re-sell," says Chip, as it creates a blank canvas for "potential buyers to envision their own personal belongings and family in the home."

FOCUS ON THE FUTURE

Selling your home can be a stressful experience. Between keeping the house clean for showings and planning for an upcoming move, emotions can often run high. You might also have a significant sentimental attachment to a home that you've lived in for many years. If you're struggling to let go emotionally, Joanna recommends focusing on making your new house feel like home. "Take the time to bring in pieces that really mean something," she says, "things that tell your family's unique story." Even small, yet meaningful, touches will go a long way to help you get settled and fall in love with your new space.

Source: *sunset.com*

Lawton Police Department's SafeCam Program

Do you currently utilize private video surveillance at your home or business? If you do, the Lawton Police Department would like to hear from you!



The Lawton Police Department is committed to their partnership with the residents and business owners in our community. Many citizens currently operate video surveillance systems at their businesses and homes. As crimes occur nearby, they are not always aware that their system may have captured information that could help solve the crime, thus keeping our community safer. In turn, the police are also not always aware who may have this potentially vital information. This SafeCam program connects Lawton Police Officers with citizens who have surveillance video in the event of a crime.

By registering through the LPD SafeCam Program, nearby cameras that may have captured criminal activity can quickly be identified. Video surveillance is one of the best methods for apprehending criminals and convicting suspects who are caught in the act of committing a crime. Video surveillance is a great crime deterrent and offers investigative leads in the event a crime does occur. The Lawton Police Department strongly encourages installing residential and business surveillance systems.

LPD Chief James Smith says, "The SafeCam Program is a tremendous tool in which the public and businesses can assist our police department in keeping Lawton/Ft. Sill a safe community to live, work and raise a family."

Since you own the camera, your participation always remains 100% voluntary. Your information will be kept safe and secure; never made public. Once your system is registered, you still have the ability to choose not to share footage when asked. This does not allow the Lawton Police Department remote or inclusive access to your cameras. To participate in the SafeCam program go to www.lawtonok.gov/programs/safecam-program. The SafeCam program is a wonderful opportunity for businesses, citizens, and the Lawton Police Department to work together to help keep our community safe.

Our Market by the Numbers

Are you feeling like nesting in place? It appears that our real estate market is doing so. Have you noticed how full the parking lots are at home improvement stores? And with the lack of inventory of homes for sale in our market, it is apparent we are desiring to love where we live. We have 345 homes currently on the market, last year at this time we had 642, and two years ago we had 824 homes on the market. There are currently 371 homes under contract (which shows the activity of the last 60 days). Our service area has had 1,471 sold and closed properties in the past 12 months, with an average sold price of \$139,746, and the average seller received 97.7% of their asking price. There had been 1,464 sold and closed properties the previous year with an average sold price of \$131,464. Our foreclosure market is trending downwards with only 11 properties identified in our inventory as foreclosures currently on the market. The foreclosure market made up 16% of our sales in the past 12 months, down from 20% the previous year and down from 27.5% two years ago. Interest rates according to bankrate.com show typical 30 year rates around 3%, so affordability in our market is a huge factor in making it the right time to invest in real estate in Southwest Oklahoma. Give your favorite Parks Jones Realtor a call to assist you in making that next move!

Easy Strawberry Trifle



INGREDIENTS:

1 prepared angel food cake

CREAM CHEESE LAYER:

2-8 oz pkgs cream cheese, softened
1 cup heavy whipping cream
2 tbsp powdered sugar
2 tsp vanilla

STRAWBERRIES:

6 cups of sliced strawberries
1 tbsp sugar

WHIPPING CREAM:

1 cup heavy whipping cream
3 tbsp powdered sugar
1 tsp vanilla

1. Slice strawberries in triangles and place into a large bowl. Sprinkle with sugar and toss to combine.
2. Slice the cake into three circles.
3. In a mixing bowl combine the softened cream cheese, cream, vanilla & powdered sugar. Mix until a spreadable, frosting like consistency is formed. Add more cream if needed.
4. In a large mixing bowl combine the cream, powdered sugar and vanilla. Whip until soft peaks form. Do not overmix.
5. To assemble the trifle: In a large shallow bowl, begin with a layer of the angel food cake, fill the hole of the cake with a few strawberries, then spread 1/3 of the cream cheese mixture, then 1/3 of the strawberries.
6. Repeat the same for the next 2 layers. Before serving the trifle add a layer of whipping cream and strawberries.

"This easy, crowd-pleasing dessert is a cool, refreshing, summertime favorite."

A family favorite from Realtor Debra Gilkeson

Interested in a Career in Real Estate?

Have you been thinking about a career change? It's a great time to

become a REALTOR®, and Real Estate may be the profession for you. To learn more about a career in Real Estate and the licensing requirements, contact John Jones at Parks Jones Realty at (580) 357-0842 or JJones@ParksJonesRealty.com. Parks Jones Realty offers an exceptional educational program for those entering the Real Estate profession, and has a 54 year history of training Lawton's best REALTORS®.



Call me for all your real estate needs!

John Jones

Cell: 580-695-3482

jjones@parksjonesrealty.com