

Real Estate Today

Advice on Selecting the Best Buyer's Agent to Serve You

By **JIM SMITH**
Jefferson County Realtor®

Last week I wrote about selecting the best agent to list your house. (You can review that column at www.JimSmithColumns.com.) This week let's discuss how to select the best agent to represent you in the purchase of a home.

First, you should know that it is almost always the seller who pays both agents' commissions. The listing agent charges, say, 5-6% commission, agreeing to offer about half that commission (typically 2.8% in this area) to the agent who represents the buyer.

So, lesson #1 is: get a buyer's agent! You'll get the services of a professional with legal and ethical loyalty to you — and at no cost.

Hopefully, you have selected a good listing agent following my suggestions from last week (or not), and if you think he could do a good job as your buyer's agent, he (or she) will likely agree to charge you a lower commission in return for letting him/her get that 2.8% on the purchase of your next home.

Because the buyer's agent earns that 2.8% with minimal work (especially when you find the house yourself), you can use that fact to negotiate a lower commission on your listing. Even if you didn't negotiate this in advance when you listed your house, you can amend your listing agreement to reflect such an agreement at the same time that you sign a buyer's agency.

Don't make the mistake (my opinion) of finding the buyer's agent first and letting that agent list your home at the reduced commission. There's a wide variation in the quality of *listing* representation and marketing effort. Buyer repre-

sentation has much less variation in quality. Even a novice agent, with a good transaction coordinator, can serve you well as a buyer's agent.

You could reasonably argue that the best person to help you find your house is the agent who "farms" your destination neighborhood, because they know what is not yet on the market. But your own buyer's agent can communicate your needs to all the agents who work that neighborhood to access those upcoming listings.

If none of the above applies (i.e., you don't have a house to sell), try asking friends who recently bought a house if they would recommend *their* buyer's agent. If you're buying out of area, ask a trusted local agent to help you select an agent in that other locale using their national organization's referral database. He'll get a referral fee for doing so, but he can help you make a wise selection.



Mortgage Update

By Jean Rowe, 303-601-4035

Mortgage rates are going up and are expected to continue that trend upward in the coming months. If you want to refinance your home for debt-consolidation or any other reason or you want a low-interest mortgage on your home purchase, NOW is definitely the time to act!

Mortgage rates as of 3/14/05:

3/1 Interest-only ARM: 4.75% (APR 5.927%)

30 year fixed rate: 5.75% (APR 5.917%)

5/1 ARM (fixed for 5 years): 5.25% (APR 5.890%)

(Rates are based on a conventional loan, 30 day rate-lock, \$250,000 purchase with a \$200,000 loan amount, and are subject to change. Certain criteria apply.)

If I can be of service, please call!

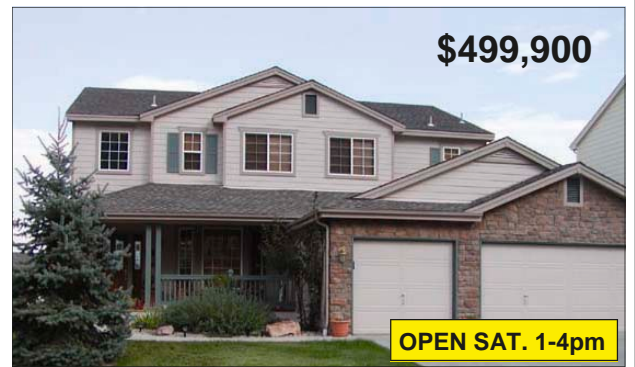
Three New Listings from Golden's Top Listing Agent



242 EAGLE DRIVE: This 1995 Mountain Ridge home is so immaculate, you'd think it was built last year! Gleaming hardwood floors, 2½-car garage, new paint inside & out, professionally landscaped backyard, 2nd floor deck outside master suite, main-floor study, fully finished bsmt, 4BR, 3½ Baths, 3,081 sq. ft. www.242EagleDrive.com.



709 ILLINOIS ST.: Half-duplex on cul-de-sac, 3 blocks from the Golden Community Center in one direction and downtown Golden in the other! Large sauna in the partially finished basement, oversized 1-car garage. Hardwood & carpeted floors. New paint. All appliances included. Walk to School of Mines. www.709Illinois.com.



295 WEST DRIVE: This home has four bedrooms upstairs, an open floor plan, and an unfinished walk-out basement which opens to one of the bigger grassy backyards in Mountain Ridge. Nice views of Golden, the Table Mountains, and the foothills. Hardwood & tile floors. Includes a 14-month home warranty. www.295WestDrive.com

It's a Fact:

No Realtor Had More Sold Listings in Zip Codes 80401+80403 During 2004 Than Jim Smith!

Based on an analysis of data by Metrolist, Inc.



Jim Smith

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www.JeffcoHomes.info



Buy or Sell a Home Using Jim Smith, and Get Free Use of His Moving Truck with Driver/Helper. (Picture of this truck is on website.)