

SEPTEMBER 2022

REAL ESTATE

DAVID ORSO OF BERKSHIRE HATHAWAY HOMESERVICES PENFED REALTY **Page 8**

Orso views real estate as a vehicle to introduce people to this community and to help others in this community.



DIY Title Work **Page 5**

When homeowners modify how their home is titled, they often make a costly decision.

"Mortgage Local" **Page 7**

Securing a mortgage with a trusted consultant is more important than ever.

Leaf Removal **Page 11**

Puddles and clogged gutters are two signs of drainage problems.



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- Beth. P



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-Daniel O



Brad Kappel

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When contemplating what subject to write about for this year's real estate edition, I found my writing muse via a friend's Instagram comment,

"Love Where You Live." This comment was in response to a reel I posted about my Saturday around Severna Park with my wife, Ashleigh, and our two boys, Luke and Cooper.

More on that day in just a moment, but the comment made me think of the most famous saying in our industry: "The three most important things when determining value in real estate are location, location, location." Luckily for those of us reading the *Severna Park Voice*, we have so much to be thankful for in regard to location. The value of Severna Park real estate has never been higher thanks in large part to the community that we all call home.

During a recent Saturday, we woke up early and walked to The Big Bean via the B&A Trail for coffee and donuts. Our next stop was Olde Tyme Barber Shop to get the Wyble bros

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Love Where You Live



“ Luckily for those of us reading the *Severna Park Voice*, we have so much to be thankful for in regard to location. The value of Severna Park real estate has never been higher thanks in large part to the community that we all call home.”

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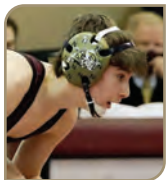


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DIY Title Work



Brad Walsh
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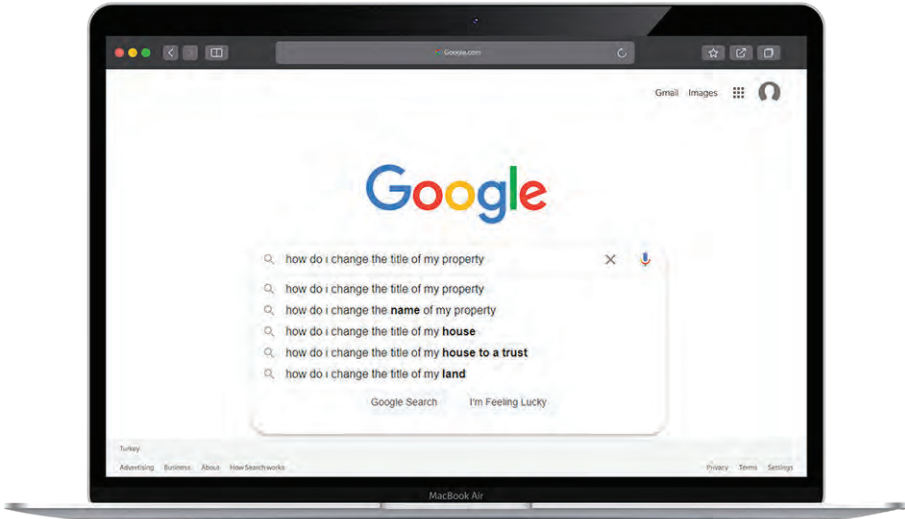
With most home improvement projects that homeowners undertake on their own, if they don't know exactly what they are doing, they could be causing more harm than good. The same is true when homeowners modify how their home is titled, or what I call "DIY title work."

While some consumers hire a real estate attorney to draft the deed to their home, others rely on examples and forms available on the internet, or discount services that generate legal documents from stock, non-specific templates. This decision can be extremely costly if the appropriate components of the deed are missing. For a deed to effectively transfer real property, it must include the names of the parties involved, a description of the property that

identifies it with reasonable certainty, and it must be appropriately executed and acknowledged prior to its recordation among the land records. While not required, the designation of the tenancy is also critical. The tenancy dictates the ownership interests in the property and certain survivorship characteristics by identifying who may own the property after the death of an owner. Tenancy is also important because certain designations have the additional

benefit of protecting the property from judgment creditors of one or more owners. Unfortunately, sometimes we see deeds that either lack a complete legal description, omit the tenancy of the owners, or are technically deficient because they are not appropriately executed and acknowledged. Often, people elect to add their children or trusted family member to the title of their

Continued on page 14



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If you're thinking about moving into a new home or using your home's equity to renovate, your first step is speaking to a mortgage professional that can tailor a loan to fit your financial needs and goals.

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“Mortgage Local” Offers Many Benefits

Tony Leighty

Mortgage Consultant
First Home Mortgage
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benefit: local market knowledge.

Special down payment assistance programs are usually hyper localized. The Maryland Mortgage Program is a state-run program to help make the initial investment into homeownership more affordable by providing down payment assistance. There are many tiers of the program, but the design is to help people with down payment funds. The direct benefit to the borrower would be the funds obtained from these programs and can be the difference between becoming a homeowner or not. A local lender would have the knowledge of these programs, over a nationwide lender.

Indirect benefit: peace of mind. Generally speaking (and this can be subjective by interpretation, but I'm speaking for myself), your local mortgage professional will care more deeply for their clients

as they live in the community they serve. We have a responsibility to help one another, to look out for our neighbors, and it's more apparent when your clients can literally become your neighbors. Our kids play on the same teams, we shop in the same shopping centers, and we share the same values. With peace of mind comes the assurance that you'll be advised in your best interests, you'll be communicated with, and you'll be able to get answers to your questions quickly.

Merely answering the phone on an evening or weekend can go a long way to establish trust and peace of mind for someone dealing with quite possibly their largest financial transaction of their lives. It's something that's inherently unquantifiable but incredibly important, nonetheless.

Let's face it, home mortgages aren't exactly the most

exciting thing in the world. Most people perform a home transaction every seven to 10 years, so the terminology isn't something that you are entirely familiar with. Some take it as an overwhelming experience. One that they just want to get over with because the end game is a new home. They suck it up and do whatever is needed to finalize it just to get to the closing table. For me, that's an awful take on it. You would think that with something so significant, you'd want to remember it in a positive light. It's the experience for me. That's what I've always wanted to bring to the table, and at its core, that's the essence of what it means to mortgage local.

For a one-on-one mortgage consultation for your next purchase or refinance, contact Tony Leighty at tleighty@firsthome.com or 443-623-3882. ■

Times are changing. The stock market has dropped. The Federal Reserve has raised rates multiple times. Mortgage interest rates continue to rise. Home supply inventory is getting only a little better, but home prices remain high. It's still a seller's market.

Navigating and securing a mortgage today with a trusted, local mortgage consultant is now more important than ever. “Mortgaging local” is your key to success.

There are direct benefits and indirect benefits of “mortgage local.” Let's take a dive into one from each. **Direct**

“Navigating and securing a mortgage today with a trusted, local mortgage consultant is now more important than ever. ‘Mortgaging local’ is your key to success.”



David Orso Team Offers Much More Than Real Estate

Zach Sparks

For David Orso, real estate is about more than buying and selling houses. It's about guiding people through big decisions that will change their lives.

"I view real estate as a vehicle to introduce people to this community and to do good in this community," said David, a lifelong Anne Arundel County resident who is raising his three children in Arnold with his wife, Dawn.

He believes Severna Park and the Broadneck peninsula are special places.

"You always want to buy what you can't change," he said. "Severna Park is close to an airport, metropolitan areas, and bodies of water."

The David Orso Team of Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices PenFed Realty is big enough to matter but small enough to care. That team includes David, two Realtors, and two client care coordinators, one of whom also serves as operations manager and a community events coordinator. They all follow the same principles: treat others with respect, be honest even when it's tough, show people you care and have fun.

"We offer luxury service at any price, everything from grand waterfront properties to modest townhomes," David

said. "We want everyone to know, and feel, that they are our most important client. People call us for referrals on things they need: a pediatrician, a marina, a boat dealer."

The team pairs that customer service with David's tireless work ethic, his exhaustive market insight, and a straightforward, professional approach to help turn clients' dreams into a reality.

"There are landmines everywhere," David said, when asked why it's important to consult a professional. "You might have the desire to sell your home yourself, but the highest and best price comes from competition, which is created from a strategic marketing plan."

Helping people navigate the homebuying and home-selling process is a humbling experience, but David really enjoys real estate because it allows him to give back. Through real estate, David and Dawn want to enhance the lives of as many people as they can.

"Before we got married, David and I talked about the importance of giving back," Dawn said. "We have the ability to reach new people through David's platform and continue our philanthropic efforts but on a bigger scale."

As of August, the David Orso real estate team had donated more than \$28,000 to charities in 2022. Most of that





Dawn and David Orso

money, Dawn said, has gone to grassroots organizations in Anne Arundel County.

"This month, we continue to support a 5K for a friend of ours who passed away from ovarian cancer," Dawn said, referring to the Stefanie Ashdown 5K. "We are also heavily involved in the Severna Park Community Center, and in a few weeks, we will kick off our annual Halloween costume drive to donate to Sarah's House."

That's just a sample of the work they do and the causes that are close to their hearts. They have also supported an end-of-year toy drive for EllaStrong, which gives new toys to Believe In Tomorrow and to kids at Children's National Hospital, Johns Hopkins Children's Center and Luminis Health Anne Arundel Medical Center, Backpack Buddies, The Light House shelter, Arundel House of Hope and Benevolent Baskets.

"I like the toy drive because it gives an opportunity for everyone in the community to be involved in doing good for one another, whether the people donating are clients or not," Dawn said. "We post pictures on social media, so when people give us donations, they can see that their donations are impacting their local community."

At the heart of the community is the Severna Park Community Center, where David served as chairman of the board from 2014 to 2020. He was recognized as the community center's honoree during its 2022 gala in April.

"Many years ago, Andy Borland (SPCC board of directors, emeritus) told me, 'Whatever you give to this community, you'll get back tenfold,'" David said before the gala in April. "As I got older, I realized that I wanted to get more and more connected to this vibrant community and join a bigger communal family."



David is ruthlessly committed to being the absolute best professional so that his clients have every advantage in the marketplace. Readers of the Severna Park Voice have voted him Best Real Estate Agent or runner-up 10 times. What's Up? Media readers voted David Orso's team as the "Best Of" in 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2022.

To date, David has represented 1,282 clients and sold more than \$600 million in real estate, demonstrating a proven track record of success. To get started on the journey of buying or selling your home, contact the David Orso Team of Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices PenFed Realty at 443-372-7171 or david@davidorso.com. Learn more by visiting www.davidorso.com.

Maryland Mortgage Program Announces Diversification Of Loan Products

Additional Financial Assistance Available Now For Homebuyers

The Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development's Maryland Mortgage Program launched new loan products in July to provide more flexible options of down payment and closing cost assistance. The Maryland Mortgage Program has been the state's flagship homeownership program for over 40 years, and for the past three years, has averaged over \$1 billion in home loan reservations, helping about 4,000 Marylanders get into their dream home each year.

"In this challenging housing climate, when interest rates are increasing and affordable housing inventory is low, the state of Maryland is always looking for innovative offerings to make homeownership affordable," said Kenneth Holt, secretary of the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development. "Our Maryland Mortgage Program is nationally recognized for a diversified product line, and we are constantly evaluating new products that give Marylanders the best option for homeownership."

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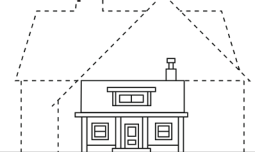
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When They Brown And Fall Down, Rake!

Nick Whittles

SERVPRO of Annapolis/Severna Park



Here are some quick tips from SERVPRO of Annapolis/Severna Park.

- **Drainage.** Clogged gutters are a common cause of drainage problems. However, make sure you fix drainage problems with patios and landscaping too. Do you see any puddles in your yard? This can be a sign of drainage problems. To avoid water

damage, get those drainage problems addressed before the leaves fall.

- **Roof.** When was the last time you had your roof inspected? Ideally, your roof should be inspected and maintained on a yearly basis. Keep those gutters clean of leaves and debris.
- Keep wet leaves away from your foundation.

If you have concerns with a commercial property having an emergency plan, let a professional know. SERVPRO of Annapolis/Severna Park can develop an Emergency Ready Profile (ERP) for your building and provide your facilities staff with a telephone application that will keep them prepared for severe weather. For more information, call 410-647-8181. ■

As fall approaches, the vibrant colors of the falling leaves can quickly become a headache!

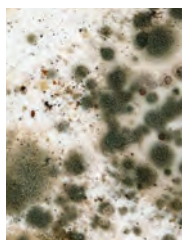
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Love Where You Live

Continued from page 4

back-to-school haircuts. We then walked to Diehl's to pick out fresh produce for dinner before heading back to our house. In the end, it was a three-mile walk around town, and although it was a special enough occurrence to post about (and now write about), it isn't the first or last time we have accomplished our weekend errands via foot while hauling our purchases via stroller. It was, however, the first time I made a compilation video of our adventures.

Ironically, what wasn't on that video were later stops to Jen's Steaks for lunch, Franklin's Toys for a birthday present purchase, a visit to a charity lemonade stand behind The FroYo House, a final stop in Dawson's Liquors to stock up the cooler for an afternoon boat ride to Annapolis with friends, and the follow-up dinner and firepit back at our house that evening.

All in all, this was an amazing day and a perfect way to celebrate the end of summer. Yet as someone who grew up in Severna Park, taking walks to local shops, hanging out at a community beach or pool, having a meal at a local restaurant and taking boat rides from community piers are things that can feel almost normal here.

In fact, if you're anything like me, sometimes we can take for granted all the amazing people and businesses

we interact with daily around the town. Many of these folks have been here for generations and feel like they are a part of the town's fabric (can you remember Severna Park without Garry's Grill?)

After selling homes here for the past 13 years, I can assure you that these things aren't "normal" and that when I help families move into Severna Park, Millersville and Arnold from outside of the area, they are typically blown away by everything I mentioned above. This constant reminder through the lens of new residents keeps my perspective fresh of just how special our area is.

I know that's why my friend, a fellow Severna Park resident, made the comment that she did, and I agree, I do love where I live and I will do my best to show my gratitude daily and continue to not take our amazing community for granted.

As you've had a glimpse into my recent Saturday, I hope your memory is flooded with similar experiences you've had with your family or maybe it inspires you to take a day to explore our town on foot this autumn. I hope to see you around town!

For more information, visit www.mattwyble.com, contact Matt Wyble at matt@mw.team or 833-MWTeam-1, or follow @4thgenrealtor on Instagram and @MattWyble- 4th Generation Realtor on Facebook.

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The New Homeowner's Moving Checklist

Family Features

Now that you've closed on your first house, you're officially a homeowner. However, before you can get comfy in your new place, you need to actually move in. If you've never moved into a new house, there are a few things you may not be aware of.

As you make plans to move into a house for the first time, consider these tips as you begin to get settled.

Have The House Cleaned

You have two options: either roll up your sleeves and do a complete top-to-bottom cleaning before moving in or hire a cleaning service. While both options work, one will save you money and the other will save you time.

Tackle Any Small Projects

If you already know you want to make some changes, it's best to do that before you move your things. Your home inspector can go over your entire house and suggest possible renovations and improvement projects.

Meet Your Neighbors

Even if you've never taken the time to introduce yourself to your neighbors before, you'll likely want to get to know the folks who live next to or near your new home. Consider stopping by with a simple gift, like cookies to break the ice. Say hi and get things started on the right foot.

Check Out Community Activities

Every community has its own personality. That includes the local hotspots, activities, seasonal celebrations and recreational options. You may have looked into some of this while you were shopping for your new home, but now that you know

where you'll be living, this is a perfect opportunity to sign up for a recreational sports team or put the annual festival on your calendar.

Make Sure You Have Power

When you move into a new home, it's up to you to contact the electric provider for the area to set up an account and ensure the power is on. Do not count on the former owner to leave the power on for you.

Replace The Locks

Rather than assuming you have complete control over who can get in your home, it's best to change all the locks. This simple step isn't overly expensive and can give you peace of mind.

Consider Eco-Friendly Appliances

Going green can reduce your energy costs as well as your carbon footprint. It doesn't have to cost a fortune to make your house eco-friendly. There are energy-efficient appliances to suit every price range. Plus, simple changes, like LED bulbs and a smart thermostat, can further reduce your energy bill.

Make Your New Home Safe

At a minimum, you should check every smoke and carbon monoxide alarm to ensure they work. If not, replace them and purchase a fire extinguisher or two for added protection.

Account For Outdoor Essentials

You'll want to arrange for a lawn care provider if you don't plan on doing it yourself and give some thought to any needed landscaping, which makes outdoor maintenance one less thing to worry about as you settle in. ■



Moving to your first home is a significant milestone. Make the experience of moving in memorable, efficient and as stress-free as possible by working through this checklist ahead of time.

DIY Title Work

Continued from page 5

home as a form of estate planning. However, this can create adverse consequences for the owner as they give a property right to someone other than themselves. While not true in every scenario, this can lead to disputes or limitations regarding the disbursement of the sales proceeds if the property is sold or restrict the ability of one party to transfer the property to a subsequent purchaser. It also may leave the property vulnerable to the creditors of the newly added family member. There may also be financial implications resulting from the transfer, such as transfer and recordation taxes in connection with deed recording and potential tax liabilities for the added owners.

Some deeds also contain references to easements,

deferred water facilities charges or exclusive rights that benefit a property. Additionally, the items particular to that property are generally not included in the stock forms we see. A homeowner needs to show their interests to others with this information contained in their deed because that interest could be lost if it is not.

Speaking with a real estate attorney before modifying the title to your property is always recommended. This step ensures you are effectively accomplishing your goals without experiencing the potential adverse impacts or unintended consequences a faulty or poorly drafted deed may present.

For more information, contact Eagle Title at 410-266-3600 or www.eagle-title.com.

Maryland Mortgage Program

Continued from page 10

The Fiscal Year 2023 new products and enhancements include:

- **Base down payment assistance** will be increased from \$5,000 to \$6,000.
- **SmartBuy**, which offers student debt relief to homebuyers, will provide an extra down payment assistance option of a 4% loan. SmartBuy borrowers can choose between \$6,000 or a 4% down payment and closing cost assistance loan in addition to student debt relief up to \$30,000.
- **HomeStart** is a new loan product for borrowers with income below 50% area median income (AMI) to assist them with a 6% down payment and closing cost assistance loan.
- **HomeAbility**, for homebuyers with disabilities, to provide increased funding and a flexible loan structure.

In addition to the newly launched loan products, the Maryland Mortgage Program offers a variety of mortgage products specifically tailored to make homeownership affordable and sustainable, including flexible government and conventional loans that come with various levels and forms of down payment and closing cost assistance and attractive interest rates for both first-time and repeat homebuyers, conventional refinancing and even student debt relief. To learn more and find out which product is right for you, visit www.mmp.maryland.gov and contact a participating lender. ■



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Dianna Lancione
Lonnie Lancione

V.P., Operations

Brian Lancione

V.P., Business Development

Jonathan Katz

Sales Account Executives

Petra Roche
Larry Sells

Editor

Zach Sparks

Editorial Assistant

Lauren Cowin

Staff Reporter

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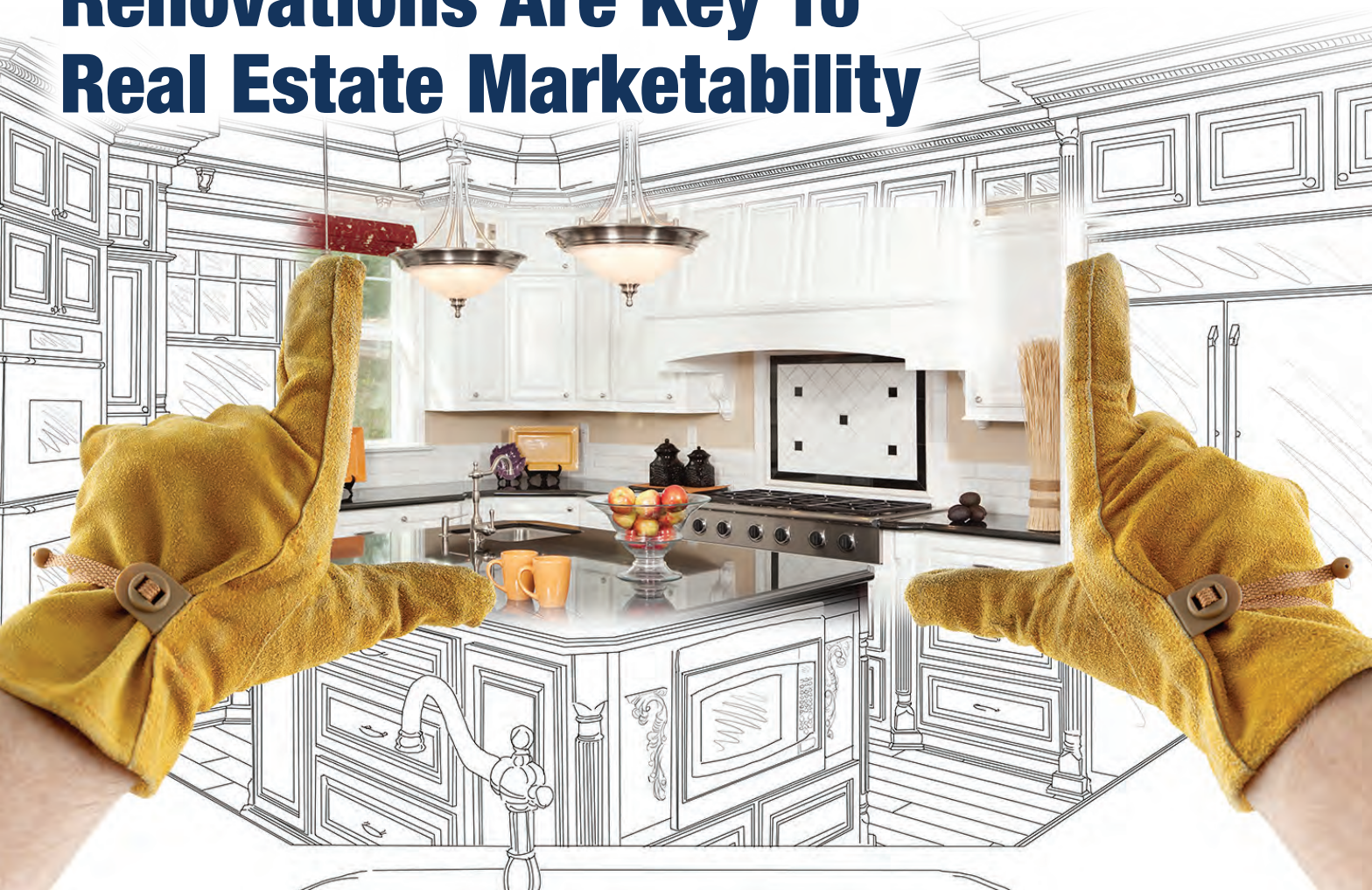
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P.O. Box 608, Severna Park, MD 21146

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Renovations Are Key To Real Estate Marketability



John Aliff



When it comes to selling real estate, whether it be residential or commercial, presentation matters. All too often, dollars are left on the table by sellers due to their unwillingness to spend money on renovations prior to selling. The inherent bias is to avoid putting any more money into something that will no longer be yours.

A more appropriate way to think about money spent on renovations is in terms of return on investment (ROI). If it costs \$12,000 to remodel a bathroom, but the house can then be listed for an additional \$15,000, then those are dollars well spent. The

big question, however, is which renovations are more important than others when there's a mutually exclusive budget? The short answer is it depends on the specific property in question, but we'll touch on two of the best focus areas here.

1. Bathrooms

Have you ever walked in a house to see an old, outdated bathroom and thought to yourself, "Wow, I'd love to shower and brush my teeth in here?" Yeah, me either. Bathrooms are one of the most important rooms in a house. Of course, most people want the latest styles and trends, but it goes beyond style. We spend a significant amount of our time in a bathroom, focusing on hygiene. So, when a buyer comes in and sees an outdated bathroom, it often comes off as being unclean (due to the nature of

everyday wear and tear), and it becomes an immediate turnoff.

2. Kitchens

This is an easy one, but again often avoided due to the higher cost associated with renovating a kitchen. The kitchen is the key focal point and one of the main entertaining areas in every home. Small, cramped kitchens with closed-off walls are a thing of the past (or at least they should be). Most buyers in today's market want to see open concepts, new stone countertops, big islands, freshly coated cabinets, etc.

Other items worth addressing are floors, paint and curb appeal, of course. One common theme with any renovation is that none of them are cheap, which is why they're often avoided by the seller. However, buyers face the same cost burden when purchasing a home if the reno-

ventions have not already been done, and that could easily turn them away. In fact, the convenience of purchasing a home that has recently been renovated or at least move-in ready is often paid a premium over the cost that the seller paid to have such renovations done — ROI.

There are a variety of ways to address the upfront costs of renovations rather than avoiding them. A&A Home Renovations and Park Modern Realty often work together with sellers to sell their homes for top dollar. Their collective experience in real estate sales, investments, and renovations allow them to prepare homes with the ultimate marketability and deliver a successful result to clients.

John B. Aliff III, CFA, CPA, is a partner with Park Modern Realty and owner of A&A Home Renovations. ■



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