

# Rapid City Real Estate Update

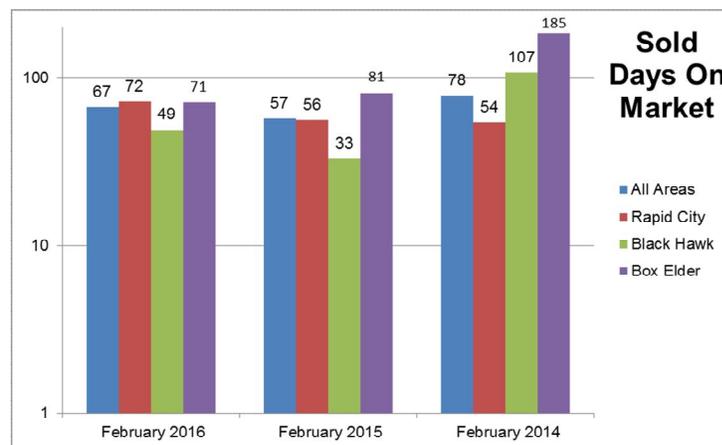
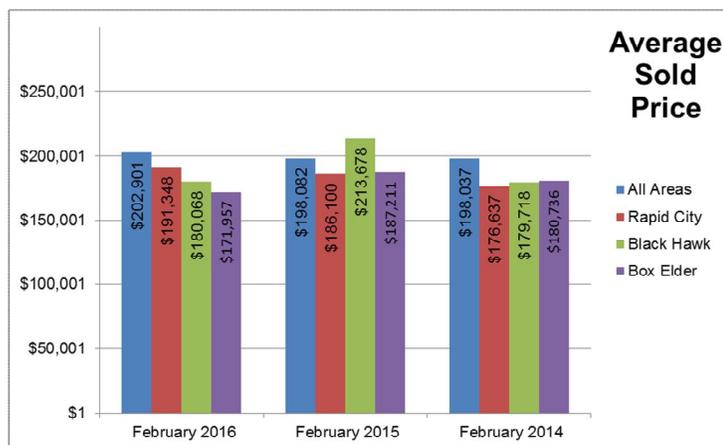
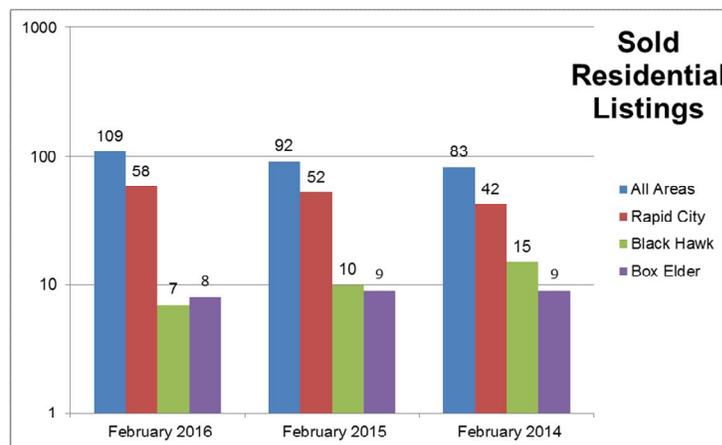
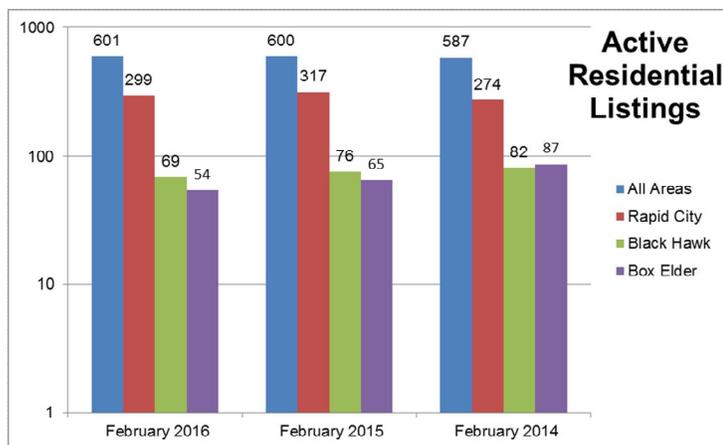


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## Rapid City & Area Market Conditions For February 2016



## How To Have Year-Round Curb Appeal In 6 Easy Steps

Exceptional curb appeal will add to the enjoyment and value of your property and home. Maintaining your curb appeal throughout each season may pose its challenges, but with these tips, you can ensure that your home and landscaping will look their very best throughout the year.

### #1 Clean It Up:

A thorough power wash is essential for maintaining the cleanliness of your home, driveway and walkways. Many homeowners prefer to do this in the spring, but you might consider an additional wash in the fall as well. By keeping your landscape free of debris like broken branches and dead trees, you can better maintain the appearance of your property.

### #2 Planting for Seasonal Interest:

It's helpful to plant with each season in mind to ensure that your landscape looks great year-round. Spring bulbs and flowering trees add visual interest to your landscape at the start of the growing season. A lush lawn and pots of colorful annuals can provide eye-catching appeal in the summer. Think about late summer perennials and deciduous trees or shrubs that boast spectacular fall colors. Evergreens are classic winter plants, but you might also wish to plant trees like birch or interesting shrubs to draw the eye.

### #3 Vertical Interest:

To avoid flat looking landscaping, be sure to include vertical interest. Arches, even when bare during the winter season, will add visual interest to your front yard. Hanging plants, vines, climbing plants, trellises and even a decorative light post

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## Buyer Etiquette: How To Get The Home You Want



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As most people know, the real estate market shifts between a buyers' or sellers' market, depending on supply and demand. However, regardless of which market we're currently in, buyer etiquette can help you get the home you want with the least amount of stress.

It may sound odd to some, especially first-time homebuyers, but manners matter when it comes to the real estate transaction. I'm not talking about "Please" and "Thank you." So, what exactly does this mean?

Buyer etiquette is not only about doing the things that are vital to helping sales go through but it's also about general manners like being on time for your viewing of a home, being prepared with your financial documents, and being responsive when requests for documents, signatures, or answers are needed from your real estate professionals.

This isn't about lecturing buyers about minding their manners; rather, think of this as the inside tips to helping land the home you really want. For instance, sometimes, being late for a viewing of a listing could cause you to lose that particular home. In a really hot real estate market, if you're late or you don't show up for the listing, you might not get a second chance - the home could be sold.

Another consideration is to be aware of how much time you need to view a home. If you try to see too many homes in one day, chances are you're not going to treat each home with the same respect. The first homes might get lots of attention by you in terms of time and what you notice.

However, by the time you're on, say, 15th home of the day, you might be so tired that you blaze through it barely giving this last home the attention it deserves. You'll end up wasting your time and potentially making a poor choice because you

were worn out when you viewed it. Instead, you may have to return to the last few homes you viewed that day. While it's often expected to return to a home you're very interested in, it's time-consuming to have to return to several homes simply because you weren't able to focus or pay attention in great detail.

One of the most important etiquette tips is to make sure that you've been pre-approved and are a serious buyer, ready to take action should you find the right home. Shopping for homes is serious business. It's likely the largest monetary transaction you'll make; being financially and emotionally prepared is good etiquette and will help expedite the process.

When viewing a home, if the sellers are present (sometimes this happens), don't share your likes or dislikes about the home with them. Be courteous and keep the conversation to a minimum with the sellers. You want to make sure you leave the negotiation process to your experienced real estate agent. If you have questions about the home, be sure to take good notes and consult with your agent.

Your agent is the liaison for good reason. The agent is experienced and knows how to find out the information you need without undermining your bargaining position. Polite conversation with the sellers is appropriate if the opportunity occurs. And, if the house isn't right for you from the moment you set foot in it, at least give it a quick walk-through, just to be absolutely certain.

Good manners when house hunting is about more than just having people like you. It could be the potential development of a successful real estate transaction. Good will during that process helps keep things moving along at a steady pace and possibly with a better outcome than if the sellers were selling to a buyer they really didn't like.

*Written by Phoebe Chongchua  
Courtesy of Realty Times*

# Remove Road Blocks To Sell Your Home

Every seller has a common goal in mind: sell the home quickly and for the most money. Yet when it comes time to sell the home not every seller will be prepared.

Many forget or don't know how to remove road blocks that can stall the sales process or kill it completely. If you're getting ready to list your home for sale, pay close attention. What you do before you list it can help or hurt the process.

Remove or limit the areas where your home is lacking. Study your neighborhood and the homes that are for sale. If your home is consistently coming up short in comparison, maybe it's not landscaped enough or it hasn't had any upgrades in 20 years, and it's overdue for some renovations or, at the very least, repairs to clean it up.

Get your home "show-ready" so that it isn't lacking or appearing deficient compared to other homes in your neighborhood. Placing a home on the market that isn't ready (needs repairs) can cause the home to receive very little foot traffic and it can end up being on the market for a long time.

If, for instance, you have vinyl flooring that's peeling, consider replacing it with a flooring that matches the style of your home and is comparable to the neighborhood so that it is consistent with the quality of floors in other homes in the area.

Remove YOU from the home. Yes, it's tricky to remove your personality from the home, especially when you're still living it. But it's very necessary. This doesn't just mean taking down personal photos and putting away private items like medicines. This means that if you've turned a room into a particular "you" room - your style, your personality, and your unique use of the room - consider re-doing the room to make it more neutral, versatile, and appealing to buyers.

For instance, if one of the bedrooms in a two-bedroom house was converted into a meditation room, it's wise, when listing the home for sale, to show it with both rooms as bedrooms rather than one bedroom and one room that is uniquely decorated for a specific use other than sleeping. Buyers can sometimes imagine how else they'd use a room but if it looks like too much work to make changes, they'll keep hunting for a house that is better suited to their needs.

If you've converted the garage into a den, office, or kids play area to fit your particular lifestyle, consider making it a garage again. Find a way to show your home with the garage as clean, useful, and as an extended-living space but also with the option to park cars in it. Not everyone wants to park on the street just to have a few extra hundred square feet of living space. An appraiser can actually knock thousands of dollars off your appraisal if the garage can't be used to park cars in because it's considered a loss of covered parking.

Remove strong odors from your home. Of course, I'm talking about foul smelling odors but sometimes too much of a good thing can also be a turn off. Gather up pet toys, pet beds, pet food, and make sure the house is pristine. If you're using fragrances in your home from sprays, candles, potpourri or even real flowers, make sure that the odor isn't overwhelming. Subtle is good... overbearing can make people think you're trying to cover up something bad in the home.

Ultimately, the goal is to make the home have mass appeal with as few road blocks as possible to sell it. Think like a buyer and see your home the way you'll be looking at your own next home purchase. Then maybe you'll understand the importance of making some changes before you list your home for sale.

*Written By Phoebe Chongchua  
Courtesy of Realty Times*

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will ensure that your yard has a visual balance year-round.

## #4 Hardscaping:

Plants aren't the only method of achieving excellent curb appeal. Consider replacing a worn-out front walkway with elegant cobblestone or brick pavers. Replace mulch with stone or encircle trees and shrubs to achieve a more formal look for your property. Boulders can be strategically placed to draw the eye and provide further visual interest for your setting.

## #5 Tackle Problem Areas:

If you have a slope that's difficult to mow or a sunken section of landscaping that always seems to flood, consider a solution. A low-maintenance, terraced garden is ideal for sloping sections of land that are difficult to mow. On the other hand, there are no-mow grasses that can replace a traditional lawn. Installing adequate drainage for low-lying areas of your landscape can help reduce the flooding that occurs during stormy seasons.

## #6 House Appeal:

You can increase the year-round curb appeal of your home by maintaining its outward appearance. A pleasing door, elegant fixtures, contemporary railings, eye-catching shutters and stylized window boxes will go a long way to boost your curb appeal. For an additional wow factor, consider expanding your porch or replacing worn siding to improve the appearance of your home.

Conclusion: Great curb appeal begins with assessing your current setting. When you do install new features, it's important to consider how they will appear during each season.

*Written by Andrea Davis  
Courtesy of Realty Times*



## Buyers May Find Mortgages Easier To Get

Good news for potential home shoppers: A Mortgage Bankers Association index shows lender requirements regarding credit scores, down payments, and other terms are finally loosening up. Some lenders are even expanding the types of mortgages they offer. These moves come after years of lenders tightening loan requirements in the aftermath of the housing crisis.

The newly-released MBA index shows that recent improvements in lending are

mostly tied to the government's efforts to ease regulations and improve affordability in the housing market. For example, mortgage financing giant Fannie Mae is now allowing purchases of conventional mortgages that have down payments as low as 3%; Freddie Mac is planning to do the same for mortgages closed on or after March 23.

*Courtesy of Realty Times*

# Black Hills Events

## 2016 Black Hills Home Builders

### Association Home Show

March 11 - 13

Rushmore Plaza Civic Center, Rapid City

## Rapid City Rush Games

March 11, 12, & 15

April 1, 2, 5, 8 & 9

Ice Arena, Rushmore Plaza Civic Center

## State A Boys Basketball Tournament

March 17 - 19

Rushmore Plaza Civic Center, Rapid City

## Deadwood Saint Patrick's Day Weekend

March 18 & 19

Downtown Deadwood

## Easter Egg Hunt

March 19

Visitor Information Center, Hill City

## 28th Annual Black Hills Motorcycle Show

March 19 - 20

Rushmore Plaza Civic Center, Rapid City

## Eggstravaganza

March 26 - 11:00 AM to 3:00 PM

Memorial Park & Main Street Square

## Deadwood's Forks, Corks & Kegs

### Food & Wine Festival

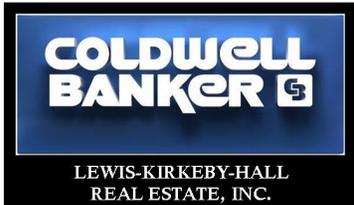
April 8 - April 10

Deadwood

## Information provided by:

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# Happy Easter!

*From everyone at  
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