



Applegate Valley Real Estate

by Debbie and Don Tollefson

Impact of National Real Estate Trends

For the last five years, local rural property owners and aspiring ones have been attempting to predict how national trends will impact them. With the economy tied to national and international events, all new variables are making buyers, sellers and realtors a little crazy.

In recent columns, we have talked about local stats and trends – here, let's examine some national trends that filter down to our local rural real estate market. Most national trends say that prices for most rural real estate will start rising steadily. Rates of appreciation will vary according to where the property is and the character of the property.

The predictors say that growth areas of rural real estate will be affected greatly by location. The national trend is away from arid areas, areas with harsh winters to areas with milder climates and less volatile weather. The quality of the location is greatly enhanced by water sources. Here in southern Oregon, we are fortunate to have many sources of year round water to enhance the lush beauty of the environment. We can attest to this trend in the Applegate Valley where buyers recently bought an older fixer-upper (for the same \$) on a river instead of an almost-new home on non-irrigated land with no water running through the property.

National trends are also affected by the local job market and state budgetary solvency. California is losing many retirees and workers because of its budget issues which include a reduction of services as sales and gasoline taxes are rising dramatically. Another national trend affecting rural real estate is a move away from farmland used for agriculture – small rural farmers are finding it difficult to make a profit when land is priced too high. Slower rates of appreciation make the investment more risky, as

well. In our area, most rural buyers are retired – or will soon – and aren't interested in the work large-scale farms takes. Interestingly, many more retirees are moving to the area and are interested in vineyards – which I guess no one told them required work, too! The trend of converting irrigated farmland into a vineyard is a strong one in the Applegate Valley. Nationally, high-profit crops, like grapes, helps the rural real estate outlook when climate and soil conditions support those kind of cash crops.

Nationally, above-average appreciation is forecasted for rural properties around college and university towns, and especially colleges that are seeing increased enrollment. Above average appreciation is also trending-up in hardwood timber-covered rural parcels. The price of hardwood has softened during the last 10 years because it is tied to home construction trends. Nationally, however, timberland has proven a sound long-term investments for both individuals and institutions.

With the strength of the national economic picture trending-up, the lending picture for rural properties needs to evolve, as well. Many banks and mortgage companies seem to be afraid of rural property transactions. We've found that a property with an owner-carry option may sell easier, quicker and without the appraisal roadblocks that can occur with a conventional rural loan.

In conclusion, the upward-trend predictors is positive for the Applegate Valley rural real estate market.

Don and Debbie Tollefson own Applegate Valley Realty. For questions on buying or selling property call 541-218-0947 or visit their new office at 15090 Hwy 238 in Applegate. Or visit their website at: www.applegatevalleyrealty.com

Sanctuary One at Double Oak Farm

by Robert Casserly

More and more local farmers are getting into grapes. There are already more than 50 featured stops on the Southern Oregon Wineries Association's tour. In the Applegate Valley alone there are 16 wineries and vineyards featured on the "Applegate Wine Trail," a clever marketing ploy which makes one imagine brave tourists clambering into Calistoga wagons destined for the frontier up over yonder Jacksonville Hill.

But before we collectively quaff too much Chardonnay and skip ahead to the Wine Rush, let's recall that after the Gold Rush petered out in Jacksonville, fruit trees became worth their weight in gold.

So despite the gloomy news recently about the decline of big-time local fruit producers like Harry & David and Associated Fruit, plenty of small-time farmers and gardeners have been busy planting fruit trees, and for good reason.

A community where people have thought ahead and planted lots of fruit trees to feed lots of people and animals is a community that is prepared for the unexpected. The best time to plant a fruit tree was 20 years ago. The next best time is now.

Food security is the foundation of a stable community, so it's no surprise that the resiliency of southern Oregonians to survive tough times is inexorably linked to fruit trees. In 1854, the Billings family planted the first pear trees in the Rogue Valley in the Valley View Road area. By 1860, numerous small apple orchards were planted. The first commercial fruit orchard was established in Medford in 1885 by J. H. Stewart and J. D. Whitman. One of Jacksonville's most celebrated historical figures, Peter Britt (1819-1905), planted fruit trees that are still producing food to this day. By 1891, the growth of the railroad allowed fruit from southern Oregon to be shipped to places all over the world. By 1930, there were 400 pear growers in Jackson County. Then, unexpectedly, the Great Depression hit, and a couple of hard freezes wiped out fruit across southern Oregon, then a blight struck and made a bad situation worse. But things soon picked up again when Harry and David Holmes began a little mail order business selling gift packages of fruit. You probably know how that turned out.

The growing season in the Jacksonville area is 150 to 180 days. The abundant sunshine we enjoy means fruit like apples, pears, peaches, cherries, and apricots get the sun they need to ripen to a delicious sweetness. The Mediterranean climate of southern Oregon helps prevent the diseases that plague fruit trees growing in moister climes like the Willamette Valley and along the Pacific coast. The soil here is generally fertile. Watering trees here is relatively affordable, especially if you install an efficient drip irrigation system for your trees.

You don't have to be a green-thumbed genius to grow fruit trees in such

conditions. All you have to do is do some research, pick a suitable kind of fruit tree, then pay attention to the tree's needs from time to time. Do that and you'll soon have a fruit stand growing in your backyard.

The Sanctuary's 55-acre care farm has enough acreage to plant hundreds of fruit trees, trees that could help feed lots of hungry people and animals.

Imagine how happy they'll be when they bite into the fresh organic apples, pears, figs, plums, and other fruits that you helped provide for them. Now imagine it wouldn't cost you a nickel to make it happen. Sound too good to be true?

It's true! We are happy to announce that Sanctuary One has been selected as a finalist for the 2011's "Communities Take Root" contest. The 20 groups from across the U.S. who garner the most public support will receive a donation of an entire fruit orchard and help planting the trees, too. The contest is co-sponsored by the Fruit Tree Planting Foundation of Pittsburgh, Pa. and Dreyer's Fruit Bars.

Please take a moment to visit www.CommunitiesTakeRoot.com to cast your vote for Sanctuary One. A couple of clicks of the mouse is all it takes.

Past years' orchard winners have received approximately 5,000 votes, so we would appreciate it if you vote and then ask your family, friends, and co-workers to vote for Sanctuary One. Everyone is allowed to vote one time per day, so if you want extra good-karma points, please consider casting a daily vote for the Sanctuary.

For more information, visit us on the Web at www.SanctuaryOne.org or call 541.899.8627.



Fire Extinguisher – Cont'd. from Pg. 6

7. It has been recommended by some manufacturers to shake your extinguisher once a month to prevent the powder from settling on the bottom.
8. Every few years, your fire extinguisher should be pressure tested to ensure the cylinder is safe to use. Your owner's manual or extinguisher labels should inform you when yours may need this test. This should be included in your monthly fire extinguisher inspection.
9. If you notice that your fire

extinguisher has become damaged or is in need of a complete recharging, it should be replaced immediately.

10. **VERY IMPORTANT:** Immediately after using your fire extinguisher (no matter how much), be sure to do a fire extinguisher recharge on your unit to reach full capacity to ensure that it will be ready in the event of another fire.

If you have any questions about your fire extinguisher feel free to contact us at Jacksonville Fire & Rescue 541-899-7246.

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julie@melissactaylor.com

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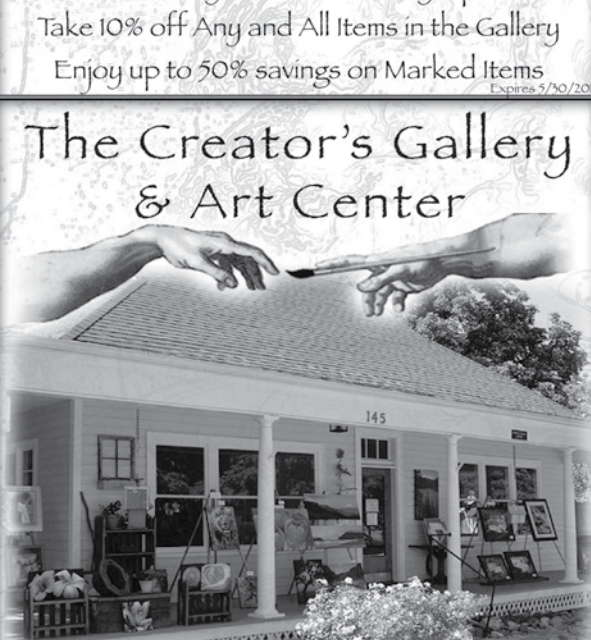
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