

WOW, WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH MY HOME?

Submitted by Bryan Webb

You probably know someone in your neighborhood that sold their home in 2013. You might be asking yourself, what is happening in the real estate market and what can I expect for the future? Overall, the news is going to be a positive message that you will want to hear. The interesting part is why it's happening and is it going to continue?

This past week, I attended the annual economic forecast produced by the Angelou Economics Group here in Austin. For 29 years, Angelos Angelou has been analyzing a number of key metrics, talking to city leaders and reporting the results each year, which can directly track to 'what's happening in Austin'.

If you talk to people around the country, many of them either wants to move to Austin or visit Austin. We are known as a great place to live, have lots of entertainment, and still are an affordable place to live. We are becoming an 'Entertainment Hub' with events that have an incredible impact on our economy. Here are a few of the key events:

Austin City Limits - economic impact of \$105M

South by Southwest - economic impact of \$218M

Formula 1 and Moto GP - economic impact of \$400M-\$500M

The total of these three events is considered the equivalent to about one third of the economic impact of the Super Bowl. Austin will also be hosting the X Games beginning in 2014.

First and foremost, Austin is one of the shining stars in the US Economy for many reasons. Here are a few key reasons:

JOB GROWTH:

Austin added 27,200 jobs in 2013, the forecast for 2014 is 28,900 and 2015 is 30,400. Many of these jobs are in high paying areas such as Professional Services.

POPULATION GROWTH:

Austin population grew by 54,000 in 2013 and is estimated to increase by 57,000 in each of the next two years.

NEW BUSINESS FORMATION:

This is a leading indicator of job and population growth in future years. In 2013, over 1,000 new businesses were started in Austin.

No review of the city would be complete without the mention of Google Fiber coming to Austin. With Internet speeds topping 1GB, download speeds will be increased by 100X and upload speeds will be increased by 500X. It isn't even known which types of industries and applications may be created from this incredible improvement to Internet performance. While the impact can't be forecasted, it is clear that Austin Entrepreneurs will capitalize on the capabilities with the creativity that has always been at the heart of the Austin Technology Sector.

Were there any concerns about the future of Austin? The two primary concerns addressed were the local traffic issues and congestion and a more national view of issues facing our country. However, the positive things in Austin far outweigh these concerns. If you have any questions about your home or the real estate market, always reach out to a local real estate professional for guidance.

THE MONITOR

WELCOME

A Newsletter for Meridian residents

The Monitor is a monthly newsletter mailed to all Meridian residents. Each newsletter is filled with valuable information about the community, local area activities, school information and more.

If you are involved with a school group, play group, scouts, sports activity, social group, etc. and would like to submit an article for the newsletter you can do so online at www.PEELinc.com or you can email it meridian@peelinc.com. Personal news for the Stork Report, Teenage Job Seekers, special celebrations, birthday announcements and military service are also welcome.

Our goal is to keep you informed!

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Tell Your Family's Story with Thoughtful Home Decorating

Article provided by Gary Gentry

Have you ever walked into a home, looked at something that caught your eye, and thought, "Wow, that is so cool"? After you noticed some unique piece of art, a wall of photos or a travel keepsake, you probably turned to the owner of the home and said, "Tell me the story behind that". Decorating by focusing on your family's interests and unique style will not only create a warmer, more comfortable place to come home to, but also invite visitors to ask questions and get to know you a little better.

For the creative type, this may come easily. My friend's daughter recently took an old window from her shed, refinished it, added hooks and hung it on the wall as a coat rack. When someone asks her about it, she tells them, not only about the window, but also the history of the shed that she removed and replaced with a newly constructed garage.

Even if you don't have the time or patience for more in-depth craft projects, you probably do have time for some basic but unique design projects. Everyone has a stack of photos that

are stored away in a closet, never to be looked at again. Why not choose 10 or 15 of your favorite photos, pick up matching black 8x10 frames and hang the photos staggered on a wall that guests will notice when they come over. It creates an instant conversation starter and invites storytelling on both sides.

The next time you are on a trip, instead of buying the t-shirt souvenir, look for something more unique. In foreign countries this might be a small statue, a wall-hanging, or a beautiful piece of pottery. If you're on a beach vacation, maybe you take a collection of beach findings and place them in a pretty glass jar. When you finish a bottle of your favorite wine, consider repurposing it into a lamp by putting string lights in the bottle and using it as a nightlight in the bathroom or hall.

Decorating should be stylish, tasteful & functional, but it should also include an element of you and your family. Let your home tell a story by choosing decorative items that have meaning, bring warmth and invite conversation.

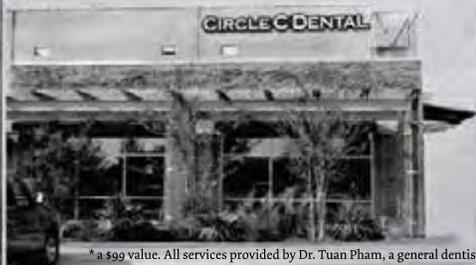
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GOOD NEIGHBORS CAN BE GREAT FOR STRESS LEVELS

Do you live in a neighborhood where you feel safe and connected to others, or do you feel overcrowded, threatened, and otherwise unsafe in your surroundings? This, and other aspects of neighborhood life, can impact both your level of happiness and stress.

Socializing: With our busy schedules, we don't always see friends as often as we'd like. For a bit of socializing that takes only minutes out of your day, it's nice to stop and chat with people for a few minutes on your way out to your car. And the more people you have available for shared social support, the better, generally speaking.

Pooled Resources: I know people in some more-friendly neighborhoods who share dinners, minimizing the effort it takes to cook. Others trade fruit from their trees. A neighbor who borrows a few eggs may come back with a plate of cookies that the eggs helped create. Knowing your neighbors increases everyone's ability to share.

Security: Knowing the people around you can bring a sense of security. If you need something—whether it's a cup of sugar when you're baking cookies, or someone to call the police if they see someone lurking outside your home—it's nice to know you can depend on those around you and they can depend on you.

Home Pride: Knowing the people who live around you provides a strengthened sense of pride in your home and neighborhood.

Coming home just feels nicer. While you may not be able to change the neighborhood in which you live, you can change the experience you have in your own neighborhood by getting more involved with those around you and taking pride in the area in which you live. The following are some ideas and resources that can help you to feel more at home in your neighborhood:

Get Out More: If you live in a generally safe area, I highly recommend taking a morning or evening walk. It's a great stress reliever that also allows you to get to know many of your neighbors, get an understanding of who lives where, and feel more at home in your surroundings.

Smile: It's simple enough, but if you're not in the habit of smiling and giving a friendly hello to the people you encounter in your neighborhood, it's a good habit to start. While not everyone will return the friendliness immediately, it's a quick way to get to know people and build relationships, even if you've lived close for years and haven't really said much to one another.

Talk To Your Elders: The more veteran members of the neighborhood often have the inside scoop on the neighborhood. You may be surprised at how much you can learn if you stop to take the time to talk to the sweet old lady at the end of the block.

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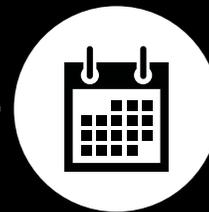
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A FOCUS ON RESOLUTIONS

By: *Concentra Urgent Care*

The New Year is a great time to make healthy lifestyle changes. According to the US Department of Health and Human Services, the most common resolutions focus on losing weight, getting fit, quitting smoking, and reducing stress. These are important themes that can reduce your risk of disease. Here are ways you can achieve your goals this year.

LOSING WEIGHT

A weight loss of five to seven percent of your body weight can improve your health and quality of life. It can also help prevent weight-related health problems, like diabetes. Changing your eating habits and increasing your physical activity are keys to successful weight loss and help to maintain optimal weight for the rest of your life. Create a plan for healthy eating and increased physical activity, while taking in fewer calories than you use. Your healthy eating plan should include:

- Taking into account foods you like and dislike
- A focus on fresh fruits, vegetables, and whole grains
- Consuming fat-free or low-fat dairy products such as yogurt, cheese, and milk
- Protein sources such as lean meats, poultry, fish, beans, eggs, and nuts
- Avoiding saturated and trans fats such as animal fat, butter, and

hydrogenated oils

- Staying away from foods high in sodium and added sugars

GETTING FIT

Regular physical activity for at least 30 minutes each day, or broken up into several shorter periods of 20, 15, or 10 minutes, can help you lose weight, keep it off, and stay fit. It can also improve your energy and mood and lower your risk for heart disease, diabetes, and some cancers. Try some of these physical activities:

- Walking (15-minute miles or 4 miles per hour)
- Biking
- Tennis
- Aerobic exercise classes (step aerobics, kickboxing, dancing)
- Yard work or house cleaning (gardening, raking, mopping, vacuuming)

Taking the first step can be the hardest part. Start slowly, at a level that is comfortable for you and add activity as you go along. Sometimes, it helps to have a friend or activity buddy when you start out. It is recommended that adults get at least two and a half hours of moderate physical activity each week. Strengthening activities, such as pushups, sit-ups, or lifting weights, at least two days per week are also encouraged.

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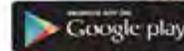
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SW Austin Neighborhoods	6 Months Sold History (06/2013-11/2013)						CURRENT MARKET	
	TOTAL	AVERAGE					TOTAL	
	Homes Sold	Square Feet	Price / Sq. Foot	Sold Price \$K	Year Built	Days On Market	Available	Pending Sale
Belterra	85	3,137	\$ 120	\$ 376	2009	57	29	12
Bridges of Bear Creek	19	2,772	\$ 135	\$ 373	2012	116	15	3
Circle C Ranch	198	2,857	\$ 138	\$ 395	2000	20	23	36
Heights at Loma Vista	6	3,603	\$ 133	\$ 478	2000	28	0	1
Highpointe	48	3,115	\$ 118	\$ 368	2010	80	19	8
Legend Oaks	28	2,516	\$ 133	\$ 334	1994	10	3	1
Lewis Mountain	3	3,599	\$ 171	\$ 616	1993	30	2	0
Loma Vista	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Maple Run	56	1,752	\$ 133	\$ 232	1987	12	4	13
Meridian	36	3,305	\$ 135	\$ 447	2008	42	7	4
Oak Creek Parke	15	2,788	\$ 117	\$ 328	1994	6	0	1
Overlook at Lewis Mtn	1	2,942	\$ 181	\$ 531	1999	16	0	0
Reunion Ranch	8	3,327	\$ 143	\$ 474	2013	72	7	2
Sendra	29	1,920	\$ 138	\$ 266	1999	11	5	5
Shady Hollow	33	2,300	\$ 136	\$ 312	1987	21	7	4
Villages at Western Oaks	79	2,123	\$ 145	\$ 308	1995	10	7	13
Western Oaks	7	2,225	\$ 159	\$ 355	1981	7	4	2
Grand Total	651	2674	134	\$ 358	2000	31	132	105
% Change Mo/Mo	-8%	0%	1%	1%	0%	11%	8%	15%
% Change Yr / Yr	3%	-1%	13%	11%	0%	-37%	-19%	1%

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