

Understanding Our Economy

Today, A House Is Home, Sweet Investment

(NAPSA)—“A man’s home is his castle.” If verification is ever needed for this age-old adage, economic conditions today certainly could provide it.

As troubles with stocks, bonds, mutual funds and derivatives seem to increase daily, home ownership in virtually every part of the nation is proving to be an outstanding value for both existing owners and, most especially, homebuyers.

Home values are rising, while sales activity continues at historically high levels. Yet at the same time, homebuyers enjoy an extremely friendly environment. Mortgage rates are at a two-decade low, with funds readily available, and inventory is up, with more listings on the market than there were just a few months ago.

No wonder more men and women are acquiring their own “castles” every day, thousands with the guidance and assistance of Accredited Buyer Representatives (ABR).

Because of the specialized training the Real Estate Buyer’s Agent Council (REBAC) provides, a buyer representative with the ABR designation can analyze mortgage terms and rates to assist buyers in acquiring financing that is compatible with their financial situation. More importantly, especially in an active market like today’s—when homes often sell very rapidly—ABRs know which new listings match buyers’ needs and lifestyles. As the largest of the National Association of Realtors’ institutes, societies and councils, REBAC has



Accredited Buyer Representatives can guide people through the homebuying process.

more than 42,000 members active in virtually every market in the country, where they report vigorous activity from all types of buyers—first-timers, second-home buyers and investors.

Still, there are detractors. Frantic activity in many markets has recently led some observers to predict that the residential real estate market is a “bubble” that will pop in the foreseeable future, greatly reducing property values. Most industry specialists, however, think otherwise. In testimony before Congress, Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan called the possibility of a real estate bubble “unlikely,” attributing increases in value to “the effects on demand of low mortgage rates, immigration and shortages of buildable land.”

Janet Branton, executive director of REBAC, concurs. “Experts who monitor real estate markets tell us that this isn’t a bubble but a boom,” she says, “one that will continue to reverberate throughout the economy as more people take advantage of favorable market and economic conditions to purchase homes. So it is pretty apparent that most Americans think it is a good time to buy—a home, that is.”