

LATEST NEWS RELEASE

Brokers report some good news for home buyers, but still expect Puget Sound's "frantic market" to continue

KIRKLAND, Washington (May 7, 2018) – Home buyers may be cheered by an uptick in inventory, but the improving supply is unlikely to reverse rising prices, suggest industry leaders from Northwest Multiple Listing Service.

Commenting on just-released figures for April, which showed the highest level of active listings since August, OB Jacobi, president of Windermere Real Estate said, "For the first time in a long time we had good news for buyers." Noting supply is still lower than year-ago levels (down 5.6 percent), it jumped 14 percent from March, which Jacobi said "is a pretty significant increase even for this time of year."

Northwest MLS brokers added 11,271 new listings to inventory during April, a gain of 6.3 percent when compared to March, and up nearly 5.9 percent versus a year ago. April's pending sales (mutually accepted offers) totaled 10,574, improving on the same month a year ago and the previous month.

At month end, the active listings selection included 10,079 single family homes and condos, eclipsing the total of 8,825 listings at the end of March. The condo segment grew 10.9 percent from March.

Of the 23 counties in the Northwest MLS service area, only six of them reported year-over-year gains in inventory compared to a year ago. King County was the only one in the Puget Sound region to notch a gain, up 13.6 percent from a year ago.

Commenting on the uptick, Mike Grady, president and COO, Coldwell Banker Bain, remarked "We are still WAY below a balanced market of five months of inventory, and this is even with interest rates ticking slightly upward."

Area-wide there is 1.3 months of supply, with 4-to-6 months used as a gauge of a balanced market. Three counties – King, Kitsap, and Snohomish -- reported less than a month of supply. The condo component remains very tight with slightly more than three weeks (0.87 months) of supply.

Prices are still climbing at double-digit rates in most counties. Year-over-year prices for single family homes and condos combined jumped about 15.3 percent overall, from \$360,000 to \$415,000. Within the four-county Puget Sound region, King County notched the biggest gain at nearly 18.2 percent. Prices there rose \$100,000 from a year ago, from \$550,000 to \$650,000.

"There's little reason to think we'll be seeing a change in this frantic market anytime soon," commented Grady, citing double-digit appreciation in many of the most populous counties, expansion plans by Alaska Airlines and Amazon, and other positive economic news as reasons for that expectation.

“Huge jumps in home prices to the north of us are pushing a lot of people to our county, which is among the most affordable on the Puget Sound,” commented Thurston County broker Ken Anderson.

MLS figures show a median price of \$300,000 for homes and condos that sold in Thurston County last month, slightly less than Pierce County (\$337,950), and significantly lower than both Snohomish County (\$475,000) and King County (\$650,000).

Despite the cost differential favoring Thurston County, Anderson, the president and owner of Coldwell Banker Evergreen Olympic Realty in Tumwater, said sellers are seeing price gains “they didn’t think possible just a couple of years ago.” Prices in that county are up more than 7.5 percent from twelve months ago. He also reported new construction is not keeping up with the population growth. “That alone will ensure prices will continue to rise in the near to intermediate term,” he commented, adding, “Buyers are seeing the trends and jumping into the market before prices and interest rates climb even higher.”

George Moorhead, designated broker at Bentley Properties, said while prices are still increasing, both inventory and the number of expired listings are also rising. He noted the steady climb in King County’s inventory of single family homes, with April rising more than 25 percent from March. Expired listings surged 86 percent from March, which Moorhead said is another example of some flattening in the market.

Moorhead also believes rising interest rates are having a “moderate impact” with buyers, forcing some to look at homes in lower price points. Buyers still want a good home in a good area, he reported, but some are reconsidering just how much they want to pay, saying they don’t want to be “house payment poor.”

Northwest MLS director Frank Wilson is also detecting some shifts in behavior by both buyers and sellers as the market changes. “As King County buyers spill into Kitsap, they realize they have to be more strategic in their offers, and sellers are paying more attention to the details of an offer, and not always taking the first offer presented,” stated Wilson, the Kitsap regional manager and branch managing broker at John L. Scott Real Estate in Poulsbo.

Wilson said multiple offers (often higher than the list price) are becoming more common on new listings in Kitsap County. When that occurs, he said buyers are being asked to make up the difference should the appraisal not match the increased offer price.

Meanwhile, sellers are beginning to realize the amount offered over list price may not be bankable unless buyers are willing to make up the difference. Consequently, Wilson said they are being more discretionary with the offers they consider. Local, proactive lenders, increased earnest money, preferring verifiable cash offers or conventional over VA or FHA, higher down payments, shorter closing times, and setting some future date when they will review all offers are examples he cited.

Wilson noted Kitsap was one of a half-dozen counties in the MLS report where last month’s pending sales surpassed the number of new listings. “This means the listing deficit is deepening,” he remarked.

J. Lennox Scott, chairman and CEO of John L. Scott, joined the chorus of brokers who believe better times are ahead for home buyers. “Eventually, higher interest rates will moderate the rapid home price

appreciation,” he stated, but added, “We have not yet arrived at that tipping point.” He expects the Seattle metro area to probably tie and maybe break the 20-month home price appreciation record for the Case-Shiller index. (The latest S&P CoreLogic Case-Shiller Home Price Indices, released late last month for February, shows Seattle’s 12.7 percent increase led the list of 20 cities it compares.)

Commenting on April’s report showing more new listings than pending sales area-wide, Scott said that pattern is consistent with the annual housing cycle. “New listings will continue to spike, providing slight relief for the backlog of home buyers.”

Scott also expects the market for homes in the more affordable and mid-price ranges to remain at a frenzied pace into the summer of 2019. “For luxury listings in the \$1-to-\$2 million range and close to job centers, the market remains extremely competitive,” he predicts.

The competitive market is exposing several misconceptions held by buyers and sellers, according to Wilson, who has worked in the industry since 1990. He listed several including:

- “It’s all about the price.” Wilson says it’s more about the possibility of a successful closing, using the example of an all-cash offer that is 30 percent above list price that doesn’t close, versus a solid, verifiable conventional offer at 5 percent above list price that actually closes;
- “Seller has to take the highest offer” is another myth Wilson listed, explaining a seller can accept any of the offers that are presented.
- Similarly, “if multiple offers are made, the seller has to take or work with the first one first,” is also untrue. A seller can address any of the offers in any order.
- “Cash is always king.” Wilson emphasized if the cash is not verifiable to the seller’s satisfaction, a conventional offer may actually have a better chance of success.
- “Pre-approval with a lender is the same as pre-underwritten,” is another misbelief. The farther down the path a loan application can go, the more likely it is to be approved.

Buying or selling a home can involve nearly two dozen people, Wilson noted, while encouraging buyers and sellers to work with a broker who is well-versed in the process and able to coordinate all the participants to assure a successful closing.

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 28,000 real estate professionals. The organization, based in Kirkland, Wash., currently serves 23 counties in the state.

Statistical tables follow

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	3,977	2,281	3,464	2,764	\$768,410	\$650,000	0.94	0.87
Snohomish	1,716	1,004	1,603	1,185	\$512,467	\$475,000	0.84	0.90
Pierce	1,875	1,604	1,977	1,343	\$375,600	\$337,950	1.10	1.24
Kitsap	486	588	521	385	\$403,076	\$335,000	0.95	1.73
Mason	167	292	181	104	\$245,942	\$219,250	1.87	2.65
Skagit	265	327	251	154	\$362,610	\$318,000	2.16	1.79
Grays Harbor	164	396	165	118	\$199,552	\$182,200	3.06	4.40
Lewis	124	240	143	100	\$220,466	\$224,250	2.11	2.50
Cowlitz	174	183	150	113	\$234,503	\$220,000	1.72	2.15
Grant	161	323	132	94	\$226,966	\$200,939	2.83	4.61
Thurston	581	606	613	414	\$325,333	\$300,000	1.20	1.47
San Juan	60	221	30	22	\$538,506	\$477,650	9.09	10.52
Island	224	337	211	147	\$409,326	\$355,000	2.03	2.09
Kittitas	107	177	95	56	\$393,763	\$290,500	2.75	3.28
Jefferson	89	204	86	50	\$396,823	\$409,500	2.98	4.43
Okanogan	88	255	71	23	\$199,159	\$170,000	10.04	10.20
Whatcom	415	607	377	285	\$391,037	\$350,000	1.90	2.23
Clark	90	57	90	57	\$425,956	\$375,000	1.86	1.50
Pacific	78	204	59	47	\$195,199	\$188,500	4.32	5.37
Ferry	14	48	4	4	\$153,475	\$149,950	11.25	12.00
Clallam	138	254	131	94	\$306,775	\$281,950	2.20	3.43
Chelan	144	205	116	78	\$356,938	\$310,950	2.94	3.80
Douglas	68	70	65	49	\$338,914	\$334,900	1.86	1.89
Others	66	194	39	40	\$191,914	\$166,250	3.75	9.24
Total	11,271	10,677	10,574	7,726	\$523,592	\$415,000	1.30	1.47

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	7441	7740	6094	4460
2018	5484	5725	7373	7565								

Changing demographics, policies create new challenges for cost burdened renters

Affordability is a major concern for renters and that problem is likely to persist according to researchers who authored “America’s Rental Housing” report for the Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University. A “good news/bad news” finding from the report is that rental stock is growing – but only for units renting at \$850 or higher.

The JCHS report, prepared biannually, examines changing demographics and policy issues that are driving the rental component of the country’s housing supply.

Researchers found a growing number of the country’s 43 million residents who rent are cost-burdened, meaning they spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing costs. Those in rural areas are

especially hard hit, with an estimated 40 percent considered burdened. (In nine of the nation's largest metro areas, about half the renters are considered to be cost burdened.)

The segment that rents is growing at twice the rate of a decade ago, raising questions about the ability of developers to keep pace with demand. Hoyt Advisory Services, a consulting firm that works with decision-makers, estimates an additional 4.6 million apartments will be needed by 2030 or affordability problems will continue.

Researchers attribute sustained demand to a number of factors. These include immigration, historically high demand from retiring baby boomers, and rising demand from high earners.

The report noted renting now appears to have greater appeal for households that could afford to buy homes "if they desired." Households earning \$100,000 or more made up nine percent of renters in 2006, but ten years later that share jumped to 18 percent, representing a cumulative increase of 2.9 million renters.

High-end renters are faring better than their poorer counterparts, in part because developers are eager to create housing in desirable urban centers. Between 2013 and 2016, nearly 60 percent of unfurnished new units were built in the principal metro areas of cities, a 10 percent jump from the previous decade, according to the JCHS report.

Virtually all the 7.2 million rental units added in the decade between 2006 and 2016 rented for \$850 per month or more. A whopping 53 percent commanded \$1,500 and up. During the same timeframe, the number of units renting for less than \$650 fell by 475,000 units.

Sharply rising costs for labor and materials are cited as a driver of higher rents. Tight land use regulations and lengthy approval processes further constrict the creation of affordable rentals.

Low-income renters continue to see their residual income drop along with their choices. For those in the bottom quartile of all U.S. incomes, just \$500 per month was left, on average, after paying housing costs.

Rental choices for low wage-earners are shrinking in part because of a deferred repair backlog for public housing. HUD estimates 93 such units are affordable for every 100 very low-income renters, but of these, only 54 are both available and adequate. Other research conducted by the Hudson Institute indicated around 60 percent of the 15 million rentals affordable in 1985 (roughly 8.7 million units) were lost by 2013. Permanent removals and demolitions, conversions, and gentrification contribute to the demise of affordable units.

Harvard's analysts reported increases in median rents have exceeded inflation for non-housing expenses by one percent during each of the past six years, noting "And it's even worse in hot markets: median rents have risen at twice the national pace in cities such as Austin, Denver, and Seattle."

(Editor's note: As of March 2018, the average rent for Seattle's one-bedroom apartments is \$1,970; for two bedrooms it's \$2,675, according to Rainmaker Insights. Overall, the average rent in Seattle is \$2,094, about 41 percent higher than the nationwide average of \$1,480.

Researchers also noted stark differences in the net worth of renters versus owners: In 2016, renter households “stuck on a treadmill of monthly rent” had a net worth of only \$5,000, according to the Survey of Consumer Finances. For homeowners, the average was \$230,000.

Other findings a senior research associate at JCHS listed as “new or surprising” in the latest Rental Housing Report include:

- New rental starts dropped 9 percent year-over-year, continuing a slowdown that emerged in 2016 when permitting fell in nearly half the nation’s 50 largest markets. Despite the softening, rental starts are considered to be at a healthy level.
- Conversions of single-family homes to rentals have slowed. The stock of single-family rental homes increased by 4 million between 2001 and 2016, but the trend has shown signs of moderating. In fact, the American Community Survey reported that 2015 was the first year since 2006 when the number of single-family rentals declined.
- Renter households with incomes over \$100,000 accounted for 30 percent of growth over the past decade. The trend is particularly pronounced in high-cost metros, notably San Francisco and New York City.
- Households age 50-plus made up more than half of renter household growth over the past decade. This cohort comprised 30 percent of all renter households in 2006, but jumped to 52 percent through 2016. In contrast, households under age 35 made up just 24 percent of renter household growth through 2016.

Alleviating the concerns for low income renters will require policy changes, the report’s authors suggest. Issues include access to capital for the multifamily industry, the cost of local regulations and requirements, and the growing challenge of housing affordability in numerous communities across the country.

“While the affordable housing challenge has many causes, this report offers evidence that it should continue to be a top issue locally and nationally for years to come,” the report concludes.

This year’s report, for the first time, includes interactive maps and charts so readers can compare rent growth, rent burden, changes in household growth and other data points by selected markets.

The Joint Center for Housing Studies provides research, education, and public outreach programs to help advance understanding of housing issues and to help inform policy for cities and communities. Leaders in government, business, and the civic sectors are among users of its research.

Center for Housing Studies releases reports on fair housing, remodeling, and access to high-opportunity communities

April proved to be a busy month for researchers at the Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University:

- **Fair Housing Act at 50.** David Luberoff, deputy director at JCHS, reflected on the Fair Housing Act at 50, citing remarks by Dr. Raphael Bostic, CEO of the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta. Speaking at an event at Harvard, Bostic asserted “Fair housing can and should be a centerpiece of efforts to expand opportunity.”

The guest lecturer cited decades of research showing strong positive impacts that neighborhoods can have on children’s education and future earnings. He emphasized it is in everyone’s interest to support efforts to expand opportunities for all families. “Fair housing is a key to economic mobility. It is an economic development issue as well as a community and personal development issue,” he told his audience.

Bostic, a former assistant secretary at HUD (the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development) advocates for two main strategies for achieving the law’s goals. One approach has been enforcement of the fair housing act’s prohibition on discriminatory treatment in the housing market, he explained. The other strategy stems from the act’s mandate that federal grantees also have an obligation “to affirmatively further fair housing, taking steps to promote integration and not just combat discrimination.”

Fair Housing advocates acknowledge enforcement efforts are likely to be the primary way in which goals are achieved, “given the current administration’s efforts to slow and roll back some efforts. “However, Luberoff wrote, “in the long run, people and communities will come to adopt more proactive approaches if only because an increasing number of them understand that America’s long-standing history of upward economic mobility is at risk and that fair housing can be part of a solution to making sure the next generation (and the ones that follow) continue to have access to the American Dream.”

- **Remodeling outlook: “strong and steady.”** Abbe Will, associate project director, Remodeling Futures, reported home remodeling is expected to remain “strong and steady” into 2019. Based on findings from the latest Leading Indicator of Remodeling Activity (LIRA), expenditures are projected to remain about 7 percent for the next four quarters. Spending on residential improvements and repairs by homeowners will likely exceed \$340 billion by early next year, according to the LIRA study. Will noted strengthening employment conditions and rising home values are prompting owners to make greater investments in their homes.
- **Expanding access to high-opportunity communities.** Barbara Sard from the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities authored a report based on papers from “A Shared Futures” symposium, which delved into using a full portfolio of tools (including vouchers) to expand access to high-opportunity communities. “Efforts to expand opportunities should also recognize that tenant-based vouchers are,

and will likely remain, the primary policy tool for enabling poor and near-poor families to live in higher-opportunity communities,” she wrote.

Sard, considered a leading expert on the housing voucher program, rental assistance, and issues concerning the intersection of housing and welfare policy, believes federal housing policy has neglected certain acquisition strategies. She noted some mission-driven organizations, like the King County Housing Authority and the National Housing Trust, have patched together state or local assistance with private market debt to make some acquisitions feasible.

“Facilitating loans and grants to purchase rental properties tied to long-term affordability restrictions – including obligations not to discriminate against voucher holders – should be a goal of federal housing policy, including housing finance reform,” Sard wrote. Housing practitioners work to do the best job possible with available resources, she emphasized, adding “We must also build the political will to expand investments in housing subsidies so more families have the chance to overcome affordability barriers and live in communities of their choice.”

In a long-term effort to achieve that goal, the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities has joined with the National Low Income Housing Coalition and others in launching [the Opportunity Starts at Home campaign](#).

Bellingham considers adding more ADUs to ease housing crunch

Like many municipalities faced with rising rents and inadequate supplies of housing, the city of Bellingham is considering revising its ordinance governing accessory dwelling units (ADUs). The proposal generated lively debate via written public comments and at recent hearings.

Bellingham Herald reporter Robert Mittendorf described a variation of ADUs known as D-ADUs (detached units, which new rules would allow) as “the blister point of community friction, especially in neighborhoods surrounding Western Washington University, where demand for student housing has turned many single-family homes into virtual rooming houses.”

Current regulations prohibit ADUs in most Bellingham neighborhoods and ban more than three unrelated people in a single-family dwelling, a rule some residents say is “routinely flouted and nearly impossible to enforce.”

Rising prices are driving much of the debate.

A check of Northwest Multiple Listing Service figures show a median asking price of \$569,475 for current listings of single family homes in Bellingham; countywide it is \$500,000. The median rental rate in Whatcom County, according to a survey by Zillow.com, is \$1,623 a month.

City planner Christopher (Chris) Koch said proposed ADU changes would give homeowners more options, allowing them to add a small unit on their property to house a caregiver, to accommodate an adult child who

wants to move home, or to enable owners to rent their main house and move to the ADU. “We see this as an incremental way of accommodating infill,” he said, adding “We’re not seeing this as a solution to the lack of housing or to the housing crisis.”

Opposing factions say congestion and safety are other important considerations. Some residents contend illegal rooming houses and detached units have added to parking and noise problems, especially in the York neighborhood (east of the City Center) when Western Washington University students have guests and parties. Citizens also expressed fears that backyard cottages could become short-term rentals, such as Airbnbs.

Proposed rules for ADUs would cut the minimum lot size for the property in half, from 10,000 square feet to 5,000, and would reduce height restrictions from 25 feet to 20 feet (about two stories). Up to four occupants per D-ADU and up to two bedrooms would be allowed. One off-street parking space would be required. Impact fees for transportation and parks would be waived.

Additional restrictions being considered would require the owner to live in either the main house or the detached unit. Proposed restrictions would allow only one ADU per primary residence. The changes would also mandate a review of the ordinance by 2025 or when 200 new legal ADUs are built, whichever comes first.

The council heard testimony during April in anticipation of its next scheduled meeting on May 7 when the agenda includes consideration of the [draft ADU ordinance](#).

Teams competing for \$1 million for improving algorithm for real estate valuations

Three top contenders edged out more than 3,800 teams from 91 counties to qualify for the Second Round of a Zillow Prize® competition and the chance to win a \$1 million grand prize if they succeed in building an algorithm to predict actual sales prices. Winners will be announced in early 2019.

The three top teams from Round One are among 100 teams who were challenged to make incremental improvements in Zillow’s Zestimate. The top contenders include a three-person team, each from a different country, who had never met each other, a father-daughter duo from Switzerland, and a solo data scientist from Japan. Collectively, they were awarded \$50,000 in prize money.

Since announcing Zillow Prize in May 2017, the competition has become one of the most popular machine learning competitions on Kaggle, a platform for data-related competitions and the world’s largest community of data scientists.

To qualify for the Second Round, teams had to improve the accuracy of the Zestimate beyond the current error rate of 4.2 percent in the three competition counties (Los Angeles, Orange and Ventura, all in California).

Stan Humphries, creator of the Zestimate and Zillow Group's chief analytics officer said his company hopes the prize inspires current data scientists to dive into the world of real estate valuations and inspires a future generation to consider a career in data science and machine learning. "There's an incredible opportunity to bring new and diverse minds into the field," he remarked. Regarding the data science community's response to the Zillow Prize, Humphries said there were lots of innovative solutions. "We've been blown away," he commented.

Zillow is matching the first-round prize money with a \$50,000 donation to #YesWeCode, a Dream Corps initiative. #YesWeCode helps 100,000 young women and men from underrepresented backgrounds find success in the tech sector. This is part of Zillow Group's greater efforts to support STEM-focused organizations which includes donations and investments in the University of Washington School Of Computer Science and Engineering, DiscoverU, and the Washington State Opportunity Scholarship.

Zillow publishes Zestimate home valuations on more than 100 million homes across the country based on 7.5 million statistical and machine learning models that examine hundreds of data points on each individual home. Calculations for Zestimate use data from county and tax assessor records and direct feeds from hundreds of multiple listing services and brokerages, plus input from homeowners.

Master Builders select real estate attorney as association's leader, the first woman to head country's largest homebuilders association

Former Weyerhaeuser Co. executive Kathleen (Kat) Sims is the next executive director of the Master Builders Association of King and Snohomish Counties.



Sims is the first woman to lead the 109-year-old group whose 3,000 member companies make it the largest residential homebuilders association in the country. She succeeds Shannon Affholter who vacated the position last fall to join Oakpointe Communities, developers of two large master-planned communities in Black Diamond and Covington.

Prior to joining MBASK, Sims was vice president of environmental affairs, sustainability and corporate responsibility at Weyerhaeuser Co. Prior to that she was vice president of government affairs at Plum Creek Timber Co. Inc., which merged with Weyerhaeuser in 2016. She also held positions at two Seattle law firms, focusing her practice on real estate.

Master Builders Board President Erich Armbruster said Sim's professional experience will be a tremendous asset for the association as it seeks to expand its influence in addressing the region's housing issues.

"Developing adequate housing is vital to the health of our region, and the Master Builders Association needs to be at the table as discussions are made that impact housing availability," Sims stated in an announcement of her hiring.

Headquartered in Bellevue, MBACKS is the nation's oldest association of local homebuilders, architects, remodelers, suppliers, manufacturers, and sales and marketing professionals.

 News In Brief

- **A lot of people drive around without insurance. It's about 17 percent of the motorists in Washington, according to the latest report from the Insurance Research Council.** That means we are the seventh worst state in the country for uninsured drivers. While it's against the law to drive without insurance, uninsured motorist coverage and underinsured motorist coverage are optional in Washington. Insurance companies must offer you this coverage, but you can decline it. The Northwest Insurance Council indicates that the cost of adding uninsured and underinsured motorist coverage to a policy is typically between 5-10 percent of your annual premium.
- **Puget Sound soon will be off limits to sewage from ships, boats or other vessels, under a new rule that takes effect on May 10.** Maia Bellon, director of the state Department of Ecology, established the new no-discharge zone following a five-year comment period and approval by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The new rule bans the discharge of any type of sewage, treated or untreated, within Puget Sound. Vessels looking to empty their loads will need to use a pump-out station or wait until they are out of the no-discharge zone. In establishing its first no-discharge zone, Washington joins 26 other states and more than 90 other no-discharge zones in the nation. The no-discharge zone will include all marine waters of Washington state east of a line between the New Dungeness and Discovery Island lighthouses, north to the Canadian border and as far inland as the fresh waters of Lake Washington, and all the water bodies that connect Lake Washington to Puget Sound. The state Department of Health expects to upgrade or open approximately 1,000 acres of commercial shellfish beds for harvesting near marinas after the establishment of the no-discharge zone. During the five-year study period, a draft proposal drew more than 65,000 favorable comments and about 525 comments expressing opposition or concern.
- **Austin, Texas, ranked number one for the second year in a row (and Seattle ranked number 10) as the top place to live in the United States, according to new rankings released by U.S. News & World Report.** The magazine ranks the 125 largest metros based on affordability, employment prospects, and quality of life each year. The top 12 best places to live in 2018 are: 1) Austin, 2) Colorado Springs, 3) Denver, 4) Des Moines, Iowa, 5) Fayetteville, Ark., 6) Portland, OR, 7) Huntsville, Ala, 8) Washington, D.C., 9) Minneapolis, 10) Seattle, 11) Nashville, and 12) Grand Rapids.
- **It's not just the size of your roof, the price of a new roof is based on a number of factors according to a report published in komonews.com.** The type of roofing materials you choose and the type of warranty you get, play a big role. The slope of the roof can make a big difference. According to Angie's List, it costs more to replace a very steep roof because it requires greater staging and safety equipment, and in some cases, different materials. How many layers of shingles are there on the roof that need to be removed? The price is typically based on time and disposal charges. And of course, the price will go up if any of the plywood needs to be replaced. When preparing an estimate, the contractor will also look at obstacles, such as chimneys, skylights and box vents. Limited access to the roof can also be a factor. Angie's List says it's not necessary to replace the soffits or gutters when

replacing your roof. The contractor just needs to be careful not to damage the gutters when they're removed. Keep in Mind: No reputable roofer will give you a quote without coming to your house, examining the roof and going inside the attic. More Info: [The Real Cost of a New Roof](#).

- **With last year's market for existing home sales being the strongest since 2006, the personal-finance website WalletHub today released its report on [2018's Best Places to Be a Real Estate Agent](#).** To determine the best markets for real-estate agents, WalletHub compared more than 170 U.S. cities across 18 key indicators of a healthy housing market, ranging from sales per agent to annual median wage for real-estate agents to housing-market health index. According to the report, the top ten places to be a real estate agent are: 1) San Francisco, **2) Seattle**, 3) San Jose, 4) Fremont, 5) Oakland, 6) New York, 7) Santa Rosa, 8) Denver, 9) Nashville and **10) Vancouver, WA**. San Francisco, San Jose, and Seattle were noted in part because listings have the fewest days on the market, 38, which is 4.3 times fewer than listings in Miami, the city with the most at 165.

Calendar of Events Through June 6, 2018

Dates	Event	Time	Location	Contact
SEATTLE—King County REALTORS®				
5/14/18	NAR Mid-Year Meetings		Washington, DC	425-974-1011
5/16/18	Affiliate Council	1:30 pm – 2:30 pm	SKCR	425-974-1011
5/323/18	First Citizen Banquet	5:30 pm – 9:30 pm	Fairmont Hotel	360-943-3100
5/28/18	Holiday—Office Closed			
6/6/18	Housing Issues Briefing	11:30 am – 1:30 pm	Meydenbauer Center	425-974-1011
For updates visit http://www.nwrealtor.com/events/				