

Sherry Franks

Subject: Abe and Wags Laurel Highlands Update 11-2006

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Before any substantive discussion about real estate with us refer to the [PA Consumer Notice](#).

November 2006 Newsletter. Thank you to all who enjoy our updates! Always know that we do post these updates on our newsletters page on our website so if in the future we may seem to be late please check our site, your spam system may be blocking our message.

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1. Third Quarter MARKET OVERVIEW: July, August, and September transfers still indicate a strong sellers market at Seven Springs and a mixed market for Hidden Valley. It's mixed in that the price range you are in controls your marketability. The Seven Springs new and resale transfers are positioned to exceed Hidden Valley recorded settlements for the year. This is a new market pattern and a reversal of past trends. Unless Seven Springs is ready to develop more communities (the land is certainly there) this trend may be short lived. Here's the third quarter break down (**REMEMBER, these are new and resale recorded sales**);

Seven Springs

<u>2006</u>	<u>2005</u>	
0	2	sales under \$100K
3	6	sales between \$101K to \$200K
5	9	sales between \$201K to \$300K
8	10	sales between \$301K to \$400K
6	1	sales between \$401K to \$500K
<u>6</u>	<u>0</u>	sales over \$501K
28	28	

Hidden Valley

<u>2006</u>	<u>2005</u>	
3	13	sales under \$100K
9	20	sales between \$101K to \$200K
7	13	sales between \$201K to \$300K
1	5	sales between \$301K to \$400K
1	1	sales between \$401K to \$500K
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sales over \$501K
21	52	

2. Seven Springs: Slots- On Oct 17, 2006 the Nutting family withdrew their application for a resort slots license. The families ownership connection with the Pittsburgh Pirates was the deal breaker. Bob Nutting is quoted as saying, "his family will focus its efforts on a significant makeover for the resort." Improvements to the center lobby, hotel, and general grounds maintenance have begun. It will be interesting to see if our inventory increases as we've heard many homeowners say they were waiting for the final slot approval before putting their property up for sale. A quote coming from Bob Nutting in several formats has really caught our interest! The phrase comes out with this emphasis, Seven Springs **will be an economic force** for the community. Hey, Share the plans!! Since there were no recording taxes to split up when the sale went through and now no hopes of income generated from slots, we wonder just what they have up their sleeves!

Southwind - Through October 31 there have been a total of 34 recorded transfers. That's more than half way through the first phase of 54. Pennsylvania still holds the title for hailing the highest number of new home owners! Foundations for Phase Two are underway now. It sounds like the condo hotel project is being repositioned to a later date with Phase Three being replaced with more town homes. Towers for the Southwind chair lift have been installed. This will be the first winter for these new home owners and will test the planning design for parking, snow removal, construction, and association dues!

"SUPERPIPE" and NEW TERRAIN PARK to make first debut! The walls of the superpipe will be up to 18 feet high with full competition length of 450 feet!! Positioned for spectators entertainment? You will notice a clearing on the front side of the mountain to the skiers right of Alpine Meadows. Snowboarders and free style skiers numbers have dramatically increased since the Olympics recognized the sport in 2002. According to Scott Bender, sales of twin tip style skis (used for extreme tricks) have skyrocketed 230% over the past year. This addition may make Seven Springs a stop on the PRO Tour!

News releases may be found at www.7springs.com By far the best quote we found concerning the superpipe was from Robert Nutting, President of Seven Springs, "These continued improvements will allow us to realize the resort's true potential as a **year round economic driver for the region**. We will continue to embrace the **hottest trends** to ensure Seven Springs **stays on the cutting edge**." The superpipe and improved grooming are the major skiing improvements this year.

A high speed 6 pack " has been bought" to be installed on Gunar next year. The chair to service the Southwind community should be in operation this year and will most likely be a double. The off ramp is at the top of this community and does not give access to the top of the hill. We hear the water

park is on hold until the debate on where to put it and if it will be an indoor or outdoor facility is decided. The discussion is on what best to do with the area at the bottom of the front side slopes. This could be expanded to be a novice ski teaching area, which would allow the beginner to come out of the skier service building into a controlled teaching area,, or the water park could go there. That decision has not been announced. We don't expect the Great Western area to be opened until what is currently in operation is tweaked and polished to its greatest potential, so a good guess will be a couple of years out at best. For photos on some of the changes at Seven Springs go to our [Seven Springs](#) page, whats new for 2006-07.

Customer service is a big emphasis, with all employees getting training. We see the difference. Abe pulled up to the hotel lobby to pick up property keys last week. She had hardly opened the car door when there was a bellhop helping her and saying " Welcome to Seven Springs, we hope you enjoy your stay!"

SEPTEMBER RECORDED SALES

<u>2006</u>	<u>2005</u>	
0	0	sales under \$100K
1	1	sales between \$101K to \$200K
0	4	sales between \$201K to \$300K
3	4	sales between \$301K to \$400K
2	0	sales between \$401K to \$500K
<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	sales over \$501K
8	9	

To date the listings remain low and sellers are still raising the price bar. Expect the asking prices to continue to climb until we see higher numbers of inventory. Without new construction competition the resale prices have plenty of room to go up! Recently our sold listings have set record high sales numbers in the StoneRidge and SunRidge communities!

3. Hidden Valley: Hello out there! This resort is for sale! There is one more Resort Slot License that is up for grabs. We delayed this newsletter waiting for what we see is the obvious combination of these two resources. We think that there are parties exploring the acquisition of both the license and the resort. Think of the economic impact our region could be having Seven Springs in between two resort slot holders! Each resort offering it's own niche amenities. Add the Buncher Group future proposed development plans and watch the progress!

At the homeowners meeting there was discussion on adding a great room addition to the foundation building. As to the ski season, we expect the same vendors for the ski year with Ski North being the ski shop and Boston Concession continuing as the food vendors. Other than inspections and paint to the chairs we see little new activity so I would expect that this ski year will be about the same as last year.

With Laurel Highlands tourism numbers at record highs, Seven Springs being booked for conventions years in advance and packed on any holiday weekend, we know the business is here.

As new construction prices attempt to raise the sales numbers with future building, resale properties are benefiting!

SEPTEMBER RECORDED SALES

<u>2006</u>	<u>2005</u>
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1	6	sales under \$100K
2	9	sales between \$101K to \$200K
4	7	sales between \$201K to \$300K
1	3	sales between \$301K to \$400K
0	0	sales between \$401K to \$500K
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sales over \$501K
8	25	

The under \$200,000 price range has the least amount of competition with only 13 active listings. Once you get over that number there are 42 listings posted with 23 of them being over \$300,000. Year end statistics are going to be very interesting!

4. Nemaocolin and Laurel Summit: Nemaocolin continues to set the standard for the highest quality of facilities, amenities, and customer service and experience. Although their ski area is small, their customer experience is HUGH, making this resort the area choice for Presidents, golf pros, and eastern seaboard elite. This is truly a Four Star Resort. Go to the [Nemaocolin Website](#) for more. At the other end is the CLOSED SIGN at the entrance to Laurel Summit. Recent news articles indicate Somerset Trust has ownership of this state concession, but there has been no announcement this ski area will open this year, and we are seeing Ski Patrollers signing in with the HV and SS patrols. With no summer activities, we wonder if there is enough \$\$\$ calories in snow alone to revive and sustain this ski area. It looks like this year this area may be back country for the pinners and those willing to skin and ski and earn their turns.

5. Local: Buncher - A little over two years from their first land acquisition and the company now holds title to 822.44 acres at a cost of \$5,535,000. **AND that's just land cost!!** If you remember from our earlier updates they are planning one of the largest communities in southwestern Pennsylvania. A September newspaper article from the Somerset Daily American states that the County commissioners recommended that the Redevelopment Authority apply for a \$1 million dollar grant for this project. Considering the proximity to Laurel Hill Creek the environmental permitting may extend the process. With nothing being promoted on their website for this location (Rt 31, Hidden Valley, and Jimtown Rd) we have to wonder when they will begin marketing and releasing property for sale. This **will be an economic force** for our communities!

6. National: The National Association of Realtors met for their annual convention in New Orleans and we attended as representatives of the BOD of the Council of Real Estate Brokerage Managers and Westmoreland Realtors Association. Our participation keeps us at the leading edge of legislation, national trends, industry trends, and technology, all to the benefit of our clients. The downtown area was scrubbed and polished as NAR was the largest (30,000+ attending) convention since Katrina, and everyone we met from room service to Maitre de personally thanked us for coming to their city. The downtown experience was great and we encourage everyone to make this a tourism destination.

A cab ride to the 9th ward shows another picture with block after block for miles of total destruction. The cab driver said the debris was just finally removed so where there were thousands of small homes there is nothing but destroyed homes and empty lots. What the pictures don't show is the destruction of the infrastructure, sewage, water, and other utilities. Roads, sidewalks, and foundations that remain are marginal at best. Another problem is that in this poorer area many of the homes were passed on from one family member to another, with the key to the front door being proof of possession and no recorded change to deed or title. With the loss of personal documents in the flood many of the people who occupied these homes may not have the proof that they have any

legal right to it. It will be years if ever that this area will come back. To see photos of New Orleans and the 9th Ward go to our [Newsletter](#) page.

Catching up with friends in the business from all over we found markets to be hot and cold. Now is the time to make sure you have a REALTOR that is working for you (not a dual agent). Here are the questions you must have answers too PRIOR to selling or buying in this market ANYWHERE!

1. How many houses are on the market in my price range now compared to last year.
2. What have the sales been like for the past 6 months. Ask for a comparative market analysis on the property you are interested in or are selling.
3. How long are properties sitting on the market.

These three questions will give you great insight on supply and demand. Your agent can give you suggestions on negotiating to get the best deal.

7. Political: Incumbents Jess Stairs, PA HR and John Murtha, US HR remain with Melissa Hart, US HR replaced by Jason Altmire and Robert Casey defeating Senator Rick Santorum. Although the majority of our readers have no vote in this area, being property owners will make you subject to this change in the political landscape and impacted by legislation affecting property tax, transfer tax, and community services. Once our new representatives find their office and the bathroom we will be meeting with them to determine their position on issues that will impact local homeowners. More to come.

8. Tasty Dining Review: " Country Gourmet" Ligonier Country Inn Restaurant offers big-city cuisine at the base of Laurel Summit. Located on Route 30 in Laughlintown to the east of Ligonier, this homey and romantic Inn offers fresh seafood, filet mignon and roast duck. Chef Rich Salyers signature best seller is the Chicken Ligonier, chicken breast stuffed with provolone cheese and flavored with garlic butter. Travel time from the resorts about 35 minutes, take Route 381 to Route 30 for the scenic tour and past the Mellon Estate. Open weekends and some week days, reservations recommended, call 724-238-3651 for hours. This is a recap of the review by Karen Welzel in the Trib on 10-29-2006.

9. Team News: We stay very active in our local, state and national Realtor Associations because this is where decisions are made and policies are started. We are there to speak our voice on matters that affect our clients. Wags is the incoming President of the local board, Westmoreland Realtors Association, and Abe will be on the Board of Directors for the National Association of Realtors. She is also the incoming President of the PA Realtors Education Fund, which promotes and funds education for our state members. In our ongoing quest to continue being on the cutting edge of education within our industry Abe recently received the Resort and Second Home certificate (RSPS). This is a new program educating agents that service the second home market. It's core concentration is based in 1031 exchanges, market information, and servicing the second home owner.

10. Tek Tip: Go to our [TEK TIP NEWSLETTER](#) for a link to CNET, an Internet TV site that features reports and reviews on tech gear, gadgets, gaming and more. Also, links to realestate trends and flu shot locator and more. This site is updated monthly so make it a link in your favorites for a monthly update in the latest in technology.

CALL US FOR MORE recent sales information and market insights. We'll be posting quarterly and yearly stats for your review. Call us for info in between the postings. We'll be happy to share! Any feedback or questions are greatly appreciated. Feel free to forward this newsletter in its entirety to any other interested parties.

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