

Sacramento Bee

Appraisal sites on Net often fail to pin down accurate prices

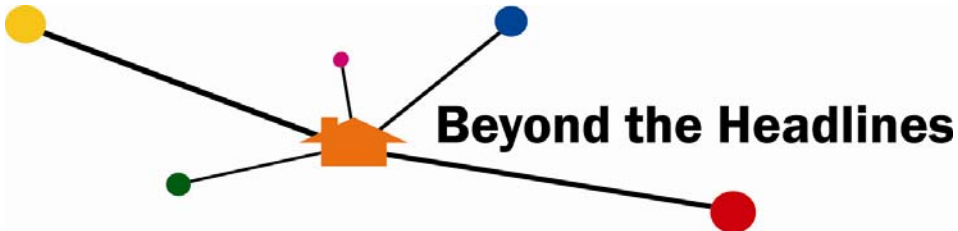
Over the last five years, one of the newest developments in real estate is the ability for home buyers and sellers to search online for a home's value. Popular Web sites such as Zillow.com, Cyberhomes.com, and Eppraisal.com offer free home estimates, but some consumers and real estate industry professionals say the values calculated often are inaccurate and misleading.

KEEP THIS IN MIND

- Online home appraisal Web sites assign home values without knowing the features or upgrades of a home or the neighborhood in which it is located. Some Web sites offer a price range of \$20,000 - \$40,000 more or less than the actual value of the home.
- Since housing markets are local and not every home of a certain size is the same value, consumers can be misled into believing a home is worth more or less than the actual value. Working with a local REALTOR® can help minimize inaccuracies in home values. REALTORS® can provide local housing market data and show homeowners and buyers recent sales of comparable homes in the area, to help determine an accurate list or offer price.
- While some agents report that Web estimates can educate clients and provide a reasonable assessment of market conditions and the home-buying process, working with a local REALTOR® is the best option.

To read the full story, please click here:

<http://www.sacbee.com/2010/08/13/2955920/online-appraisals.html>



In Other News...



Los Angeles Times

Federal Reserve bans lenders from paying bonuses to brokers for higher-interest-rate loans

The Federal Reserve on Monday approved a rule banning lenders from paying bonuses to mortgage brokers and loan officers who get borrowers to agree to a higher rate than they need to pay.

To read the full story, please click here:

<http://www.latimes.com/business/la-fi-fed-mortgage-20100817,0,638034.story>



The Wall Street Journal

Mortgages: How to pay less

The interest rates for 30-year fixed-rate mortgages are in freefall, averaging just 4.44 percent on Aug. 12, according to Freddie Mac. Not only was that down from 5.07 percent in January, it was the lowest since Freddie began keeping records in 1970.

To read the full story, please click here:

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703723504575425734198113348.html?mod=WSJ_RealEstate_LeftTopNews



Los Angeles Times

Good-faith estimates get real

Facing new penalties if they lowball estimates of upfront mortgage costs, lenders and brokers appear to be coming clean about how much borrowers will pay.

To read the full story, please click here:

<http://www.latimes.com/business/la-fi-closing-costs-20100818,0,6277647.story>



Beyond the Headlines



The New York Times

More borrowers opt for “cash-in” refinancing

As the nation continues to endure the correction of the housing market, more buyers are opting for “cash-in” refinancing—putting extra money into a transaction to obtain cheaper loans and pay down debts.

To read the full story, please click here:

http://www.nytimes.com/2010/08/15/realestate/15mort.html?_r=1&ref=realestate



The Wall Street Journal

Low rates finally spark refinancings

After months of hovering near 50-year lows, mortgage rates have fallen even further, into uncharted territory and to a level lenders say is finally igniting more homeowner refinancing.

To read the full story, please click here:

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703723504575425793949599842.html?mod=WSJ_RealEstate_LeftTopNews



Los Angeles Times

FTC’s fake mortgage-company site aims to educate about scams

The folks at Esteemed Lending Services are out to teach people a lesson. Esteemed Lending isn’t a mortgage lender at all. It’s a fictitious company. If it existed, it might have taken a lot of people for a ride down the road to ruin.

To read the full story, please click here:

<http://www.latimes.com/business/realestate/la-fi-lew-20100815,0,7793028.story>



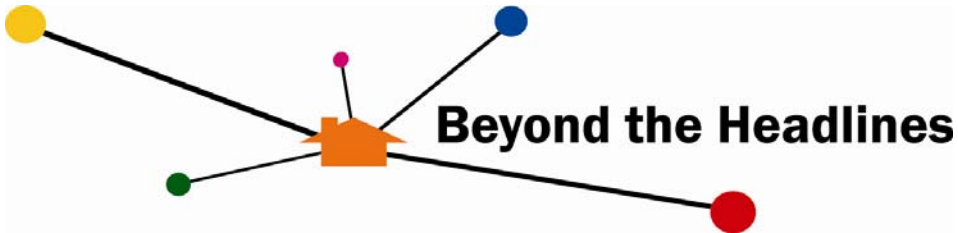
Los Angeles Times

Homeownership to decline further, housing analyst predicts

Housing analyst John Burns says he got “a lot of heat” for his recent report predicting that homeownership could drop below 62 percent—and maybe further—if the number of “strategic defaulters” who walk away from their underwater mortgages continues to increase, he said.

To read the full story, please click here:

<http://www.latimes.com/business/realestate/la-fi-umberger-20100815,0,62214.story>



What you should know about the market

- After a natural disaster, homeowners may begin to be solicited by home contractors and others offering to repair damaged property. Unfortunately, natural disasters also tend to bring out scam artists who prey on the situations of homeowners, often bilking them of thousands of dollars. Homeowners searching for reliable contractors are advised to first start by contacting their home insurance company and asking if the company can recommend a contractor.
- If the insurance company cannot recommend someone, homeowners should next search for local contractors. However, prior to hiring anyone, homeowners should contact the Better Business Bureau and state licensing agencies to ensure the company has met all state licensing and bonding requirements.