



River Counties Association of REALTORS®

Serving Bradley, Bledsoe, McMinn, Meigs, Polk and Rhea Counties.



INSIDE

- Page B2:** • RCAR takes action when community is in need
- RCAR Staff
- Page B2-B9:** • RCAR Past Presidents
- Page B3:** • RCAR Board of Directors
- Realizing homeownership dream
- Page B4:** • RCAR Multiple Listing Service Board of Directors
- Page B5:** • 'That's Who We R' Scholarship
- Homeownership on upswing
- Page B7:** • How to get cleaner air at home
- 4 ways to avoid remorse when buying a house virtually
- Equity-rich properties
- Page B8:** • 7 reasons you should own a home
- Top priorities in new construction
- Page B9:** • Preparing to list after the pandemic
- Watch out for home's energy hogs



River Counties Association of REALTORS®

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RCAR takes action when community is in need



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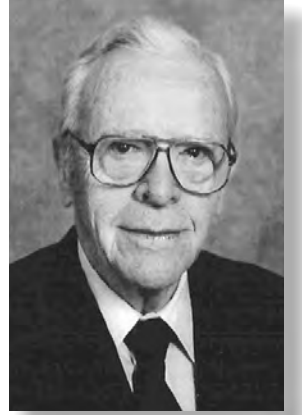
REALTORS of River Counties Association of Realtors assisted at The Caring Place June 9 and 10 while also delivering a \$2,000 check in response to COVID-19. This effort was organized by RCAR's Community Outreach Committee.



Past Presidents 1961 to 1973



Bob Gentry
1961 & 1962



Nelom Jackson
1964



Max Carroll
1967 & 1968



Willis Park
1969



W.B. Bender
1970



Max Finkle
1971



Newton M. Metzger
1972



Bill Phillips
1973



River Counties
Association of
REALTORS®

RCAR Staff:



Lisa Martin
Chief Executive Officer



Jenna Woody
MLS Services



Meghan Stone
Member Services Coordinator

River Counties Association of REALTORS'

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2020 RCAR Board of Directors:



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President



River Counties
Association of
REALTORS®



STEVE BLACK
Treasurer



TAMMY JOHNSON
Vice President

RCAR serves 6 Southeast counties

The River Counties Association of Realtors includes members from six Southeast Tennessee counties — Bledsoe, Bradley, McMinn, Meigs, Polk and Rhea.

The members of the association play an active role in the growth and marketing of each of the communities within these counties.

The 2020 leadership of the River Counties Association of Realtors includes Suzanne Akins as president; Tammy Johnson as vice president; Steve Black as treasurer; and Dianne Tumlin as secretary.

Robert Bradney, 2019 president, serves as past president. Shawn Matthews, who is president of the MLS Board of Directors, serves as ex-officio

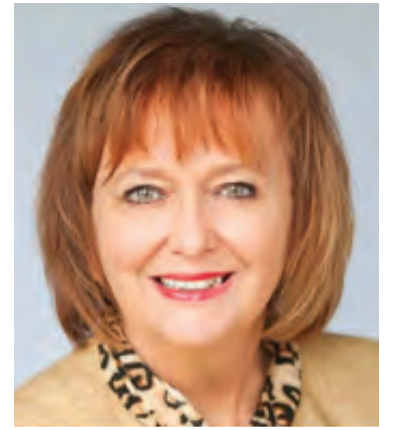
member of the RCAR Board of Directors.

River Counties directors include Whitney Proctor, Robin Fuller, Marcia Botts, Misty Newsome, Kristy Whitmire, Ricky Tallent and Jim Metzger.

The River Counties Multiple Listing Service Board of Directors leaders include Shawn Matthews as president; Betty Messer as vice president; Ingrid Prather as treasurer; and Tina Ledford as secretary.

The directors of the RCMLS are Tim Mazzolini, Jennifer Douglass, Angie Stumbo, Brian Workman, Theba Hamilton and Amy Elkins.

Suzanne Akins, president of RCAR, is an ex-officio member.



DIANNE TUMLIN
Secretary



ROBERT BRADNEY
Past President



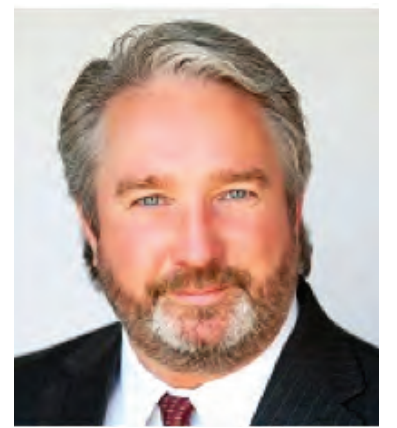
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Director



ROBIN FULLER
Director



MARCIA BOTTS
Director



SHAWN MATTHEWS
Ex-Officio



MISTY NEWSOME
Director



KRISTY WHITMIRE
Director



RICKY TALLENT
Director



JIM METZGER
Director

Our Mission Statement:

“Enhancing, promoting, and protecting the private property rights in our communities, and the business interests of our REALTOR® members.”

Realtors help make dream of home ownership come true

When you think about “home” you may have fond memories of an actual house, your parents, smells of a favorite meal, family gatherings, playing outside, bringing home or saying goodbye to loved ones. Those memories make your thoughts of “home” special, and the house is the physical representation. Home ownership is something that helps unite memories and people for years and years. It provides a stable and steady feeling of belonging to a community, and encourages participation in the neighborhoods, schools, churches, cities and counties.

June is National Home Ownership month, and as Realtors, we promote and protect the rights of individuals to purchase private property. Our Code of Ethics Preamble, states:

“...Realtors should recognize that the interests of the nation and its citizens require the highest and best use of the land and the widest distribution of land ownership. They require the creation of adequate housing, the building of functioning cities, the development of productive industries and farms, and the preservation of a healthful environment.”

The widest distribution of land ownership is at our very core, as Realtors. We love home! “Home is Where the Heart is,” “There’s No Place like Home” and “Home

THAT’S WHO WE

for the Holidays” are all phrases indicating love for home and what it represents to us!

Realtors love helping people find home. We strive to make sure everyone who wants to purchase a home to have the opportunity. With the trusted partner affiliate members, like our lenders, title companies, home inspectors, appraisers and others, the Realtor members, in the six counties that the River Counties Association of Realtors services, can help anyone, anywhere.

Although COVID-19 has changed the way buying and selling homes looks, nothing will change how we feel about home and home ownership. Let’s all celebrate Home Ownership Month by giving some love to our homes, the people we love, and the community we live, work and play within, and we Realtors, will continue our mission of helping anyone who wants a home, find a home.

RCAR members support our local communities by

participating in Habitat for Humanity builds, The Caring Place and distributing tornado relief checks to help home owners recover after tragedy strikes Members are constantly finding ways to make home ownership more attainable for everyone, and are open to learning about how they can help impact the community from local residents.

Realtors help create belonging for all people, in communities around the world. Call a Realtor for your home purchase. THAT’S WHO WE R!



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1974 & 1978



Glenn Ramsey
1975



Erwin "Rip" Townsend
1976



Jo Organ
1982



R.F. Bill McIntire
1983



Jim Workman
1984

2020 Multiple Listing Service Board:



Shawn Matthews
President



Betty Messer
Vice President



Ingrid Prather
Treasurer



Tina Ledford
Secretary



Cathy McCracken
Past President



Tim Mazzolini
Director



Jennifer Douglass
Director



Angie Stumbo
Director



Brian Workman
Director



Theba Hamilton
Director



Amy Elkins
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Suzanne Akins
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"There is no place like home." — L. Frank Baum, author

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Past Presidents
1985 to 1994



Bruce Renner
1985



Charlene Moore
1986



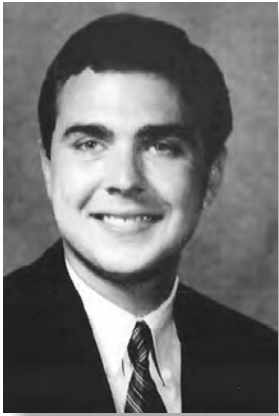
C.W. "Bill" Harris
1987



G. Max Phillips
1988



Eddie Botts
1989



David Carrol
1990



Della Renner
1991



John Paul Douglas
1992



James R. Holt
1993



Judy Dunn
1994

Rhea County's Cristine Moore wins 'That's Who We R' scholarship

Special to the Banner

The Community Outreach Committee of the River Counties Association of Realtors® sponsored a scholarship for graduating seniors in the six-county region of its service area recently.

RCAR presented the "That's Who We R" scholarship to 2020 recipient Cristine Moore from Rhea County, with a \$1,500 check.

Moore submitted a video demonstrating her accomplishments, goals and story of her needs, and was ultimately chosen by the Committee.

RCAR is proud to honor this young student.

"This is our way of helping youth and raising the bar for education," said Tina Ledford, Committee Chair of the Community Outreach Committee for RCAR.

According to Suzanne Akins, President of the River Counties Association of Realtors, "Helping high school students is important to us, as once they complete their edu-



Contributed photo

CRISTINE MOORE was the recipient of the "That's Who We R" scholarship, from the River Counties Association of Realtors. From left are RCAR Community Outreach Committee members Ricky Tallent, Julia Tallent and David Sanders; scholarship recipient Cristine Moore; RCAR President Suzanne Akins; and Community Outreach Committee Chair Tina Ledford.

cations, they will be part of the community and become productive citizens that run for office, own small businesses, develop technology and become future private property owners.

"We consider this to be a small way we can give back to the counties of

Bradley, Rhea, McMinn, Polk, Meigs and Bledsoe, which our membership boundaries cover," Akins added.

The "That's Who We R" Educational Scholarship is designed to encourage applicants, recommended by their high school counselors, to further their

education through the \$1,500 grant, by submitting a three-minute video.

The tagline "That's Who We R" is the motto for the National Association of Realtors®, demonstrating that Realtors, who follow a strict Code of Ethics, are working, living and playing in local communities.

Homeownership on upswing since 2016

National rate reached 8-year high before coronavirus pandemic

REALTOR.com

In the first quarter of this year, the homeownership rate reached its highest level since the third quarter of 2013. The percentage of people who own a home in the U.S. increased to 65.3%, a 1.1% uptick over the year prior, the U.S. Census Bureau reported earlier this year.

Homeownership has been on the upswing since 2016. While the pandemic that increased its presence in the U.S. in March and April may impact that movement going forward, many economists aren't so sure that it will have that effect across all age groups.

Indicators from the first quarter of this year show a strong housing market. Homeowner vacancy rates — the share of houses that are empty and for sale — dropped to the lowest level in more than 40 years, according to Census Bureau data.

Homeownership rates were highest for those aged 65 or older (78.7%), followed by those 55 to 64 (76.3%), 45 to 54 years old (70.2%), and 35 to 44 years old (61.5%).

Homeownership rates were lowest for those under 35 years of age (37.3%), but did show increases during the first quarter.



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"The homeownership rate for people under the age of 35 — while the lowest across generations—posted the strongest gain over the past 12 months," George Ratiu, realtor.com's senior economist, told HousingWire. "An upward trend in homeownership would indicate rising economic well-being."

But, he acknowledges, current unemployment trends due to COVID-19 likely will impact this age group.

However, Ratiu believes that as the pandemic subsides, homeownership interest won't decrease.

"The coronavirus pandemic is impacting not only the economy and real estate markets, but also shifting consumer preferences,"

Ratiu told HousingWire. "As Americans have lived, worked, taught, studied, cooked, and exercised at home over the past month, we have a new-found appreciation for bigger homes, with more outdoor space, updated kitchens, and access to amenities. Those preferences hold across generational cohorts, pointing to a favorable outlook for homeownership."

In the first quarter, the homeownership rate was highest in the Midwest, at 69.2%, followed by 67.6% in the South, 62.4% in the Northeast, and 60.1% in the West.

Source: "Homeownership in the U.S. Reached a Nearly 8-Year High B.C. (Before Coronavirus)," HousingWire (April 28, 2020)

"Home is the nicest word there is." — Laura Ingalls Wilder, American author

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Simple strategies to meet the neighbors after moving

(MCG) — A lot goes into building safe, strong communities. While no single factor can be highlighted as more important than another in regard to building strong communities, a willingness on the part of residents to connect with their neighbors can benefit local neighborhoods and the people who call those communities home.

According to Mental Health America, a community-based nonprofit dedicated to promoting the mental health of all Americans, research has shown that social connections increase happiness and lead to improved overall health and longer lives.

Adults may find that establishing a connection with their communities, and maintaining that connection while juggling the responsibilities of work and a family, is not always so easy. That's especially so for adults who have recently relocated to new areas. Reaching out to neighbors can be a great way to build new



Metro Creative Graphics

relationships that can benefit as individuals and strengthen communities.

Don't be shy

People often want to know who's living next door, so adults who have recently moved need not be shy about introducing

themselves to their new neighbors. Introduce yourself and share what inspired you to move to your new neighborhood.

Host a backyard barbecue

Backyard barbecues are laid back affairs, and that pressure-free atmosphere is perfect for meeting new neighbors. Once you have settled in, invite a handful of your neighbors over for the barbecue. If you have children, invite neighbors who also are parents, ideally ones whose children are the same age as your own. Kids have sparked many a conversation, and discussions about local schools, parks and programs for youngsters can be great ice breakers.

Answer and ask questions.

Neighbors will no doubt ask questions when you introduce yourself, so be ready to answer these questions. Questions may focus on your career and where you grew

up. If you grew up in the area where you recently moved, some of your neighbors likely did as well. Sharing stories about your school days and/or local hotspots can be a great way to break the ice.

Don't hesitate to ask questions of your own. Asking questions might reveal some common interests that can serve as strong foundations for budding relationships.

Volunteer

Volunteering with community-based organizations is another great way to meet new neighbors. Volunteering with an organization whose mission you identify with may be even better, as you're likely to find like-minded neighbors who share your passions when working with such groups.

Strong communities are built around people. When moving to a new community, adults can overcome the challenges such relocations present by taking various steps to connect with their new neighbors.



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Past Presidents 1995 to 2002



Martha Little
1995



Dottie Bryant
1996



Wynen Preston
1997



Jo Organ
1998



Paul Renner
1999



Ronald Murphy
2000



Dwight Richardson
2001



Wayne Sherlin
2002

How to get cleaner air at home

As more people spend time inside, indoor air quality is becoming a pressing issue. Here are a few tips from experts recently highlighted at Curbed.com.

Clean surfaces

Cleaning has never been more important than in the age of a pandemic, but it can also help improve the indoor air quality of your home. Wipe down surfaces and vacuum frequently to remove build ups of dust, pollen, and mold, which all impact air quality, Curbed.com reports.

Use the vent when cooking

“One of the big things we’re starting to understand a lit-

tle more is the problems with cooking,” Adriano L. Martinez, an environmental lawyer who tweets about air quality issues as @LASmogGuy, told Curbed.com. “A hood and fan that siphons toxic fumes out of your kitchen can make a big difference, even if you’re just boiling water. Try to run the fan every time you’re cooking.”

Use plants to showcase a healthier home

Easily-obtainable plants include English ivy, bamboo palm, peace lily, spider plant, rubber tree, pothos, aloe vera, ficus, philodendron and flamingo lily.

Avoid the VOCs

Pay attention to the labels when cleaning to avoid products containing volatile organic chemicals. The fumes have been linked to irritating lungs.

Use a high-quality filter on the HVAC

A good filter can help trap airborne pollutants inside a home. Martinez suggests looking for a minimum efficiency reporting value, or MERV rating, of 8 or higher on the HVAC filter. Also, change it frequently. Plug-in air purifiers can also help, experts say.

Source: “Breathe Cleaner Air Everywhere,” Curbed.com

4 ways to avoid remorse when buying a house virtually

REALTOR Magazine

Since the spread of COVID-19, consumers are showing more willingness to purchase a home without stepping foot inside. Twenty-four percent of 1,300 consumers surveyed say they’d be willing to buy a home without seeing it in person, according to a survey conducted this year by realtor.com® and Toluna Insights. Buyers are using listing data, virtual tours, detail photos, and live video walkthroughs with real estate agents as a substitute for visiting the property in person.

But after buying sight unseen, remorse could set in if buyers don’t do their full due diligence. Here’s how real estate professionals can help their buyers move forward confidently with a sight-unseen offer:

Get a sense of the senses

“When you’re house-hunting in person, you’re able to use all of your senses,” Redfin notes at its blog. “You can see the wonderful natural light coming into the living room, you can hear the noisy garage door, and you can smell the pet odors that are still lingering throughout the home. But when you’re buying a house without seeing it, you’re limited to only what is shown digitally.” Real estate pros should be prepared to answer questions regarding the smell of the house (inside and out); noises from the house (including outside, like a train or traffic);



Metro Creative Graphics

whether appliances or any home features look outdated; and the strength of internet and cell phone service.

Show off the neighborhood

Encourage buyers to check out the surroundings. Agents can take buyers on a video tour around the neighborhood or encourage buyers to use Google Maps to virtually walk through the neighborhood and see what surrounding homes look like, as well as get a sense of what is nearby, the Redfin blog notes. Or urge them to sign up for online community groups, such as Nextdoor or Facebook, to get more insights into a neighborhood or community.

Get inspections

Provide contact information for a few reputable, qualified home inspectors in

the area. “It’s even more important to have this extra set of eyes from a professional when you aren’t able to see the home in person,” Redfin notes. Buyers may want to seek out additional inspections as well, such as for the pool, radon, or asbestos if the home was built prior to 1980.

Be realistic about a timeline

“Buy a house sight unseen and you’ll likely

find yourself navigating the process differently,” Redfin notes. “It’s important to set a realistic timeline with a buffer in case there are any hiccups along the way.” Encourage buyers to prepare all their documents in advance to help in navigating the loan approval process. The loan approval process could take longer nowadays, as could getting any repairs done to the home prior to closing.

More than a quarter of properties are equity-rich

REALTOR Magazine

Many homeowners have a lot of money in their homes. During the first quarter of this year, 26.5% of residential properties or 14.5 million were considered equity rich, meaning the owner had at least 50% equity in their home, ATTOM Data Solutions reports Thursday.

“Homeowners’ balance sheets generally remained strong in the first quarter of 2020 across the U.S.,” says Todd Teta, chief product officer with ATTOM Data Solutions. “In the latest marker of the ongoing housing market boom, mortgage payers were four times as likely to have homes worth considerably more than what they owed on their loans than considerably less.

“But as with other rosy first-quarter reports, this one needs to be taken in context of the looming impact of the coronavirus pandemic,” Teta adds.

See EQUITY, Page B8

Bank of Cleveland Home Loans



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Joe Collins
478-8423
NMLS-1313332



Member FDIC



Past Presidents
2003 to 2012



Bill Pryor
2003



Allison Robinson-Hamilton
2004



Kelli Paul
2005



Rhonda McClure
2006



Susan Barnett
2007



Robert Bradney
2008



Allison Hamilton
2009



Jennifer Zopfi
2010



Jim Metzger
2011



Ingrid Prather
2012

7 reasons why you should own a home

National Association of REALTORS®

Homeownership has its benefits — but do you know what they are and how they can benefit you?

Tax benefits

The U.S. Tax Code lets you deduct the interest you pay on your mortgage, your property taxes, and some of the costs involved in buying a home.

Equity

Money paid for rent is money that you'll never see again, but mortgage payments let you build equity ownership interest in your home.

Appreciation

Historically, real estate has had a long-term, stable growth in value. In fact, median single-family existing-home sale prices have increased on average 5.2% each year from 1972 through 2014, according to the National Association of REALTORS®.

The recent housing crisis has caused some to question the long-term value of real estate, but even in the most recent



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10 years, which included quite a few very bad years for housing, values are still up 7.0% on a cumulative basis. In addition, the number of U.S. households is expected to rise 10 to 15% over the next decade, creating continued high demand for housing.

Predictability

Unlike rent, your fixed-rate mortgage payments don't rise over the years so your housing costs may actually decline

as you own the home longer. However, keep in mind that property taxes and insurance costs will likely increase.

Freedom

The home is yours. You can decorate any way you want and choose the types of upgrades and new amenities that appeal to your lifestyle.

Savings

Building equity in your home is a ready-made savings plan. And when

you sell, you can generally take up to \$250,000 (\$500,000 for a married couple) as gain without owing any federal income tax.

Stability

Remaining in one neighborhood for several years allows you and your family time to build long-lasting relationships within the community. It also offers children the benefit of educational and social continuity.

Walk-in closets, energy efficiency are top priorities

National Association of Home Builders

Closets, energy efficiency, and laundry rooms appear to be home builders' top priorities in the single-family homes they're constructing this year.

The National Association of Home Builders conducts a nationwide survey each year to find out what home features builders are most likely to include in a typical new home. The walk-in closet in the master bedroom was the most popular home feature builders cited, according to the survey. Energy-efficient features were popular, too, such as efficient lighting, programmable thermostat, Energy Star-rated appliances, and windows. Kitchens were most likely to have a central island, a walk-in pantry, and granite countertops, the NAHB survey shows.



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On the other hand, the least likely features builders were to include in the price of the home were cork flooring for the living areas on the main floor, geothermal heat pumps, solar power systems, and dual toilets in the master bath. Also, specialty rooms unlikely to be included were sun rooms, media rooms, and two-story family rooms or foyers.

EQUITY: More than a quarter of properties are equity-rich

From Page B7

Teta says it is possible that equity levels could drop over the coming months due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the toll it's having on the economy. So far, however, housing prices have stood in firm during the pandemic.

The highest equity places

In the first quarter, the 10 states with the highest share of equity-rich properties were all in the

Northeast and Western regions of the U.S., led by California (42.3%), Hawaii (39%), Vermont (38.2%), Washington (36.6%), and Oregon (34%).

By metro level, the five areas with the highest share of equity rich properties in the first quarter were: San Jose, Calif. (64.8%); San Francisco (57%); Los Angeles (47.4%); Santa Rosa, Calif. (45.5%); and San Diego

(40%). In the Northeast, the equity leader was Boston, with 34.8% of

equity-rich properties.

Source: ATTOM Data Solutions

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Homeowners are preparing to list after the pandemic

REALTOR Magazine

Real estate professionals report that about 77% of potential sellers are preparing to sell their homes once stay-at-home orders from the COVID-19 pandemic are lifted, according to a newly released survey from the National Association of REALTORS®. More than half of Realtors report their clients are taking on do-it-yourself home improvement projects in preparation, too.

"After a pause, home sellers are gearing up to list their properties with the reopening of the economy," says Lawrence Yun, NAR's chief economist. "Plenty of buyers

also appear ready to take advantage of record-low mortgage rates and the stability that comes with these locked-in monthly payments into future years."

NAR conducted an Economic Pulse Flash Survey May 3-4 and asked about 2,500 members how the coronavirus has been affecting their real estate business.

Home buyers are gradually re-emerging, but the pandemic has shifted some of their housing preferences, according to the results. Five percent of Realtors report that their clients have changed their neighborhood preferences from urban to suburban due to

the pandemic. Also, one in eight Realtors surveyed say that buyers have changed at least one home feature that's important to them since the COVID-19 pandemic. The most common features identified are home offices, yard space for exercising or growing food, and more space to accommodate their family.

But home buyers in search of a big bargain may not find one. Nearly 75% of Realtors report that their sellers have not reduced listing prices to attract buyers. Housing inventories are near record lows and that reduced competition may be prompting more sellers to stand firm on their home prices.

Watch your home's energy hogs while sheltering in place

National Association of REALTORS®

As everyone settles into their homes to ride out the COVID-19 pandemic, their energy bills will jump, perhaps even skyrocket. But there are some simple things that homeowners can do to curb their costs, particularly as electronics and lights are used.

Sense, a company that offers home energy monitoring solutions, offers up the following five ways to save money on energy costs at home during this time.

Turn off electronics when not in use

Keeping gadgets on constantly will add to your electricity bill. Consumer electronics and common devices can account for 23% of the average electricity bill — or about \$322 annually, according to Sense. Turn off devices that aren't in use. Place printers, PCs, laptops, home entertainment equipment, and gaming systems on power strips. Turn them off when not in use.

Turn off extra appliances

Consider consolidating food into a single refrigerator. Particularly older fridge or freezer models can be energy hogs. For example, Sense says that a 10-year-old refrigerator alone could add \$53 annually to your energy costs. Refrigerators that should be maintained to



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keep them working most efficiently: Vacuum the condenser coils, inspect and clean the door gaskets for a proper seal, and check the temperature setting (at or below 40 degrees for fridge and 0 for the freezer), Sense recommends.

Swap out every incandescent light bulb

Incandescent bulbs can use up to 70% more energy than LEDs. They can be all over your home — inside your fridge and your oven and outdoors such as porch lights. Swap them out to help save on your energy bills.

Clean the dryer vent

Lint collects in the dryer vent and can make

your dryer less efficient. Blocked vents can also become a fire hazard. Clean out the dryer duct and vent, but be sure to follow safe practices. If you're

looking for more savings, consider hanging your clothes outside to dry on a warm day or set the dryer on a delicate cycle to use less energy.

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How to save up for your first home

(MCG) — Home ownership is a dream for people across the globe. Many people save for years before buying their first homes, squirreling away every dollar they can with the hopes they can one day become homeowners.

But thanks to factors beyond their control, even the most devoted savers can sometimes feel like their dream of home ownership may never come true. According to the Pew Research Center, American workers' paychecks are larger than they were 40 years ago, but their purchasing power is essentially the same.

Various challenges can make it difficult to buy a home. However, some

simple strategies can help prospective home buyers build their savings as they move closer to the day when they can call themselves "homeowners."

Determine where your money is going

If you're finding it hard to grow your savings, audit your monthly expenses to determine where your money is going. Using exclusively debit or credit cards can simplify this process, as all you need to do is log into your accounts and see how your money was spent over a given period. If you routinely use cash to pay for items, even just to buy coffee on the way to work, keep a notepad handy so you can


jot down each expense. Do this for a month and then examine how you spent your money. Chances are you will see various ways to save, and you can then redirect that money into your savings account.

Become a more savvy grocery shopper

Another great way to save more money is to alter something you already do each month: grocery shopping. If you haven't already, sign up for discount clubs at your local grocer. This is a largely effortless way for shoppers, especially those buying food for families, to save considerable amounts of money. Shopping sales at competing grocery stores also can save money.

Dine in more often

The U.S. Department of Agriculture says that Americans spend, on average, 6% of their household budgets on food. However, the USDA also notes that Americans spend 5% of their disposable income on dining out.



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