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PROPERTY SIGNPOST NEWSLETTER

Email: berry@propertysignpost.co.zaWeb Site: www.chaseveritt.comSubscription: [Click Here](#)**Chas
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Chas Everitt International sales agents have all the latest market information regarding local property values at their fingertips – and are committed to the highest standards of personal service when it comes to selling your home. In addition, the Chas Everitt International property group offers you, the homeowner, the best possible exposure for your property in both national and international markets. So if you are thinking of selling your home, call your nearest Chas Everitt International office today for the name of your local area specialist - or visit www.chaseveritt.com

Every month the **Property Signpost Newsletter** will be issued to all our subscribers, filled with real estate information to help you make an informed decision, whether you are buying or selling a property.

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1. Welcome By Publisher

So far, 2006 is showing all the signs of being another excellent year for property - the fifth in a row in which prices show real growth and in homeownership numbers increase.

Our offices have reported strong sales activity all around the country in January, boosted by rising consumer confidence that inflation and interest rates will remain relatively low this year and that more personal tax cuts will be announced during the Budget presentation this month.

From a macro-economic perspective, higher growth and new capital projects should also bring about an increase in employment and housing demand, which is good news for property developers.

Meanwhile, we're hard at work preparing for the imminent launch of several new Chas Everitt International franchises in key areas of the Western Cape, Eastern Cape and KwaZulu Natal, and anticipate that 2006 will be the group's best year yet!

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2. Pointers for Picking the Perfect Area

Instinct can tell you a lot about an area in which you are considering buying a new home. Some areas feel just right, and this will have an important bearing on the decision to buy or not.

But wise investors will take into account much more than the just their "gut feel" for an area. Important indicators of whether an area is in decline or is headed for new-found prosperity include the local shopping centre.

A well-maintained and clean centre with bright, modern store fronts is obviously a positive, while a number of empty shops or "closing down sale" signs should start the alarm bells ringing.

The type of shop found in an area is also important. Long-established shops with a good volume of business, up-market clothing retailers and quality restaurants signal stability and prosperity, while a proliferation of second-hand goods shops with assorted jumble on the pavements and ill-stocked convenience stores should be a warning.

Lots of new building in an area, both residential and commercial, is a sure sign of growing confidence. Property developers usually stay well clear of areas in decline.

Thriving and well-patronised schools signal a young and confident resident population likely to make strong efforts to maintain an area's attractions and to increase the demand for more amenities and centres of business and entertainment.

An experienced local estate agent will be able to provide further pointers to enable you to make a much more scientific evaluation of an area and its prospects. And of course you should ask for a comprehensive market analysis (CMA) on any specific property that has attracted your attention. This should include an area sales history for the past few years, which will quickly show whether property prices in the area are on an upward or downward path and either clear the way for you to make an offer or suggest that you make a run for a better area.

3. The Party Goes On

The birthday may be over but the party's still going strong for the lucky winners of our Zero Percent Commission competition. This was organised late last year to celebrate Chas Everitt International 's 25th birthday, and it attracted hundreds of entries from homeowners keen to have their properties marketed and sold without having to pay any agent's commission.

Now, under the "watchful eyes" of independent auditors, a draw has taken place to identify the 25 potential winners - who stand to take home a total of up to R1-million in commission "cash-backs". We have decided, however to keep the names of the winners under wraps for just a little longer - so as not to dampen the excitement when the awards are made live on radio around the country over the next few weeks. Then the corks will really be popping.

4. Don't Let Pets Put a Spoke Your Deal

It's a sensitive subject that is often difficult for estate agents to raise with home sellers, but pets who are given free reign of a home do leave unmistakable signs of their presence, no matter how well-trained and cared-for they are.

And while Rover may be your hero for chasing away intruders in the middle of the night, potential buyers of your home might not find his smell or his fur so appealing.

So here's some general advice for home sellers who are also animal lovers:

- Before your home goes on show open as many windows as possible and use a proprietary brand of deodorizer liberally.
- Vacuum vigorously, not forgetting beds and couches if the animals have been allowed to sleep there, and better yet, have carpets professionally cleaned and treated for pests.
- Clean up the garden, wipe cats' muddy footprints from windowsills and revarnish or repaint doors where dogs have scratched to be let in.
- And finally, take your animals out for the day on showday and tidy away their toys and bowls. Even if potential buyers don't mind being "welcomed" by your beloved boerbull, they will be alerted to look out for pet damage that could put you in a poor bargaining position or even cost you a sale.

5. Be Prepared for Emergencies

It may seem alarmist, but common sense dictates that every household should have an emergency plan - and that homeowners should prepare a new one as soon as possible after any move.

The plan should cover every eventuality from a genuine disaster such as a fire or a robbery to a minor disruption such as a burst water pipe (which can seem like a disaster on a Friday night), and should be carefully thought through and discussed so all members of the household know what the "proper procedure" is in each situation.

It should also include the preparation of a clear list of contact telephone numbers for all emergency services including the police, fire and ambulance services, security company, doctor, plumber, electrician and municipal services and, if necessary, the nearest veterinarian with an after-hours number.

This document should also contain the location of the water mains cut-off valve and the electrical (or gas) supply installations, details of any special medical care needed by family members and the numbers of the homeowner's preferred vehicle, appliance and household repair services.

All members of the household must know where this list is kept, and everyone must ensure that it is returned to that position every time it is used.

It should also, of course, be reviewed regularly to ensure that it is up to date. Only someone who has not lived through the frustration of hunting for a mislaid emergency number while a burst geyser destroys ceilings, soaks the beds and ruins fitted carpets would argue against finding the time for this kind of preparation.

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