

Robert Wagner

Subject: Laurel Highlands Update 2-2005

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February 2005 Newsletter. Hope you are having fun in the snow.

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1. Market Overview- We watch Seven Springs, Hidden Valley, and surrounding market areas very carefully! This gives us a macroscopic view of supply, demand, and pricing for properties in the Laurel Highlands. Sales transfers from the Somerset side are gathered from the courthouse records. The recorded date is used instead of the settlement date as many attorneys/title companies ARE NOT PROMPTLY RECORDING DEEDS.

Total yearly sales for the resorts ended up with **94 for Seven Springs and 156 at Hidden Valley**. Both NEW and RESALE properties are included and remember that supply has a direct effect upon these numbers.

Starting off 2005 there are **17 active listings at Seven Springs with 44 posted for Hidden Valley**. Pricing is a big factor! The entry price in Hidden Valley for a one bedroom is at \$59,500 where entry at Seven Springs you will need to come up with \$175,000 for a two bedroom or over \$300,000 for anything slope side. The true bargains are the properties right outside of the resorts! A three bedroom chalet with two bedroom guest house, garage, in ground pool on an acre for \$349,000.00 just 4 miles away from Seven Springs on the Pittsburgh side. Go to www.AbeandWags.com to "View this Listing".

If you are curious as to what properties like yours were selling for in 2004 and what the market looks like for 2005 e-mail Abe@AbeAndWags.com or give her a call at 800-419-7653.

2. Seven Springs - Most recent bump in the road for slots is news from the [Johnstown Tribune Democrat](#). Will the family have to give up control of borough council for the ca-ching? Our State REALTOR

organization, through the Resort Forum, is reaching out to agents in other states that have gone through this transformation to help shorten our learning curve.

Sales contracts have been sent to people who have deposits on the Southwind town homes. According to prospective buyers, [Dynamic Building Corporation](#) from Pittsburgh has been named as the new builders for Seven Springs. Although resale inventory is very slim we look for more listings to enter the market when Seven Springs moves forward with construction of Southwind. This may have a cooling effect on this hot market, especially in high end units. **Still needed are approved plans from the Somerset Planning Commission.**

2004 RECORDED SALES AT SEVEN SPRINGS

11 sales under \$100,000	12%
29 sales between \$101,000 and \$200,000	31%
35 sales between \$201,000 and \$300,000	37%
15 sales between \$301,000 and \$400,000	16%
3 sales over \$401,000	4%

3. Hidden Valley - We are predicting a good year ahead for sellers with the lack of inventory and high prices at Seven Springs. New construction pricing is very competitive with re-sale single family homes over \$300K and keeping this market stagner. There are 44 active listings showing on REALTOR.com, keep in mind that this number **includes 14 empty lots and 9 properties over \$300K.** Back these out and you only have 21 properties in the market segment that is seeing 80% of the sales! Prime units are 2/3 BR that are updated and ready to move in.

2004 RECORDED SALES AT HIDDEN VALLEY

65 sales under \$100,000	41.7%
59 sales between \$101,000 and \$200,000	37.8%
26 sales between \$201,000 and \$300,000	16.6%
3 sales between \$301,000 and \$400,000	1.9%
3 sales over \$401,000	1.9%

4. Local - Many people don't realize that County Line Road is (for most of the road) the dividing line between Westmoreland, Fayette, and or Somerset Counties. Going up the hill towards 7 Springs from Champion, Westmoreland is on the left and Fayette is on the right of the white line. Somerset begins soon after the North Gate entrance. It has been a real eye opener to follow the listing and sale prices of similar properties that may have only a mile between them but sit on different sides of the road!

Fayette County residents will be seeing **almost a 60% increase** in their county property taxes this year to balance the county budget. In perspective, "according to Chief Assessor James A. Hercik the **average** property is **worth \$55,000** (how sad is that) and based on that number the average county tax bill was \$138.33. This number now goes up to approximately \$221."

Westmoreland County has approved their first [Comprehensive Plan](#). At 425 pages it takes awhile to download!! If you have time it is a very interesting read with lots of statistical details and plans for the future. When you exit the turnpike at Donegal you are in Westmoreland County and it continues on Route 31 to just before the summit at Hidden Valley where Somerset County begins.

5. State REALTOR News - We just got back from our state REALTOR meetings in Harrisburg. PA REALTORS biggest legislative issue is **defeating future property tax increases!** As the state government continues looking for funding, the real estate transfer tax is a prime target for an increase. **We say NO to any increase** to this tax and suggest you contact your representative and voice your opinion. Go to www.state.pa.us for contact information. Our state legal counsel, James Goldsmith gave us insight into the seller's disclosure. We also reviewed the revised agreement of sale that is going to be out later this

year. This is all information that keeps us on the cutting edge and keeps us proactive in representing our clients.

6. National/ International - Abe accepts her chair on the National Association of Realtors Resort Committee. We look forward to the insights and liaisons this will give us in the national and international resort market. If you need a referral to a top resort Realtor in the USA or world contact Abe at 800-419-7653 or Abe@AbeandWags.com.

7. Resort sales for 2004- Let's see what the numbers tell us about our 2004 sales. These are only team sales and do not reflect the total market averages.

Seven Springs Resale

0 - \$200K	98% List to sell with average of 33 days on market.
\$200-\$400K	97% List to sell with average of 90 days on market.
\$400K and above	97.6% List to sell with average of 219 days on market.

Hidden Valley Resale

0 - \$150K	94.8% List to sell with average of 114 days on market.
\$150- \$300K	97.3% List to sell with average of 44 days on market.
\$300K and above	Too slow to give a list to sell or DOM.

Resort areas Resale

0 - \$200K	99.8% List to sell with average of 50 days on market.
\$200K and above	83% List to sell with average of 79 days on market.

Interpolation: Seven Springs continues to increase prices in all ranges with DOM increasing with the price and when placed on the market. Hidden Valley shows slight increase in prices with properties in the \$130K to \$170K most active and above averages. Near resort properties very hot as savvy buyers watch for rare listings with 2 of these properties UA in 2 days at 100%+ of list. Higher priced area properties slower with more competition from the resorts. Rural properties are at bargain prices and market very slow. We expect both resorts and resort area to show price increases this year with the Southwind project and gambling being the wild cards in the deck.

8. Team News - Abe was awarded the PA CRS of the year Award for her tireless contributions as the PA State CRS President. Wags continues his education completing the Certified Residential Specialists course (CRS) and the Graduate Realtors Institute (GRI). Less than 4% of Realtors have these credentials and represent many hours of training in the representation, marketing, and management of the real estate transaction. Our team has qualified for the Prudential Presidents Award and should place us near or in the top 5% of nearly 1000 Prudential USA Realtor teams.

9. Tek Tip - We have integrated stunning flash photography technology into our Internet marketing. We also have PDF files of all listing disclosures and information available 24/365. Go to our site www.AbeandWags.com and "View our Listings" for the photos and visual tours and "Property Info" for the property information files.

10. Snow Conditions - Snow is 100% great on and off site. Cold temperatures, Mother Nature, and snowmaking have all the resorts open and with prime conditions. Trail conditions at the summit are excellent for X-C, snowshoe, and snowmobile. Play in our mountains NOW as this will not last forever.

11. CHINESE FOOD - Gourmet Buffet recently opened in Somerset and is trying hard at being your oriental food destination. Located on 153 N. Center Avenue in the Somerset Commons Plaza north of Somerset this restaurant features Chinese and sushi. Open 11:00 to 9:15 everyday and later on weekends. Call 814-445-4888 for more info.

REALTORS for the **Seasons of Your Life,**

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