

In buyer's market, put house in shape

Homeowners anticipating a move as economic recovery improves the housing market are advised to get their present property in top sales condition. With a high number of current listings and a general easing of prices, strong competition and a buyer's market will persist in 1983, according to the Western Wayne Oakland County Board of Realtors (WWOCBR).

"Buyers will continue to search for value," said Lloyd Mason, WWOCBR president. "Some will be seeking homes in need of extensive repair that can be bought at rock bottom prices."

"But the majority will be seeking homes that won't require any added outlay of funds after downpayment, closing costs and moving expenses are met."

MASON ADVISES against extensive remodeling that will increase the asking price, but does urge that care be taken to assure everything is in good working order.

"As time approaches when the home will be listed for sale, the seller should try to look at it from a prospective buyer's view," he said. "Such a look will likely uncover numerous small items that would cause loss of buyer interest, but would only take minimum cost to correct."

Included might be cracked window

glass, peeling paint, broken or missing knobs or locks, loose tile or siding, torn screens and leaky faucets.

"Most homeowners can take care of these minor problems themselves," Mason said, "but might prefer to have carpets and drapes professionally cleaned."

"THIS PRE-LISTING period also is a good time to start clearing unneeded items out of basements, garages and closets.

"Items with some value might be disposed of in a yard sale or at a flea market. Other accumulated material can be given away or left for trash pick-up bit by bit over several weeks."

Mason notes that particular attention should be given to fix-up measures that will help cut heating and cooling costs. Much of this type of expenditure can be claimed for income tax credit and receipts should be saved.

"Recent studies of overall housing costs in major metropolitan areas indicate utility costs add more than 20 percent to average mortgage principal and interest payments locally," he said.

Sellers who can show they have taken steps to weatherproof their homes, save utility cost records to prove their effectiveness will score a big plus with buyers."

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