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From: Wags [rwagner@lhtc.net]
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Subject: Abe and Wags Laurel Highlands Newsletter 3-2007



You are on the private e-group of [Adrienne "Abe" Wagner and Robert "Wags" Wagner](#), REALTORS of Prudential Preferred Realty, Laurel Highlands Office, Donegal PA, in the Laurel Highlands of SW PA, USA. If this message comes to you in error our apologies. Please let us know and we will clear you from this group. This update is not an attempt to solicit the offerings of other brokers and is for informational purposes only. Properties referred to are those listed or represented by our team and do not represent all properties in market area. All opinions are ours alone.

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

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.

March 2007 Newsletter**In this newsletter:**

- 1. Overall Local Market - Increase in inventory.**
- 2. Seven Springs: Inventory building, what's in the numbers**
- 3. Hidden Valley: Road Work, who has to fix?**
- 4. Proposed Developments: Buncher and EaglesRidge update.**
- 5. Local: New Enterprise Stone and Lime Co Gets Mining Permit.**
- 6. State: Rep. Tom Tangretti, Chair Tourism Committee sets priorities.**
- 7. National: A Tale of Two Industries And PMI NOW DEDUCTIBLE**
- 8. Time to sell?? Internet Key: are you there or invisible??**
- 9. Team News: Wags President of WRA: REALTORS to support Military.**
- 10. TEK TIP: Home repair, discount sites, car buying and repair.**

1. Overall Local Market - More properties on the market equal more choices for buyers! Whether it's residential or commercial there is a selection! What makes buying in this type of market challenging is finding past comparables for appraisers. Make sure you are working with a DESIGNATED buyers agent when considering purchasing! We have an awesome [5 bedroom B&B](#) with a working relationship to accommodate overnight guests visiting Falling Water. It's minutes from the resorts!

2. Seven Springs - Although in our last report we thought we would be seeing a "healthy increase" in resale prices there have been some changes in the market. **First** the winter ski season failed to create a continued sales momentum for resale properties. No natural snow will do that! **Second** the Third Phase in Southwind has yet to sell out. And, **most recently**, the stock market ride may have prospective buyers rethinking where they put their discretionary income. Our July update letter will give a better perspective with six months of statistics to review.

Another event of note is that since January there have been a minimum of seven price reductions for resale properties. Although the number of new listings for January and February are comparable from '06 there are several floor plans that have multiple listings. The higher supply of identical competition (OK the location and interior design will NOT be the same) may create competitive pricing depending upon the sellers urgency.

SOUTHWIND As we mentioned above Phase Three has yet to sell out. Interest may not be as

intense as their delivery dates are a year or two out! We saw this same type of scenario in 1987 (way lower prices then!) when the Villages were first offered for sale. The first ski in ski out phases sold out like crazy then things started to settle down as prices increased and NEW locations began selling against RESALES with superior locations. Speaking of resales there are two listed for sale, [check out ours it's slopeside!](#)

With this being the first winter (very light at that) for the chairlift and snow removal within the community it is going to be interesting to see if the \$275 a month maintenance fees remain the same. And if the amenity center is completed for use this year.

As promised we went back through recorded sales and found appreciation rates for the YEARLY, AVERAGE SALES PRICES. Hold on to your hats as these numbers shocked us! Are you ready to diversify that stock portfolio! **NOTE THE SOUTHWIND SALES WERE NOT INCLUDED!**

YEAR	Average Sales Price	Annual Appreciation
2006	387,466	37.33%
2005	242,833	10.52%
2004	217,283	9.87%
2003	195,846	11.37%
2002	173,582	13.56%
2001	150,051	-1.24%
2000	151,905	6.59%

Resale inventory is at 32 properties up from 28 this time last year. Recorded sales for Jan and Feb are up 53 % from 06 (15 to 7). Want to know how your property fits into this market? E-mail ABE@ABEandWAGS.com or give her a call at 412-897-8535.

3. Hidden Valley The winter freezing and thawing has really eaten up the main roads within the resort. Now that the snow is melting and spring is almost here we'll see how the repairs go! Speaking to Dave from the Association it is very clear that the homeowners ARE NOT RESPONSIBLE for maintenance and repair of the main arteries into the Resort. In fact last summer many of the side roads were repaved through the Association and more are scheduled for this year. The Resort is accountable for Craighead and Parke Drive which are both private roads. Gardner Road is a Township Road. Supervisors will be reviewing road conditions probably in April or May at their monthly meeting (1st Thursday of every month at their office in Bakersville).

Here are the past seven years worth of average sales price appreciation rates for Hidden Valley. Remember this is an AVERAGE rate. For both resorts there are certain designs that have exceeded and been below the average rate because of popularity, desirability, location, supply, and demand.

YEAR	Average Sales Price	Annual Appreciation
2006	172,489	5.74%
2005	162,588	6.61%
2004	151,844	19.51%
2003	122,223	10.30%
2002	109,632	2.55%
2001	106,834	5.69%
2000	100,754	-6.03%

Resale inventory stands at 64 with no properties available under \$100,000 . Recorded sales are down 54% for Jan and Feb from 2006 (7 to 13) . E-mail Abe at ABE@ABEandWAGS.com to find out how your property fits into this market or call her at 412-897-8535.

4. Proposed Developments Buncher Development in Bakersville (Rt. 31 east of Hidden Valley) Although (as of 3-7-07) there have been no formal plans submitted to Somerset County Planning Commission we hear that a permit for the sewage line tapping into the Somerset System was granted. That's one big step!

Eagles Ridge - (Rt. 31, 2 miles west of Donegal Exit) Sure sounds like this new community will finally see some earth moving this year! Although still waiting for the final permits this log home development around Donegal Highlands golf course has lot reservations on several of the offerings.

5. Local New Enterprise Stone and Lime Co. (Hidden Valley Area) This limestone mining application has been traveling through the court system since 1998. The permit grants the company permission to remove 49 acres of limestone within the 77 acre Henderson Quarry located along the PA Turnpike in Donegal Twp. Why the concern? It sits in the Indian Creek Watershed which is a high quality cold water trout stream. At this time our local Mountain Watershed Association opposes this permit, feeling it will have an adverse impact on the watershed. This property is accessed through Tunnel Road across from Hidden Valley where Westmoreland and Somerset County meet. We're not sure if you'll see it from the turnpike, RT 31, neither or both!

6. State: PA Representative Tom Tangretti has been appointed Chairman of the House Tourism and Recreational Development Committee. I had a chance to talk with him at Harrisburg regarding their priorities for the upcoming year. Their key initiatives being considered are Historic preservation and grants, starting school after Labor Day to extend the recreational season, improving and increasing lodging in state parks, and expanding our Civil War trails, Arts and Museums within the Commonwealth. With tourism the core of our local economy and supporting property values we watch carefully to make sure the Laurel Highlands continues to be a desired destination for visitors.

7. NATIONAL: Do you have any acquaintances in the TRAVEL INDUSTRY? The Internet has pretty much rewritten their job descriptions. Starting with the travel agents, AAA, the airlines, how about renting cars, booking hotel rooms, acquiring tickets for events. Web sites out of the yazoo have replaced many 9-5 jobs. Just what did the Internet do? It gave the consumer **CONTROL** over their time **and** easy access to **INFORMATION**.

The real estate industry is going through a similar transition although many in the business refuse to see the train coming down the tracks! Agents, for the most part NO LONGER control the information needed to make buying or selling decisions. Many counties offer web access to recorded sales, assessment and tax information, deeds, mapping, and listings can be found on multiple web sites. Check our [web site](#) for links to Somerset, Fayette, and Westmoreland county information.

The newest web site to hit our industry was featured on the cover of Fortune magazine in the Feb 19, 2007 issue. It's [Zillow.com](#) with as many as FOUR MILLION visitors a month. Our link should open with Seven Springs zip in place. If not insert 15622 for your search. If you enter Hidden Valley (15502) it opens in downtown Somerset. Not good.

Basically it allows anyone (agents or homeowners) to post listings for free, with a new twist, "MAKE ME MOVE." This allows homeowners who are not on the market to come up with a price that would make them pack their bags and sell. The big draw, a "**Zestimate.**" It is to give you an idea of what your property may be worth. However, if there have been no postings of properties in your area it's pretty much worthless.

It certainly doesn't work in our area YET. When it does become populated, accuracy will be an issue as it doesn't program in the factors such as location, view, access to slopes, other units on the market, condition and market demand. You still need a market expert to walk the floor plan, see the view, determine the market, and put the right price on your house in this area. We want you to know **THAT IS WHAT WE DO!**

As we see it this site is an attempt to create a free **Multiple Listing Service**, an MLS for the entire United States. The technology is there, the site is there, but what doesn't sit well is all of the MLS services that charge their agent members to offer the same information. There will be law suits but in the end isn't it parallel to the travel industry? Consumers want **CONTROL** over their time **and** easy access to **INFORMATION**.

PRIVATE MORTGAGE INSURANCE (PMI) As tax time rolls around you should be aware that this is the first year that homebuyers will be allowed to deduct the costs of mortgage insurance premiums on mortgages **obtained in 2007**. Mortgage insurance is required if a down payment is less than 20%. It protects the lender in case the borrower defaults on the loan. Naturally there's a list of provisions for qualifying. A big one is that the borrowers adjusted gross income must be below \$100,000. Think children or grandchildren. See your tax advisor or accountant for specifics!

8. Time to sell ?? Our listings are posted on Zillow and over 10 other web sites to get your property top exposure. Latest statistics show that over 80% of buyers search the Internet first and we estimate that nearly 90% of second home buyers use the Internet. The old PPP method of selling homes (Put in MLS, Put up sign, Pray it sells) never worked here (you can't even put up a sign at the resorts) and never will. If you are not getting a **HIGH VALUE TOTAL SATURATION** Internet marketing plan you are not on the market. Talk to us about our unique "[Key to Closing](#)" marketing plan. We want your business and offer a LOW COST/ HIGH VALUE program to put more money in your pocket at closing.

9. Team News: Wags, as the 2007 President of the Westmoreland REALTORS Association, has selected to support our military deployed overseas as his charity. Using the [Love Boxes for Troops](#) program started by a REALTOR in Oregon, his goal for WRA is to identify and support all those in our area with gift boxes. *THE SUPPORT HAS BEEN OVERWHELMING!!* **REALTORS committed to over 100 boxes at their first meeting to support local troops.** If you know of someone serving until at least July 1, 2007 please e-mail Wags at Wags@AbeandWags.com to have that person included in our gift box program. Abe is now the President of the PA REALTORS Education Foundation, dedicated to the education of real estate licensees in PA. Oh, buy the way, we were again recognized as a Prudential Leading Edge Team. This group is the top 9% in the USA of over 60,000 Prudential REALTORS. Thank you for selecting us as your REALTOR of choice. Getting your properties sold is what qualifies us for this recognition.

We have the new [Resort Rental Page](#) up and ready for your link to your rental home. If you have a resort rental anywhere please e-mail us the link and we will post it for free. If you sent us a link in the past and it is not there please resend. Thanks.

10. Tek Tip As a member of the Real Estate Cyber Society we have a [Monthly Newsletter](#) with really neat Internet tips and tricks. Featured this month, dealing with contractors and home repair, opening e-mail attachments, on line discount site, car dealer research when buying or getting repairs.

We appreciate your feedback or questions. *Please ask for Abe or Wags personally.* Feel free to forward this newsletter in entirety to any other interested parties.

A REALTOR Team for All Seasons

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