

Junction Realty Newsletter

Bringing People and Properties Together

Junction Realty Inc., Brokerage



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Please enjoy this newsletter, which will provide you with general real estate tips and ideas.

If you, your family or friends have any questions on the topics covered here or any other real estate or mortgage matters, please call for more information.

Your REFERRALS are always welcome.

All the best,
Sal D'Angelo



Winter's Coming: Warm Up to Energy Savings!

Interested in making your home an energy saver, and getting paid to do it? The Canadian government has a program you'll want to hear about.



Last year, the Canadian government launched the ecoENERGY Retrofit program. It provides tax-free cash incentives to Canadian homeowners who commit to making their home more eco-friendly and energy efficient. The money is granted at a flat rate determined by the government for each individual upgrade you perform on your house.

The grant money is only the first part of your windfall though. The average homeowner with a \$2,000.00/year heating bill can expect to reduce that annual bill by up to \$700.00 as a result of the energy savings alone!

The process is very simple. There is a network of licensed energy advisors across the country; call to set up an assessment. Following the assessment, your advisor will instruct you on how to go about making the necessary improvements and will give you an idea of what size grant you are eligible for. The advisor will be your liaison with the government and will complete the application process for you.

5 STEPS TO PREPARE FOR YOUR ENERGY ADVISOR ASSESSMENT

Make your energy evaluation safe, quick and easy by following these five steps:

1. Ensure the advisor has access to your attic, crawl space or other hard-to-reach areas.
2. Ensure a responsible person able to make household decisions is present.
3. Make sure you have proof of any recent upgrades to the house to help the advisor understand the home's history.
4. Prepare a list of any drafts, cold spots, or energy related "leaks" in the home.
5. Be as cooperative as possible...Together, you and the advisor can create a retrofit strategy that may save you thousands of dollars.

Of course, if you're more interested in relocating than renovating, please call me for the latest real estate news in your area.

CNSF



A MATTER OF PRINCIPLE

If you think a well-designed room just happens, think again. As professional interior designers well know, any successful décor is dependent on the five principles of design: balance, focal points, proportion and scale, rhythm, and unity. Below is an introduction to each.

BALANCE

Balance refers to the distribution of visual weight in a room. There are three different types of balance: symmetrical, asymmetrical and radial. Symmetrical balance involves repeating the same objects on either side of an axis, a hallmark of formal interiors. Asymmetrical balance is characterized by a lack of focal point or mirroring, and lends rooms a more casual feel. Radial balance refers to arrangements where elements radiate around a focal point.

FOCAL POINTS

Every well-designed room features a focal point, a point of emphasis that draws the eye and gives it a place to rest. That point of emphasis could be a work of art, a piece of furniture, or an architectural detail such as a fireplace or window. Whatever it is, your focal point should be immediately apparent upon entering the room. Depending on its size, a well-designed room can incorporate more than one focal point; in fact, large spaces may need multiple points of emphasis.

PROPORTION AND SCALE

These refer to the shape and size of objects. Proportion has to do with how the elements within a room relate to the room as a whole, while scale refers to how the elements in a room relate to one another in terms of size. For instance, small delicate pieces of furniture in a large room would make for an ill-proportioned interior, while a heavy lamp on a small end table would be out of scale. Ideally, all the elements in a room should be proportionate to each other as well as to the room itself.

RHYTHM

Rhythm refers to how the eye moves about a room. There are four ways to use rhythm in decor: repetition, progression, transition and contrast. Repetition involves repeating the same element – be it a pattern, color or line – throughout the space. Progression means increasing or decreasing one or more of an element's qualities, like its color or size. Contrast results from combining opposing elements, such as black pillows on a white couch. Transition is less obvious, and serves naturally to lead the eye from one area to another, such as through an arched entry.

UNITY

An interior has unity when all of the elements and principles of interior design combine to create a pleasing area and lend spaces a sense of order. In addition to establishing unity within each room of your home, your home should be well designed as a whole, its rooms, halls and stairways all part of one larger space. However, too much unity is bland, while too little is disorienting. Striking just the right balance is tricky, which is why so many call in a professional.





THE FAST TRACK

There's no guarantee how long it'll take to process your mortgage application, but there are things you can do to help ensure a smoother, quicker process.

First, be sure of your credit worthiness: request a copy of your credit report. It will likely be blemish-free, but never discount the possibility that it could contain errors: closed charge accounts may show up as available credit, repaid loans could appear outstanding, or you may discover you've been a victim of identity theft. Address any mistakes now so they don't slow or altogether stop your application process later.

Next, gather documents to support the claims you'll be making on your application. Include things like listing and purchase agreements, home appraisals, credit reports, pay stubs, income-tax returns, letters from employers, bank statements, lists of assets and liabilities, and proof of income from sources like rental properties, pensions, alimony, or child support. The more information you provide, the faster the lender can make a decision.

When filling out your loan application, do so honestly and accurately. Make sure all information is correct and legible and no questions have been missed.

Once you've filed your application, make sure you can be easily reached should your lender require any further information or paperwork from you – and be able to respond quickly to such needs. Now is probably not the time to go on vacation.

Lastly, check in – occasionally – with your lender to see how your approval is coming along. This will also lessen its chances of getting lost in the shuffle.

While many homebuyers wait until they find the perfect property before applying for a mortgage, you may want to consider having a pre-approved mortgage in hand before even starting your new home search. This gives you the best idea of what you can afford, and also gives you the edge when negotiating with a seller who is looking for a swift closing.

ROLE MODEL

You may not have a builder's budget, but that doesn't mean you can't apply the same strategies used in model homes to sell your own property. Read on to learn how.

- **ZAP CLUTTER.** If you've ever toured a model home, you likely remember nothing was out of place or looked like it didn't belong. This is because builders want buyers to focus on the home itself, not what's inside. You should adopt a similar zero-tolerance policy on clutter. Consider asking a friend to help you spot your home's problem areas.
- **NEUTRALIZE.** A model home's décor never offends; its colors are muted and patterns subdued to appeal to the greatest number of buyers. You should likewise strive for universal appeal: repaint bold walls with soft, light tones; strip loud wallpaper. If you have a room with a theme – be it Elvis or equine – get rid of it.
- **DEPERSONALIZE.** You never see family photos, trophies, or other personal items in model homes, do you? "Of course not," you're probably thinking. "No one lives there." But what model-home stagers know – and what you should remember when preparing your home for viewing – is that buyers want to see their lives, not yours, when viewing your property.
- **LIGHTEN UP.** Model-home stagers pay a lot of attention to lighting design, which is important as it serves to highlight a home's architecture and make it appear larger. So keep your window coverings open to maximize natural light. Make sure all your fixtures are turned on and consider switching your bulbs for some with greater wattage.



Your Home, Alone

Heading out of town this winter holiday? Don't end your vacation early or on a bad note; take the following steps to protect your house – and everything in it – while away.

Safeguarding against break-ins is especially important at this time of year, when burglars may assume your home has pricey presents inside. Lock all doors and windows: this should go without saying, but you'd be surprised how many break-ins involve no actual breaking. If you have an automatic garage-door opener, deactivate it. Consider implementing additional security measures, like placing rods in sliding-door tracks, and installing deadbolts and motion sensors.

Don't advertise your absence. Create the illusion someone is home by adding timers to indoor and outdoor lighting systems, radios and TVs. Have someone collect your mail or request the post office to hold it. Arrange for someone to keep up your outdoor maintenance. If you normally keep your window coverings open, don't close them all when you leave – doing so will only signal your absence.

Avoid returning to a flooded or fire-damaged house. Turn off the water supply to your washing machine, dishwasher, sinks and toilets. Unplug all electrical devices: your toaster, coffeemaker, microwave, washer, dryer, computers, stereos and so on. Left plugged in, these devices could spark a fire in the event of storms or power surges. Leave plugged in, of course, your fridge and anything you've hooked up to a timer.

Lastly, if you'll be away for an extended vacation, inform your home insurer. You'll want to make certain you have adequate insurance coverage for your house and belongings, and to check that you haven't foregone any measures that could result in the disallowance of any claim you may need to make.



Terminology Tip

Assumption of Mortgage - The agreement undertaken by the buyer of a property to assume personal liability for payment of the seller's existing mortgage. When a buyer assumes a mortgage, they do so at the same terms and interest rate specified in the seller's original mortgage documents, just as if the loan had been issued directly to the buyer. Mortgage assumption is an attractive option when the interest rate on the seller's mortgage is lower than current market rates.

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