

First-time Homebuyers Cautious in 2010 Despite Golden Opportunities

By Graig F. Zappia

Lacking the federal incentives that enticed them into buying homes in force in 2009, first-time homebuyers last year became scarcer in real estate markets nationwide, according to a National Association of Realtors study. Even without the federal tax credits that expired in April 2010, first-time homebuyers, especially those in the Capital Region, can still realize significant savings by taking full advantage of the buyer's market with the help of a real estate lawyer.

First-time homebuyers' market share last year was 37 percent, down from a record 50 percent in 2009. While this decline in market share is large, it actually brings first-time homebuyers more in line with normal buying activity. Long-term trends suggest four in 10 buyers (40 percent) are first-time buyers, according to the NAR study

In 2009, the now-expired federal tax credit for first-time homebuyers helped many overcome their apprehensions about buying a home. The NAR study suggests first-time homebuyers have not shaken their hesitation about entering the real estate market. Consequently, they are missing out on a market where home prices remain low and interest rates on 30-year, fixed rate mortgages have dropped to their lowest levels since the early 1950s.

Despite such opportunities, buying a home remains a daunting prospect to many. It doesn't have to be, though. A real estate law attorney could assist first-time homebuyers with the following:

Proposing and negotiating purchase agreement terms that homebuyers often don't think about, but that can provide them with significant savings;

Advising homebuyers of the pros and cons of a seller's proposed terms;

Drafting terms specific to the homebuyers' needs and wishes and including them in a formal offer;

Ensuring any concerns raised in a seller's property condition disclosure statement are addressed within the terms of a purchase agreement;

Promptly vetting a purchase agreement signed by both parties to ensure the document contains no costly surprises, allowing buyers to make an informed decision to accept or reject the contract within the attorney approval period;

Conducting a title search to ensure there are no liens, judgments, bankruptcies, or unpaid taxes against the property; and

Reviewing the mortgage documents, bank note and other closing documents.

Buying a home is a complex process for first-time and repeat buyers alike. Anyone interested in buying a home should contact an experienced real estate

attorney. Tully Rinckey PLLC's real estate

lawyers can assist homebuyers throughout the Capital Region, including Albany, Troy, Schenectady and Saratoga Springs.

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