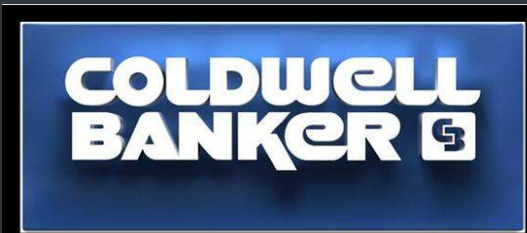


Rapid City Real Estate Update

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year!

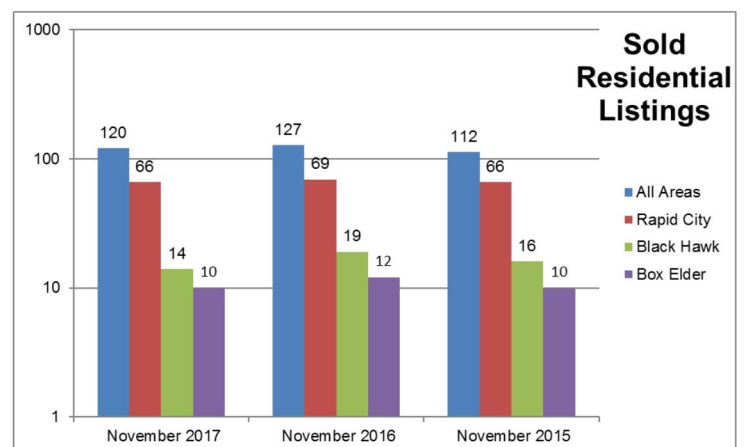
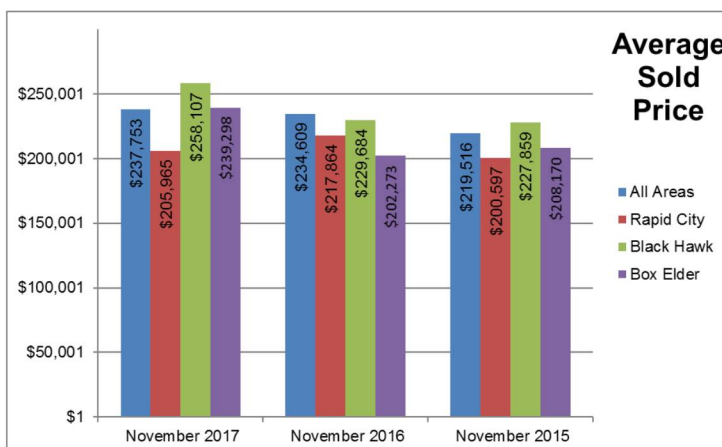
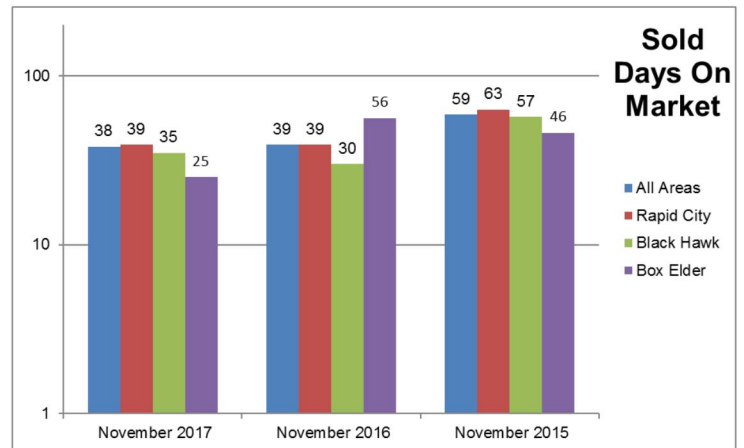
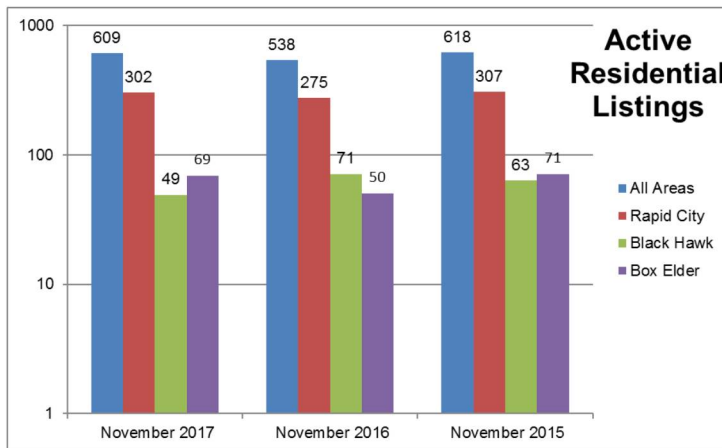


**LEWIS-KIRKEBY-HALL
REAL ESTATE, INC.**

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Rapid City & Area Market Conditions For November 2017



How to Say Goodbye to Renting And Hello to Home Ownership

Becoming a first-time homeowner takes a lot more than a desire to buy a house. It takes a lot of effort on your part to save up a down payment — which is usually a pretty good sized chunk of change — research neighborhoods, get pre-approved for a loan and other steps. Fortunately, it is quite possible to say goodbye to renting and hello to homeownership, especially when homeowners-to-be consider the following tips:

Focus on the Down Payment: In order to leave the land of rent, you are going to need a down payment — plain and simple. While it is common to put down 20 percent, some lenders now allow a much smaller amount, and first-time home buyer programs may go as low as 3 percent. While a smaller down payment may sound enticing, a 5 percent down payment on a \$200K home is still \$10,000 — not exactly a small sum. If saving money does not come naturally for you, don't worry. With some relatively minor lifestyle changes you can speed up the down payment savings process.

Come up with a savings plan to determine how much you need to set aside every week or month and then find ways to "find" that money in your budget. Using the \$10,000 example from before, if you are determined to buy a home in two years, you'll have to come up with about \$415 a month to stash into your down payment account.

Take a close look at your monthly bills and determine what you can pare down or eliminate — maybe you are paying \$75 a month for a gym membership you rarely use, or you pay \$40 extra for premium satellite channels that no one watches. These services can be cancelled and the money can go directly into your savings account. Eat out less, have Starbucks twice a week instead of every day and if you need to, consider a side hustle on the weekends to reach this magical monthly amount of \$415.

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Selling Your Home For The Holidays? Don't Be A Curb Appeal Scrooge



LEWIS-KIRKBY-HALL
REAL ESTATE, INC.

If your house is currently for sale or if you're considering listing it, you may be wondering whether you should bother at all with holiday decorations this year. In a word: yes. But there's more to it than that. There's a long way between Scrooge and The Griswolds.

"It's hard to argue with the fact that glitter lights and colorful accents make a home look more cheerful and inviting," said Realtor.com. "But you also probably know that if you're trying to sell your home, buyers need to have an easy time imagining themselves (and their own holiday traditions) in your home."

These tips will help you strike just the right balance.

Go ahead and put up lights: Being the only house on the street that isn't decorated could leave potential buyers feeling uninspired and unmotivated to purchase - or even come inside. If putting up holiday lights this year means heading to Target to buy new stuff, you'll have numerous options: white lights, colored lights, snowflake shapes, icicles. Think clean, simple, and elegant to best accentuate your home.

Don't overdo the lights: Putting up lights doesn't mean you have to create a spectacle. Plastering every horizontal surface and wrapping every tree and bush with lights may read festive, but people who are out home shopping at this time of year are likely serious about buying. And they want to see your house, not how many lights you own.

"You want them to be impressed with your house, not distracted by decorations," said Forbes. "So keep it simple this year. If minimizing the 'ho ho ho' cramps your style, just remind yourself that you can go all-out next year in your new home."

Consider LEDs: Another thing to consider if you're buying new lights this year is what type of bulb to get. If you have had

your existing lights for many years, you may not even realize how many LED options are available now. The benefit to LED bulbs is that they save energy, and therefore, money. They may cost a little more upfront, but if you are making an investment in lights you plan to use for years to come, it's worth it.

Go ahead and pack up the inflatables: Keeping it simple definitely doesn't include that big, inflatable Santa or The Grinch family or an entire lawn full of holiday-themed Peanuts characters.

"One man's 'merry' is another man's 'tacky,' so tone down any garish light displays while your home is on the market," said HGTV. "(No, your neighbors didn't pay us to say that.) Instead, use simple string lighting to play up your home's architecture or draw attention to the gorgeous fir tree in your front yard."

Address your entry: You don't have to have a sweeping front porch to establish a warm welcome. Place a festive mini tree or cluster of poinsettias next to the door or hang a wreath to add a little holiday interest.

"Classic is always best: Hang an elegant wreath on the front door, rather than a 'Santa stops here!' sign, Jamie Novak, author of "Keep This, Toss That," told Realtor.com

Go ahead and put up that tree: Putting up the tree may seem like a hassle when you're focused on decluttering and keeping everything in your home extra clean this year, but think of it as staging. A well-placed and well-decorated tree will make the home feel nice and inviting at holiday time. Placing it in a window that allows it to show through to the street creates that Norman Rockwell feel that will tug at your buyers' heartstrings.

*By Jaymi Naciri
Courtesy of Realty Times*



Sellers: Don't Let The Holidays Scare You

Some home owners may be tempted to delay putting their home on the market until after the holidays. But there's plenty of reasons why they shouldn't wait and use the holidays to their advantage and start the new year with a "sold" sign on the front lawn. Here are a four reasons why:

1. Buyers relocating for job purposes may be in a hurry to get settled into a new home before the new year, particularly if they have school-age children.

2. Buyers who are looking for a home during the holidays tend to be more serious and in a hurry to buy.

3. Some stagers argue that homes show better when they're decorated for the holidays and welcome buyers in.

4. Sellers will likely have less competition against other home sellers during the holidays.

Courtesy of Realty Times



How To Create An Enjoyable Outdoor Space On a Budget

The lawn and landscape outside your home can be your own personalized crea-

tion, and it does not have to be expensive. It is through the effort of creating what you want within your limitations – both financial and physical – that you come to love the space you craft. By learning frugal methods to care for your lawn and landscape, you can have the lawn you want within the budget you can afford.

Xeriscaping: By installing native plants, mulching appropriately and minimizing the size of your actual lawn, you can save a lot of money on maintenance and watering. Your local Master Gardener group, or the local city government, will likely have information on xeriscaping for your area. Lush green lawns are certainly beautiful and pleasant to play on, but they are also resource intensive. Unless you are one of the lucky few that live in an area with heavy rainfall, you will spend large amounts of money keeping a large lawn alive. According to Bankrate.com, a 4,000 square foot lawn takes an average of 2,500 gallons of water a week to stay green, or about \$400 a year in water costs.

Cost Effective Lawn Care Tools: Once you have minimized your lawn space, you can determine exactly what tools you need to care for your landscape. If the lawn is small enough, a push reel mower may be enough. Push mowers can be hard to use if you have physical limitations, though. Electric push mowers are also another excellent option. Older models used to require an extension cord, but newer models are often cord-free, according to Nature's Finest Seed. Other accessories, like leaf blowers, can also ease your cleanup and make for a nicer looking landscape. Electric models

are not terribly expensive, and can offer a quick solution to sidewalk clutter.

Compost Organic Waste: Composting is a wonderful way to recycle your food scraps into valuable fertilizer or top soil. Small bags of compost can be expensive and it seems silly to pay so much when you can just make your own. Pre-made compost containers are always an option, but you do not have to spend a lot of money if you have a little out-of-the-way space to make a pile.

Chicken wire and wood scraps are enough to cordon off a small area for dumping your organic waste, including lawn clippings, food scraps, leaves and anything else that naturally decays. Remember to turn the pile every month or so, and eventually you will have your own fertilizer.

Be Water Wise: Water is one of the greatest expenses for the home gardener. Water conservation is in everyone's best interest, and local city governments will often have information on how to conserve water across your entire home. Take the time to learn about minimizing the water use in your lawn, and it will save you money for the foreseeable future.

Add Value: Going green with your yard is great, but if done well it can also add to the value of your home. SFGate.com notes that good landscaping with a coherent layout and plan can add from 5.5 percent to 12.7 percent to the value of your home. On a \$300,000 home, that can add up to \$38,100 in value.

Beautiful lawns and landscapes do not have to be expensive. By adopting the above practices, you can begin creating the landscape you want within your budget. Not only will you save money, you will also do the environment a favor as well.

Courtesy of Realty Times

(continued from page 2)

Avoid Identity Theft: Unfortunately, the chances of becoming a victim of identity theft increase when you are buying and moving into a new home. The stacks of documents that are part of buying a home and that are filled with your personal information may accidentally fall into the wrong hands, and once you move, mail may not be routed correctly and thieves may steal your mail and your identity from your old mailbox.

Prevent this situation from happening by purchasing an identity theft protection program; find a trusted company that will help safeguard your personal data. In addition to letting you know when a bank pulls your credit report and asking if you have authorized this inquiry, certain services will monitor your financial activity and alert you if anything is amiss.

Check Your Credit Report: When you start the pre-approval process for a loan and then move on to the Big Kahuna of applying for an actual mortgage, your credit report will be pulled numerous times. Your credit score will then be used to determine if you are approved for a loan, and what type of interest rate you will get. Please do not wait until you have the down payment saved and you are champing at the bit to go look at houses to check your FICO score — check your credit as early in the process as you can.

If you have a credit card that has been issued through your bank, give them a call and see if they can run your report for you for free; in the cases of some credit cards, they also offer a free monthly FICO score check. Read through the report and check for any errors; this includes credit lines you never opened and delinquent payments that you know were made on time. Dispute any mistakes that you find and look for ways to boost your credit score, like paying down automatic bill pay so you are never late with your payments.

*By Jaymi Naciri
Courtesy of Realty Times*

Black Hills Events

1880 Train Holiday Express

December 1 to December 23
1880 Train Depot, Hill City

Storybook Island Christmas Nights of Lights

December 1-3, 8-23, 26-31
Storybook Island

Live At The Dahl - Dirk Quinn Band

December 15 - 7:30 PM to 10:00 PM
Dahl Arts Center

Rapid City Rush Hockey Games

December 20, 22, 23, 29 & 30
January 19, 20 & 21
Rushmore Plaza Civic Center

Skates & A Movie

December 23 - 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM
Main Street Square

Hot 93.1 Downtown Countdown

December 31 - 5:00 PM to 9:00 PM
Main Street Square

Wild West Gymnastics Invitational

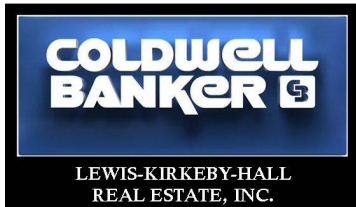
January 6 & 7
Rushmore Plaza Civic Center

Rapid City Downtown Restaurant Week

January 12 - 20
Downtown Rapid City

Information provided by:

www.visitrapidcity.com
& www.downtownrapidcity.com



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4 Renovations That Grab Buyers' Attention

Among the home improvement projects buyers are most likely to value are those that increase storage space and preserve vintage features. Southern Living magazine recently rounded up some of the renovations that get sellers the most attention for their properties:

Temperature-controlled square footage: From the appraiser's point of view - heated and cooled square footage is the biggest winner in terms of payoff. If you're looking to boost your sale price, converting a garage, attic, or screened-in porch - all add major points for buyers.

Cosmetic kitchen tweaks: Southern Living says more buyers are turning away from busy backsplashes in the kitchen, opting for a simpler subway tile backsplash and subdued paint colors for cabinetry. Southern Living suggests using stainless steel appliances to help modernize a dated kitchen.

Big-Impact Bath Upgrades: The great thing about baths is that they're tiny enough where you can make singular changes - such as replacing a vanity or tub - for maximum impact. Fixtures such as claw-foot tubs, frameless shower doors, and freestanding sinks are particularly trendy right now.

Plenty of storage: When closet space is tight, consider adding storage solutions such as extra shelves, hooks, and rods. If there is limited closet space, install an extra closet rod.

Courtesy of Realty Times