NW REporter

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LATEST PRESS RELEASE

August real estate activity described as both “robust” and “stagnant”

KIRKLAND, Washington (Sept. 6, 2017) – As smoke and ash blanketed parts of Washington state, one real estate broker noted, “Even in a fire there are some cooler spots, and seasonally, the housing market is in a cooler spot.”

The latest numbers from Northwest Multiple Listing Service show there are both cooler spots and hot spots, with the demand for housing and prices showing few signs of being extinguished.

“For August, we experienced a more robust market than anticipated,” remarked Diedre Hanes, principal managing broker-South Snohomish County at Coldwell Banker Bain in Lynnwood. “Compared to years past, we’ve seen very limited slowdown,” she added.

Pending sales area-wide during August totaled 11,867 transactions, barely exceeding the number of new listings (11,781) added during the month. At month end, there were 15,987 total active listings in the MLS database, a shrinkage of 12.8 percent from a year ago.

Sparse inventory is a likely factor in the flat pending sales, with year-over-year pending sales for all areas down .09 percent (11,867 versus 11,878). Of the 23 counties in the Northwest MLS report, 15 had fewer mutually accepted offers last month compared to twelve months ago. Last month’s total was up slightly from July’s figure of 11,800.

Credit the flurry of back-to-school activities and end-of summer vacations for sidetracking some sellers and buyers. “Typically, the last two weeks or so of August cool a bit and the market picks up again full steam once school resumes,” said Northwest MLS director Frank Wilson.

Wilson, the branch managing broker at John L. Scott in Poulsbo, described activity as a “fast-paced seller’s market,” but said the “stagnant pool” is beginning to grow as sellers realize they can’t overprice their homes, “even in this market.” With football season getting underway he expects open house schedules to adjust around Seahawks game times, with Saturdays becoming the preferred showing day.

Gary O’Leyar, designated broker/owner of Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Signature Properties, also commented on seasonal patterns. “This past summer market seems to have followed previous years’ seasonal conditions. While inventory remained low, there was some change of pace from the winter-spring market,” he stated.

O’Leyar said savvy buyers took advantage of slightly longer market times, affording them the opportunity for reasonable contingencies. “Although we saw multiple offers, they were down somewhat, and several offer review dates came and went with no offers by those deadlines.”

Changing seasons will likely mean a drop-off in listing activity, agreed J. Lennox Scott, who was upbeat on summer sales. “It’s been our best summer ever for sales activity with June, July and August clocking in a record number of transactions,” said Scott, the chairman and CEO of John L. Scott. He credits strong job growth and attractive interest rates (“the lowest they’ve been since last November”) with propelling sales.

“It’s still a frenzy market in the more affordable and mid-price ranges,” he said, while also noting the luxury segment continues to outpace last year’s market “in a huge way.”

System-wide, 3,727 single family homes have sold for more than a million dollars during the first eight months of the year, surpassing last year’s total of 2,456 such sales during the same time frame – a jump of nearly 52 percent.

With further drops in inventory likely during the fourth quarter, Scott and others expect sales will continue at a quick clip.

“As we head into fall, September and October will see new listing inventory drop by about 20 percent from the summer months, so the next two months will be the best opportunity for selection and availability for buyers to purchase a home,” Scott suggests. “Starting in November, the number of new listings will drop by another 30 percent over the winter,” he added.

“We continue to see low inventory drive the story in the Puget Sound region,” observed Mike Grady, president and COO of Coldwell Banker Bain. Thirteen of the 23 counties in the MLS report had double-digit declines in inventory compared to a year ago.

Area-wide, including single family homes and condominiums, the 1.55 months of supply for August slipped from both July (at 1.62 months), and from the year-ago number of around 1.9 months. King County continued to have the tightest inventory, at 0.93 months.

Commenting on rising prices -- up 8.3 percent across the MLS service area – Grady said, “Of course, that old law of supply and demand has its natural effect.” The trend is consistent throughout the MLS service area, he noted, adding, “With King County prices escalating at such a fast rate (up 17 percent), the ripple effect will continue to push prices throughout the area, first in neighboring counties, then throughout the region.”

“Kitsap continues to see its share of multiple offers,” Wilson reported, adding, “The effects of this seller’s market can be seen in the 13 percent price increase from a year ago. Also, with more attention coming to Kitsap due to the new fast ferry system there is no reason for prices to temper any time soon.” He believes challenges for “pent up sellers” will persist “as they have no place to move once they sell their home.”

“Nobody likes this market, -- not sellers, not buyers, not real estate brokers,” proclaimed Northwest MLS director Dick Beeson. The reasons vary, he explained. “Sellers aren’t necessarily happy because they think they could be leaving money on the table. Buyers think they’re paying too much. And brokers think sales are more complex and fraught with peril than previously, making them harder to close.”

Beeson, the principal managing broker at RE/MAX Professionals in Gig Harbor, believes Seattle and surrounding areas are “forever changed” by this market. “The change isn’t going to be painless. Housing scarcity and increasing prices are sore spots.” Whether price increases will subside is anyone’s guess, he added.

Prices aren’t the only worry, suggested Haines. She said low appraisals occur on about one of every three sales. “The low appraisal number remains consistent at $25,000-to-$30,000 below sales price when it occurs. It makes one wonder why – coincidence or something else?” she stated.

Haines noted multiple offers are continuing, but added a note of caution to sellers: “Overpriced listings are not getting showings or offers. Buyers are well educated and well informed, which definitely eases fears of a developing bubble.”

Condos offered little relief for anxious buyers. Inventory dropped nearly 25 percent from twelve months ago, but pending sales somehow managed to outgain year-ago totals (up nearly 2.9 percent). At the end of August, there was less than a month’s supply of condos for sale across all areas served by Northwest MLS. King County’s supply was slightly better than two weeks. Prices rose 6.7 percent overall, and were up 11.3 percent in King County, 12.6 percent in Snohomish County and 14.5 percent in Pierce County. This tri-county area accounted for nearly nine of every 10 sales.

Northwest Multiple Listing Service, owned by its member real estate firms, is the largest full-service MLS in the Northwest. Its membership of more than 2,200 member offices includes more than 26,000 real estate professionals. The organization, based in Kirkland, Wash., currently serves 23 counties in the state.

Statistical tables follow on next page.

Statistical Summary by Counties: Market Activity Summary – **August 2017**

Single Fam. Homes + Condos	LISTINGS		PENDING SALES	CLOSED SALES			*Months of Inventory	
	New Listings	Total Active	# Pending Sales	# Closings	Avg. Price	Median Price	This month	Same mo., year ago
King	3,933	3,329	4,003	3,571	$700,066	$585,000	0.93	1.15
Snohomish	1,886	1,830	1,885	1,648	$460,490	$430,000	1.11	1.33
Pierce	1,959	2,555	2,123	1,763	$341,579	$306,000	1.45	1.90
Kitsap	565	788	626	552	$422,208	$330,000	1.43	1.95
Mason	176	395	196	168	$247,153	$205,500	2.35	3.55
Skagit	308	539	254	238	$344,114	$308,500	2.26	2.22
Grays Harbor	187	515	197	141	$193,702	$171,750	3.65	5.35
Lewis	147	390	142	129	$232,982	$220,000	3.02	4.12
Cowlitz	212	327	190	150	$238,392	$215,000	2.18	2.20
Grant	126	382	112	108	$212,874	$192,323	3.54	4.53
Thurston	646	885	649	609	$313,403	$285,000	1.45	2.27
San Juan	62	287	54	34	$712,766	$533,850	8.44	9.38
Island	243	480	236	200	$403,671	$342,500	2.40	2.71
Kittitas	129	294	96	107	$338,204	$260,000	2.75	3.09
Jefferson	89	277	93	56	$395,957	$359,250	4.95	4.67
Okanogan	73	357	59	55	$247,387	$205,000	6.49	9.63
Whatcom	524	968	474	409	$373,244	$344,000	2.37	2.45
Clark	68	109	62	48	$348,838	$323,500	2.27	2.18
Pacific	84	261	76	61	$174,201	$158,000	4.28	7.20
Ferry	15	57	16	8	$141,500	$110,000	7.13	10.50
Clallam	131	359	118	113	$298,384	$263,000	3.18	3.40
Chelan	116	265	105	73	$414,627	$334,000	3.63	3.81
Douglas	36	89	40	46	$311,958	$290,000	1.93	2.45
Others	66	249	61	60	$206,404	$198,500	4.15	3.60
Total	**11,781**	**15,987**	**11,867**	**10,347**	**$480,652**	**$379,000**	**1.55**	**1.88**

(Tables continue on next page)

4-county Puget Sound Region Pending Sales (SFH + Condo combined)

(totals include King, Snohomish, Pierce & Kitsap counties)

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2000	3706	4778	5903	5116	5490	5079	4928	5432	4569	4675	4126	3166
2001	4334	5056	5722	5399	5631	5568	5434	5544	4040	4387	4155	3430
2002	4293	4735	5569	5436	6131	5212	5525	6215	5394	5777	4966	4153
2003	4746	5290	6889	6837	7148	7202	7673	7135	6698	6552	4904	4454
2004	4521	6284	8073	7910	7888	8186	7583	7464	6984	6761	6228	5195
2005	5426	6833	8801	8420	8610	8896	8207	8784	7561	7157	6188	4837
2006	5275	6032	8174	7651	8411	8094	7121	7692	6216	6403	5292	4346
2007	4869	6239	7192	6974	7311	6876	6371	5580	4153	4447	3896	2975
2008	3291	4167	4520	4624	4526	4765	4580	4584	4445	3346	2841	2432
2009	3250	3407	4262	5372	5498	5963	5551	5764	5825	5702	3829	3440
2010	4381	5211	6821	7368	4058	4239	4306	4520	4350	4376	3938	3474
2011	4272	4767	6049	5732	5963	5868	5657	5944	5299	5384	4814	4197
2012	4921	6069	7386	7015	7295	6733	6489	6341	5871	6453	5188	4181
2013	5548	6095	7400	7462	7743	7374	7264	6916	5951	6222	5083	3957
2014	5406	5587	7099	7325	8055	7546	7169	6959	6661	6469	5220	4410
2015	5791	6541	8648	8671	8620	8608	8248	7792	7179	6977	5703	4475
2016	5420	6703	8130	8332	9153	8869	8545	8628	7729	7487	6115	4727
2017	5710	6024	7592	7621	9188	9042	8514	8637				

REALTORS® observe “Safety Month” with proactive resources

“Every year real estate agents across the country are threatened, robbed, and physically or sexually assaulted while fulfilling the everyday requirements of their jobs. Some even lose their lives.”

So reads the introduction to a National Association of REALTORS® presentation on Safety Month, being observed during September. The goal is to help members understand the risks they face through knowledge, awareness, and empowerment. “Such understanding can mean the difference between life and death,” NAR explains.

To underscore the importance of safety, the association cites statistics showing since 2003 an average of 74 real estate professionals have been murdered on the job annually.

NAR research indicates the typical member meets half (50 percent) their prospective buyers and sellers that they do not know in a real estate office or a neutral location before first viewing a home, a strategy safety experts recommend.

Resources from the trade association cover safety at the office, safety with clients, and safety at home.

“Some of the tips might seem inconvenient, impractical or time-consuming,” the author of one Realtor report writes, adding, “Incorporating these tips into your daily routine and making them part of the way you do business can make you safer.”

To supplement the resources on NAR's website, Northwest Multiple Listing Service also maintains a "Safety and Alerts" section on its site, which contains member reports and warnings of fraudulent buyers, real estate scams, and suspicious activities.

NAR materials include a 3-hour safety course for use by local associations, along with a pair of free safety webinars. The "Real Estate Self Defense" course at Seattle King County REALTORS will be held at its Bellevue classroom on Wednesday, Sept. 20 from 9:30 am – 12:30 pm. Members and non-members may register.

NAR's free webinars will be held on Sept. 20 and Sept. 27:

Pre-registration is required.

As part of an annual safety program, NAR conducted a survey of its members. Among the findings, NAR reported only 20 percent of respondents had participated in a Realtor safety course, and among those who had, 71 percent said they feel more prepared for unknown situations after taking the course.

Slightly more than half the members (52 percent of men and 57 percent of women) carry some type of self-defense weapon, ranging from a battery-operated noise maker to pepper spray and firearms, according to the survey. Only 44 percent of members use a smart phone safety app to track whereabouts and alert colleagues in case of an emergency.

Troubled golf courses being repurposed for housing – and much more

Sometimes, "the dirt is worth more than the grass," explained Joe Beditz, the president and CEO of the National Golf Foundation when asked about golf course closures.

Considering the strength of both the residential and commercial real estate markets, Beditz said facility owners are sometimes using this strength as their exit strategy.

For many of the 171 golf courses that closed in the U.S. during 2016, the "higher and best use" was housing. Last year wasn't the first time developers re-purposed a course.

In early 2014, for example, Ridgewood Real Estate Partners of New Jersey purchased the Marriott Grande Pines Golf Club in Orlando, Florida. They subsequently rezoned and entitled most of it for 423 single family lots, 770 multifamily units and seven acres of commercial land. Sixteen acres were sold to another developer who built a 282-unit, luxury gated apartment complex.

"I love golf and I'm bullish about the sport," says Jeff Woolson, who has been involved in the sale of more than $1.6 billion worth of properties as the managing director of CBRE Golf & Resort Properties Group. "But, with the exception of maybe Sand Hills and Augusta National, there's probably not a golf course in the country that wouldn't have a higher and better use as something else, economically." Not all courses that meet their demise are converted to housing. Other transformations include:

- The former Highlands Golf Club in Grand Rapids, Michigan was sold to a developer who intended to use the 121-acre property for a housing development. They reconsidered and sold it to the Blandford Nature Center, a nonprofit organization that will use it for habitat restoration, environmental education and recreation. "It also offers a rare opportunity to create significant green space and focused tree canopy in the city," said the city's mayor.
- Tallgrass Golf Club, a onetime public course on New York's Long Island, is being converted from a public course to a 127-acre solar array known as Shoreham Solar Commons. It is projected to produce the same amount of energy as the state's largest array, approximately 50,000 megawatt hours on an annual basis. According to the Solar Energy Industry Association, one megawatt of solar can power roughly 175 homes in New York.
- Wynn Resorts is redeveloping land once occupied by the Wynn Golf Club, transforming the 130-acre property into Paradise Park, a destination on the Las Vegas Strip that will encompass a 20-acre lagoon surrounded by meeting and ballroom space, plus a 4,000 foot boardwalk, cabanas, attractions and food service.

Officials with the National Golf Foundation said last year's closures represent only a 1.2 percent contraction in a market that still has more than 15,000 facilities. "This gradual reduction is actually indicative of the market's healthy self-balancing of supply and demand" – a trend the NGF expects to continue for several more years.

"Encouragingly, the contraction in supply has shown no direct impact on frequency of play, as rounds-played in the U.S. have increased each of the past two years," the NGF report noted.

Tacoma's first micro-housing building slated to open in mid-2018

Tacoma's first micro-housing project got underway last month when Koz Development broke ground on a mixed use project that will encompass 104 studio apartments, retail space and 60 bicycle parking spaces.

Located at 17th and Market, adjacent to the University of Washington's Tacoma campus and close to a light rail station, the building is slated to open about this time next year. It has an 80 Walk Score.

The 275-to 300 square foot units are expected to rent for $750 to $800 per month, including furnishings and utilities. In King County the average rent for a studio apartment in a new building is around $1,490, according to Diupre & Scott Apartment Advisors.

Large windows and extra storage in the kitchen are among features that make the homes seem larger. Convertible furniture includes a coffee table that can be changed into a desk or a dining room table.

Koz Development took advantage of local incentives, including a 12-year multifamily property tax exemption for this $12.2 million project. Based in Snohomish, the company designs, develops, and constructs micro-housing in urban infill locations as well as student housing for universities around the country. Company officials say their projects require only limited land and are built as environmentally-friendly structures. It currently has an estimated 1,000 units in the pipeline.

Stackable, smart homes offer accessibility affordability “for everyone”

Students, teachers, low-income families and the homeless are among initial targets for a Seattle-based company that manufactures affordable, stackable smart homes.

“Our mission is to make housing accessible and affordable for everyone,” says Aaron Holm, a former project manager at Amazon who founded Blokable in 2016. He says he was inspired in part by his long-time fascination with shipping containers.

The units, known as “Bloks” are made of steel at a factory in Vancouver, Wash., and come in lengths from 18 feet to 38 feet. The LEED-ready units may be delivered to job sites as move-in ready building blocks and can be stacked to four stories high.

All units are smart-home enabled with a “BlokSense” control platform so homeowners can easily manage electric, water, temperature, lighting, and security systems through an online dashboard.

Blokable’s configurable, connectable modules allow for the creation of single- or multi-story studios, apartments, common spaces and support buildings.

Customers may add basic and premium bathrooms and kitchens, along with stairs, railings, window units or other modular additions. Various upgrades are available. The price per square foot is expected to range from $150 to $300, with finished units projected to cost between $25,000 and $100,000, depending on size.

The Blokable team calls the current built environment an “artificial construct.” They believe their company with its “fully integrated design, engineering, and manufacturing yield better quality and will help municipalities and housing nonprofits meet the housing challenges facing cities. Another advantage they cite is the inclusion of modern technology in each Blok.

“For developers, our system give them a competitive advantage, reducing project time which saves huge amounts of money, and giving them a model they can scale,” Holm states on the company’s website.

The year-old company plans an initial output of 25 units per month, and expects to be able to multiply that output as demand rises. Its first few projects are focused on emergency housing for the homeless.

Millennials stymied in search for homes as boomers resist selling

Public policy, inter-generational tension, a building slowdown, zoning rules, and even "delicate questions of race and class" are contributing to the squeeze millennials are experiencing in their quest for homeownership.

Real estate writer Prashant Gopal, with Bloomberg News, cited those factors in a report on baby boomers' refusal to sell.

In his report, Gopal followed a 23-year old painter-carpenter in North Philadelphia who armed himself with "Dear Homeowner" letters as he bicycled around various neighborhoods explaining his futile, year-long search to buy a home. "The young house-hunter, a college graduate who lives with his parents, has tried sheriff's sales, lost two bidding wars, ridden miles on pot-holed streets, and left notes in mailboxes, all to no avail," wrote Gopal.

Gopal notes the rate of homeownership among the 18-to-34-year-old cohort is half what baby boomers owned when they were that age. People 55 and older own 53 percent of U.S. owner-occupied houses, which compares to 43 percent a decade ago, according to data from Trulia. It's the biggest share since the government started collecting data in 1900.

With longer-living baby boomers staying put and homebuilders not keeping pace with demand, the younger generation's dreams of homeownership are unfulfilled. "To succeed, buyers and real estate brokers must show uncommon persistence and, at times, diplomacy," the reporter suggested.

Homeownership rises from 50-year low

An additional 1.2 million households became homeowners in the past year, boosting the U.S. rate from a 50-year low. For the second quarter the rate was 63.7 percent, a full percentage point gain from a year ago, according to a new report from the U.S. Census Bureau.

Lawrence Yun, chief economist for the National Association of REALTORS®, hailed the reversal of the sharp downward trend that dates to the beginning of the Great Recession as "clearly good news," but tempered it by noting the surge in renter households.

"Let's keep it in perspective," Yun stated, noting renter households have risen by 8 million compared to a decade ago. "So it is still the case that the massive $7 trillion in housing wealth gains from the cyclical low point has been accumulated by a fewer number of families in America. Further advances in homeownership are required to strengthen and broaden the middle class," he said in an interview with *The Wall Street Journal.*

Seattle's construction activity shatters records

Seventy-four projects were under construction in Seattle at mid-year, with residential buildings accounting for two-thirds of them, according to a new report from the Downtown Seattle Association. Of the 8,880 residential units being built, only 489 are condominium units.

Together, the homes, hotels and office buildings that are in various stages of construction are valued at a record-setting $5 billion. That represents a 40 percent increase over 2016.

The report covers Seattle and surrounding neighborhoods from South Lake Union to the north to South Lander Street, and from Elliott Bay to Broadway.

Included in the activity are 5 million square feet of office space, much of it fueled by Amazon, and 2,875 hotel rooms, a new record. That total includes 1,264 rooms at the Hyatt Regency in the Denny Triangle.

Of the 74 projects, 37 are expected to be finished this year. In its report, DSA noted the $5 billion of activity is triple the 2011 low point. Also noteworthy for current and future residents looking to buy is a new option once a recently announced tower in the Chinatown/International District gets underway.

Home sales across U.S. declined during July, but volumes still ahead of 2016

Sales of new homes across the U.S. for the first seven months of 2017 were up 9.2 percent compared to the same period in 2016, but reports for July show three of the four regions experienced declines. The overall seasonally adjusted monthly drop was 9.4 percent.

Despite the faltering sales reported for July, year-to-date closings are 9.2 percent ahead of the pace reported for 2016. Each region recorded year-over-year gains, led by the Northeast at 16.1 percent, and the West, up 14.6 percent.

The year-over-year monthly drops occurred in regions of the country that are furthest ahead over the first seven months of 2017, noted the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB). Theiy include the Northeast (down 23.8 percent),the West (down 21.3 percent) and the South (down 4.1 percent). Only the Midwest reported a gain in sales (up 6.2 percent), according to the latest figures from the U.S. Census Bureaiu and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

For the past 12 months, only the West registered a gain (up 1.4 percent), while the other three regions had double-digit drops.

The latest report shows overall inventory rose to 5.8 months, still below the 6.0 benchmark used as an indicator of a healthy level.

The median sales price rose just 0.67 percent over the month to $313,700. Sales of new homes priced under $300,000 fell 1 percent to 47 percent, with the remaining 53 percent priced at $300,000, marking a 1 percent increase.

Slowdown reported for single family homes built as rentals

Census Bureau data suggest the number of single-family homes built-for-rent appears to be slowing. A comparison of the last four quarters shows production of this type of housing totaled 28,000 homes. That's down from 35,000 when compared to the prior four quarters.

Analysis of the data by the National Association of Homebuilders indicates the market share of single family homes built-for-rent, as measured on a one-year moving average, stood at 3.5 percent of total starts for the second quarter of 2017. This class of single-family construction includes homes built and held for rental purposes, but excludes homes that are sold to another party for rental purposes.

"Given the small size of the market segment, the quarter-to-quarter movements are not typically statistically significant, "the NAHB said in its "Eye on Housing" report. The segment is down from the 5.8 percent reported at the start of 2013.

The built-for-rent share of single family homes is considerably smaller than the single-family portion of the rental housing stock, which is 35 percent, according to the 2015 American Community Survey. As homes age, they are more likely to be rented so the primary source of single family rental homes is the existing housing stock, rather than new construction, the ACS explained. The Survey showed that 56 percent of the gains in the rental housing stock from 2005 to 2015 were due to single-family homes.

Seattle has the most cars per capita

Seattle's construction boom is well known, but perhaps surprising to some is that cars are being added at the same rate as people.

Both the population and the number of new cars owned by city residents grew by 12 percent from 2010 to 2015, according to Census Bureau data. That surge in newcomers earned Seattle a spot on the list of the 10 most densely populated big cities in the U.S.

Gene Balk, "FYI Guy" at *The Seattle Times*, reported for every 1,000 residents there are 637 cars, "easily the most cars per capita."

"Our car 'population' hit 435,000, all crammed into the city's 84 square miles of land area," Balk stated, acing, "That pencils out, in case you're wondering, to 5,185 cars per square mile. If you ranked major U.S. cities by density of cars instead of people, Seattle would place fifth."

By comparison, San Francisco has 160,000 more people than Seattle, but about 50,000 fewer vehicles.

Seattle City Council prohibits use of criminal records to screen tenants

In a unanimous 8-0 vote last month, the Seattle City Council barred landlords from using criminal records to screen tenants. (Council member Kshama Sawant was absent.)

The new ordinance will protect the estimated 30 percent of Seattle residents over the age of 18 who have an arrest or conviction and seven percent with felony records. It was proposed by Mayor Ed Murray in June as part of his action plan and the 2015 Housing Affordability and Livability Agenda (HALA) recommendations.

Property owners cannot exclude people with arrest or conviction records, nor may they ask about criminal history. "Adverse action" based on an applicant's record is also prohibited under the new law, and it protects tenants from retaliation.

Employment, credit scores, income ratios, or other criteria may still be used for screening with some exceptions. Landlords may use the online sex offender registry if they give a "legitimate business reason" for doing so. Single family dwelling units in which the owner lives in part of the unit are exempt from the ordinance.

Councilmember Lisa Herbold said the new restriction is part of the solution to address the homelessness crisis. She said no studies have shown a link between criminal history and tenant violations.

The newly-passed addition to the Seattle Municipal Code comes four years after implementation of the Fair Chance Employment legislation that bans use of criminal backgrounds to screen job applicants.

Parts of the ordinance become law 150 days after the mayor signs it. The city estimates it will cost $99,000 to implement it.

News in Brief

- **Complaints about contractors is number two on the annual list of Top 10 Consumer Complaints complied by the Consumer Federation of America (CFA).** As solar energy becomes more popular, complaints about misleading sales tactics and confusing contract terms and shoddy installation are growing. That's why it's so important to take the time to check out a contractor – any contractor – before you hire them. Contact the Better Business Bureau, talk to previous customers, and check to make sure the company is properly registered. Never hire someone who just shows up at your door. That’s not how good contractors find work.

- **According to the *Seattle Times*, the city of Seattle has added cars at the same rate as people.** Census data show that from 2010 to 2015, Seattle’s population grew by an impressive 12 percent. The number of personal vehicles owned by Seattle residents during the same time period also grew by 12 percent. With that increase, our car population hit 435,000, all into the city’s 84 square miles of land. That’s 5,185 cars per square mile. If you ranked major U.S. cities by density of cars instead of people, Seattle would place fifth. For every 1,000 city residents, there are 637 cars here.

- **Out of the 3,487 ranked private schools in America, Lakeside School in Seattle nabbed the number six spot in the top ten best private high schools in America, according to Niche.com.** Niche analyzed factors like SAT/ACT scores, college enrollment, culture and diversity, and counted in the opinion of millions of student and parent reviews. As for their list of best private schools strictly in Washington, these are the 5 that made the list: Lakeside School, The Overlake School, The Bush School, Seattle Academy, and Annie Wright Schools.

- **Seattle’s Team Diva Real Estate, one of the Puget Sound region’s most successful and well-known residential real estate teams, was named runner up for most Innovative Team in Inman’s 2017 Innovator Awards** – the only team located in and serving the Seattle area to be so recognized. Inman annually recognizes “the boldest tech companies and professionals in the real estate industry,” and dozens of finalists across seven categories from around the United States were parsed and examined to select what Inman believes are the most innovative companies in real estate today. Team members include Kim Colaprete, Chavi Hohm, Rocky Flowers, Roy Powell and Michael Jouver. Through the award, Inman recognized Team Diva for engaging clients through an active online presence and an array of high-energy events, such as collaborations with the artistic and LGBT communities, post-card writing parties encouraging political activism, and more traditional client appreciation and charitable fundraising occasions.

- **Amazon's extraordinary growth has turned Seattle into the biggest company town in America, according to a report by the Seattle Times.** Amazon now occupies a mind-boggling 19 percent of all prime office space in the city, the most for any employer in a major U.S. city. Amazon's footprint in Seattle is more than twice as large as any other company in any other big U.S. city. Amazon now occupies more office space than the next 40 biggest employers in the city combined. Its footprint of 8.1 million square feet is expected to grow to more than 12 million square feet within five years.

- **The central Puget Sound Region (King, Kitsap, Pierce and Snohomish counties) witnessed another extraordinary year of growth, increasing by 82,000 people or 2.1% to reach a total population of 4,067,000 as of April 1, 2017.** This was the second year in a row that the region experienced population growth exceeding 80,000 in a single year. King County was the region's fastest growing county over the last year, increasing by 48,600 persons at a rate of 2.3%. Snohomish County was second fastest, adding 16,500 persons or 2.1% Pierce County increased by 14,900 persons at a rate of 1.8%. Kitsap County grew by 1,700 persons or 0.7%.

Calendar of Events Through October 3, 2017

Dates	Event	Time	Location	Contact
SEATTLE—*King County* REALTORS®				
9/13/17	Board of Directors	9:30 am – 12:30 pm	SKCR	425-974-1011
9/14/17	Affiliate Forum	8:30 am – 12:00 pm	SKCR	425-974-1011
9/19/17	Affiliate Council	1:30pm – 2:30 pm	SKCR	425-974-1011
9/20-22/17	WR Fall Conference		Pasco Red Lion	425-974-1011
10/3/17	Gov't Affairs Committee	10:30 am – 1:30 pm	SKCR	425-974-1011
For updates visit: www.nwrealtor.com and click "events"				