

# HINTS FOR HOMEOWNERS

## Home Sellers Could Do Well Targeting First-Time Buyers

(NAPSA)—If you're still having trouble selling your house in this tough market, these five words have never rung truer: Think first-time home buyers.

These newbies have accounted for as much as about 50 percent of all monthly home sales of late after having waited patiently—*too patiently, if you're a seller*—for prices to come down to more affordable levels. (The historical average is more like 35 percent, according to the National Association of Realtors.) And if you think all they've been scooping up are superdistressed foreclosures, you're wrong.

"First-time buyers are skeptical of buying homes that need improvement," Eric Mangan, of ForSaleByOwner.com, has noted.

In fact, supporting that view, The Wall Street Journal reported that nearly half of brokers polled for a recent Coldwell Banker survey found that while affordability was foremost on first-timers' minds, 81 percent said "move-in conditions" were very important, too.

So how do you get those newbies to make an offer on your house? Here are three strategies:

### Closing Costs

While a lot of the sales action has been fueled by the federal government's tax credit of up to \$8,000 for first-time buyers, they're still responsible for paying the closing costs. Offer to cover it for them before they even think to ask.

### Home Warranties

Odds are these are renters used to calling their landlords to fix anything that goes wrong in



**You can make your home more attractive to a first-time buyer.**

their apartments. Giving them a home warranty covering major issues could go a long way toward easing any of their jitters about homeownership.

### First Impressions

Remember how we started out by saying how important move-in conditions are? Well, in a tough housing market, we're talking more than just a fresh coat of paint or neatening rooms. In fact, experts recommend improvements such as adding a new roof to enhance the value of your home. Options like GAF's Timberline roof shingles provide a wood-shake look without the cost or maintenance issues associated with real wood. Plus, they have a Class A fire rating (the highest rating possible) and warranties that cover high winds. They even come in colors like slate, weathered wood and charcoal, which can help boost a home's all-important curb appeal.

For more information, visit [www.gaf.com](http://www.gaf.com). The Web site even features a Virtual Home Remodeler tool to help you get more ideas on design elements for the outside of your home.