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Dear Friends:

“Independence” is the topic of the month for July, so if your thoughts turn to a personal independence, I can help. I'm referring to the ability to find a home that's more suited to the changing lifestyles we all experience as we grow older. Perhaps your kids have left the nest and you would enjoy a smaller home at this time in your life. Maybe your family is growing and a larger house is needed. Or perhaps your yard is too large and you'd like the freedom to pursue the happiness of weekends without weeds.

Regardless of your housing needs, if they've changed over time, please feel free to give me a call. Together we can discuss the many options available to you when it comes time to exercise your own freedom of choice here in Colorado, or anywhere in the world.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY AMERICA!

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Herman Group Real Estate's
Colorado Homefront
 A Complimentary Colorado Real Estate Newsletter.

If your home is currently listed for sale, this is not intended as a solicitation.

JULY 2009

The costly mistake of not checking your credit report

You don't need to be buying a home or refinancing your mortgage to benefit from checking your credit report. That's because financial information about us is often used to decide if we get a job, new cell phone service, car insurance, or accepted for any kind of lease, just to name a few situations. But if you *are* looking to buy or refinance--the higher your credit score, the lower the risk you pose--and the lower your mortgage rate will be.



Even if you think your credit history is good, checking your report will alert you to possible identify theft, or incorrect information that could cause a problem in the future. Consider that a 30 state credit report survey revealed:

- In 25% of all reports, serious enough errors were found that would result in credit denial.
- A full 79% of the credit reports surveyed contained either serious errors or other mistakes of some kind.

You should always get your free credit report from <http://www.annualcreditreport.com>, which is the site set up by the Federal Trade Commission. Other sites claiming to give you your “free” credit report might have singing pirates, but they'll also try to charge you a monthly fee. Consumers are allowed one free report per year from each of the three major

credit reporting bureaus (Equifax, Experian, and TransUnion.)

You can request your report online, by phone or by mail. Visit AnnualCreditReport.com, call 1-877-322-8228, or ask for a form by writing to Annual Credit Report Request Service, P.O. Box 105281, Atlanta, GA 30348-5281. You have the option to request all three reports at once or to order one report at a time. **TIP:** By requesting

one report from a different company every 3 months, you will be able to track your report quarterly, for free. A lot can happen in a year, and if your identity is stolen, you'll want to know as soon as possible.

So what's the best way to dispute an error on your credit report? And what's the fastest way to raise your score? I've pulled together a comprehensive report that provides solid, easy-to-use, practical information on these two issues. All you need to do is contact me

and request my free July COLORADO HOMEOWNER'S REPORT entitled: **“FAST FIXES FOR YOUR CREDIT REPORT.”** You may also have a friend, a son or daughter who could benefit from this report. **It's FREE for the asking...**so contact me at your convenience.



NewsBriefs

▼ Colorado had the ninth-highest foreclosure rate in the nation in April, up from 10th in March, according to RealtyTrac Inc., Nevada had the nation's highest foreclosure rate in April, with one in every 68 households in some stage of the foreclosure process. Nevada was followed by Florida, California, Arizona, Utah, Georgia, Illinois, Colorado and Ohio. RealtyTrac's data for the first quarter of 2009 showed Colorado had the 12th-highest foreclosure rate in the nation for that three-month period.

▼ In a late May Case-Schiller Home Price Index Report on twenty select markets, the Front Range market saw the nation's smallest quarterly decline and, for the past month, actually saw home sales rise. Our area shone as one of only three markets with an increase.

▼ Since 1973 the square footage of houses built in the United States grew steadily —

until last year when the size of the typical home shrunk by 11 percent. About 90 percent of the homes that members of the National Association of Home Builders are building this year are smaller now.

▼ Home is where the heart is--and where the kids keep returning to. Stats show unemployment in the 25- to 34-year-old age group is now at 30 million, up from 18 million in 2004, and college debts now average \$20,000 per graduate. It's not surprising that these "boomerang kids," as sociologists have been calling them, are returning to their parents for a roof. The U.S. Census estimated in 2008 that 5 million Americans aged 25 to 35 are living with their parents.

▼ The Obama administration has made modifications to the Hope for Homeowners program. The new version sweetens the pot by paying lenders \$1,000 for every Hope-refinanced loan and easing the amount they have to write off by allowing loans of up to 93 percent of the market value.

House Hunting Tips for our Front Range Real Estate Market this Summer

It may sound easy--and it may sound fun--but finding the perfect house takes a lot of effort. The task is made easier for those who follow a few simple guidelines.

Analyze your lifestyle:

Finding the perfect home starts by identifying your needs, wants and desires. Create a list that reflects your lifestyle. For example: do you need/want to be close to a specific location? Do you want a large/small yard, or no yard at all? Is a gourmet kitchen important?

Stick to your requirements:

It's always fun to look at more costly homes than you can afford, but save yourself the time and anguish of visiting those properties. Also, if upon visiting a home you quickly determine it doesn't meet your needs, don't feel obligated to finish the tour.

Get pre-approved for a loan:

By getting pre-approved for your loan, you'll not only know exactly what you qualify for, sellers will know you're a serious buyer who is ready to commit. Being pre-approved increases bargaining and negotiating power, as well as it speeds up the entire closing process.

Avoid the seller:

If you meet the seller, don't get drawn into a conversation. It's not that you're being unfriendly, it's just that most people reveal too much information in casual

conversation. You could easily say something that ends up making it more difficult to negotiate with the seller.

Keep a perspective:

Professionally decorated new homes, and homes that are "staged," are always more appealing because they're clean, cutter-free, and beautifully decorated. But don't forget to analyze the living space and configuration of rooms with regard to your own family's lifestyle. Likewise, when touring resale properties, don't be turned off by the color of carpeting or dated wallpaper.

Take notes:

It only takes two properties to begin the "mix and match" game. In your head you'll start combining features of one home with features of another. Pretty soon you're totally confused. But detailed notes on each home you visit will be extremely helpful later on.



COLORADO CORNER

Life as a Pioneer: Four Mile Historic Park

Step back into the past at the Four Mile House in Denver. Today the Four Mile Historic Park consists of 12-acres where you can experience Colorado as the pioneers 150 years ago.

Built in 1859, the Four Mile House is the area's oldest existing structure. Originally it was built as a stage stop, wayside inn, and tavern for travelers on the Cherokee Trail on their way to Denver City. It is four miles from what was, at the time, the heart of old Denver City.

The park is a working farm. You can see how pioneers spun wool, sheared sheep, or made quilts to

keep warm. There are monthly events (such as the October pumpkin patch), and horse-drawn carriage rides. There's even a one-room schoolhouse to visit.



Photo courtesy Four Mile Historic Park

It's a wonderful way to step back in time and experience life as a pioneer. It's also an economical adventure (kids under 6 are free), adults are \$3.50, and seniors and kids 6-15 are just \$2.00.)

The park is located at 715 South Forest Street, in Denver. (Half way between Mississippi and Leetsdale, and half way between Colorado Blvd. and S. Monaco Parkway.)
Web: www.fourmilepark.org

Happy Birthday America!



GREEN IDEAS FOR THE COLORADO HOMEOWNER

Get Green and Save Green with Tax Incentives

New energy efficiency tax incentives are helping homeowners get green, and save some green. Here are some of the energy incentives available through the American Recover and Reinvestment Tax Act of 2009.

Weatherization:

For income-eligible homeowners, this new program allows as much as \$6,500 to be spent sealing up a house. (That corresponds to an income of \$44,100 for a family of four, or \$29,140 for a family of two.) Upgrades from this program generally include weatherstripping, insulation, and new windows.

HVAC / Heating, Venting, and Air Conditioning

Homeowners can receive a tax credit of \$1,500 in 2009 or 2010 for eligible heating, ventilation, and air-conditioning units.

Insulation

This tax credit is capped at \$1,500. Insulation requirements vary by region but must meet 2009 standards set by the International Energy Conservation Code. The insulation must have a

five-year life span or two-year warranty. Insulated siding does not qualify, and labor is not included.

Windows and doors

The tax credit will pay 30% of costs, minus labor, for qualified window upgrades in 2009 and 2010. The credit is capped at \$1,500, but you must install the best. Windows and doors must have a U-factor below .30 and a solar heat gain coefficient less than .30 to meet the requirements for a tax credit.

High-tech green

Eligible systems include solar water heaters, solar panels, geothermal heat pumps, and wind energy systems. The tax credit will cover 30 percent of the cost, including installation, with no upper limit. In most cases, the window for the tax credit has been extended into the year 2016.

For detailed information on these incentives, visit this web site:

<http://energytaxincentives.org/consumers/index.php>



"Give me golf clubs, fresh air and a beautiful partner, and you can keep the clubs and the fresh air."
~ Jack Benny

SUMMER Sportz Fun GOLF

"It's good sportsmanship to not pick up lost golf balls while they are still rolling."
~ Mark Twain

"The only sure rule in golf is - he who has the fastest cart never has to play the bad lie."
~ Mickey Mantle

"I never pray on a golf course. Actually, the Lord answers my prayers everywhere except on the course."
~ Billy Graham

"If you think it's hard to meet new people, try picking up the wrong golf ball."
~ Jack Lemmon

"If you drink, don't drive. Don't even putt."
~ Dean Martin

"I'm hitting the woods just great, but having a terrible time getting out of them!"
~ Buddy Hackett

"May thy ball lie in green pastures, and not in still waters."
~ Ben Hogan



"Golf is a game invented by the same people who think music comes out of a bagpipe."
~ Lee Trevino

"It took me seventeen years to get 3,000 hits in baseball. I did it in one afternoon on the golf course."
~ Hank Aaron

"Golf is a good walk spoiled."
~ Mark Twain

"I've had a good day when I don't fall out of the cart."
~ Buddy Hackett

"I'm the best. I just haven't played yet."
~ Muhammad Ali, on his golf game.

"Have you ever noticed what golf spells backwards? FLOG!"
~ Al Balsa

Q

What is the "Denver Square?"

Real Estate Trivia

It's the name of a style of home built mainly between 1894 and 1920. A devastating fire in 1863 prompted the city to require all homes be built of brick. Denver Squares are 2-story, brick square structures found close to downtown.

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Sellers' game plan for entering our Colorado real estate market in the next six months

Bronco season hasn't yet arrived, but you can be sure that they're working on their strategy for the upcoming season. In the same spirit, anyone who thinks there's a good chance they may be in the market sometime this year can begin making preparations today that can help them reap big rewards when the time comes to sell. Here are a few tips to make the task more trouble-free and financially rewarding.

- Take one room at a time and weed out the closets, basement, garage, and every room in the home--looking for items you no longer need. Your house will seem larger.

- Have an inspection conducted to alert you to any problems that could stop a potential sale. Fixing problems before the home goes on the market will help sell the home faster and for more money.

- Create a list of all home improvement expenditures you've incurred which would justify a higher price than comparable area homes.

- Create a written list of all items you plan to exclude in the sale.

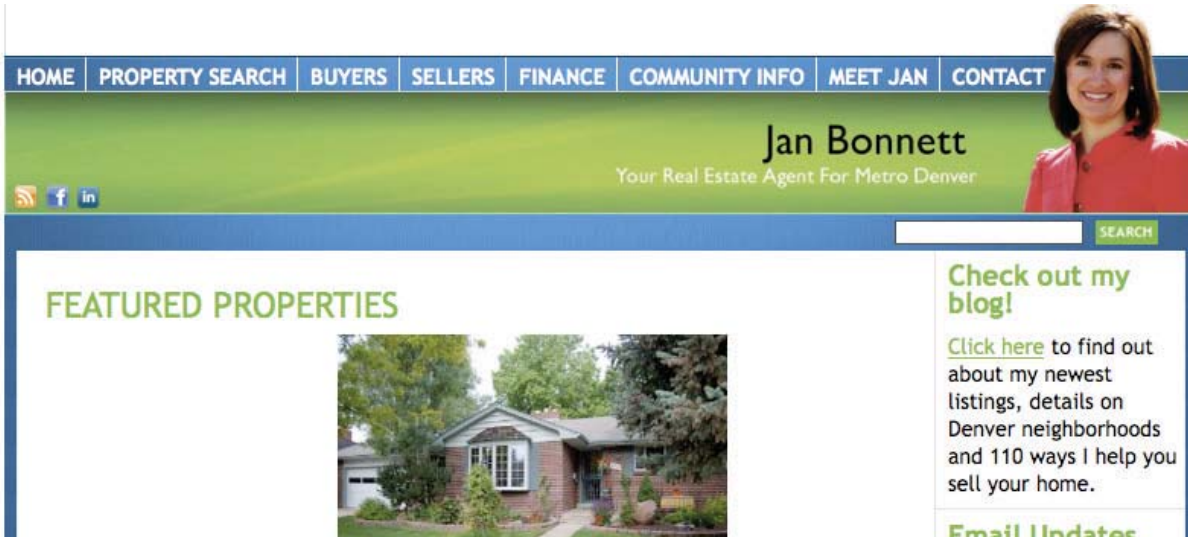
- Take advantage of the upcoming fall landscaping sales (usually starting with Labor Day), to add additional interest to your yard and to replace dead or unattractive shrubs. In Colorado, fall is a wonderful time to plant most shrubs, trees and perennial flowers.

- Gather all manufacturers' warranties and maintenance booklets into one place. Find out if any warranties you have are transferrable to the new owners.

- Clean. clean. clean. Neatness and cleanliness cannot be stressed enough. Most people have a difficult time looking beyond clutter and grime and will simply move on to look at the next home.

- Let's talk about your home's current market value, as well as marketing strategies that would help expose your home to the largest possible market of buyers. We can also discuss any financial options for assisting buyers such as offering lease-to-own deals, paying for closing costs or paying for points to lower the interest rate.

Check out my New and Improved Website! My blog will provide all the latest information about the Denver Real Estate market, feature spotlights on hot Denver neighborhoods and will provide important education and tips for buyers and sellers. Sign up for my free E-mail Update Service and receive all the latest listings that you are specifically looking for, as soon as they are posted to the Denver MLS!



Just Sold by Jan Bonnett



Happy 4th of July!

For a complete guide of Denver's 4th of July fireworks displays & celebrations, please visit: <http://denver.metromix.com/>



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