

# TODAY'S REAL ESTATE MARKET: THE BEST TIME TO BUY IS NOW

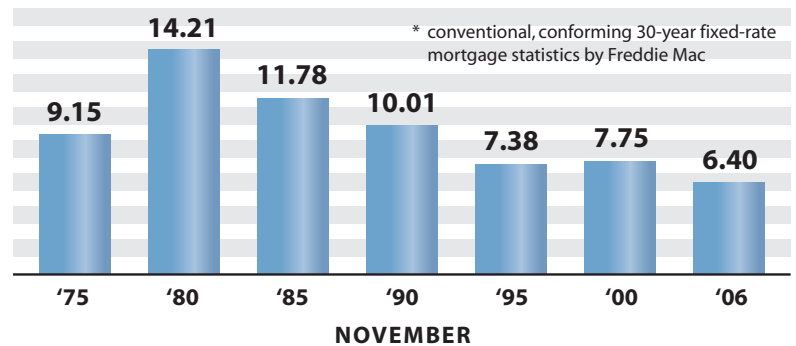
The latest economic forecasts suggest that the real estate market correction is coming to an end, offering consumers a once-in-a-lifetime buying opportunity.

The time for prospective buyers to enter the market is right now; and here's why:

## MORTGAGE INTEREST RATES ARE CLOSE TO 40-YEAR LOWS.

- The average 30-year fixed rate mortgage rate remains near 40-year lows. Currently at 6.4%, this is more than an entire percentage point below 2000 levels.
- Low interest rates allow a substantially larger population of Americans to own their own homes.
- For example, with a \$250,000 mortgage, a rise in interest rates from 6.5% to 7.5% means an additional \$2000 in annual payments. This may boost currently available homes out of financial reach for potential buyers. Today's low rates offer a unique opportunity for buyers.

## Average 30-year Fixed Mortgage Rate



## INVENTORY IS ONCE AGAIN ON THE DECLINE.

- In recent months, there has been a record inventory of nearly four million homes on the market. However, total housing inventory levels fell 2.4% at the end of September to 3.75 million existing homes available for sale. As inventory continues to decline, the selection of homes will once again become limited. For prospective buyers, there may never be a better time to buy a home than right now.
- Taking advantage of the variety of homes available on the market today allows buyers the unique opportunity to find the home of their dreams.
- Expanded selection combined with low interest rates offer buyers an opportunity that may never be available again in their lifetime.

## WITH THE MARKET CORRECTION NEARING AN END, HOME PRICES ARE EXPECTED TO RISE AGAIN.

- Research indicates that home prices will not go any lower. While certain local markets may see limited price declines, the national picture remains bright. Pending home sales were up 4.3% in August, an early indication that buyers are returning to the market.
- The national median home price will rise 1.6% in 2006 and prices are expected to rise again in the first quarter of 2007. As prices begin to rise again buyers who do not act now could be making a costly mistake.

## REAL ESTATE REMAINS THE BEST INVESTMENT AVAILABLE.

- The average home purchased five years ago has appreciated 49%. Even with the recent 2.2% decline in the median home price, this still equates to a more than 45% return on investment for the average homeowner. Media reports of a vast market decline are deceiving, and consumers will benefit from purchasing a home now before prices begin to rise once again.
- According to *Forbes* magazine (using U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development statistics), U.S. real estate sale prices increased more than 56% from the beginning of 1999 to the end of 2004. The S&P 500 index dipped nearly 6% during that same period.
- While year-to-year fluctuations are normal, real estate remains one of the best performing and consistent long-term investments. Median existing U.S. home sale prices have increased on average 6.5% each year from 1972 through 2005, and 88.5% over the last 10 years combined. For consumers looking for long-term and stable growth rates, real estate is still their number one choice.



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