

REAL ESTATE NEWS AND UPDATES

By Everett Ballenger, Owner/B.I.C. Ballenger Realty. Former President Beaufort County Association of Realtors.

As it is a little too soon to analyze the first quarter real estate numbers, we decided to take this opportunity to share some general real estate news and provide updates on subjects reported in past articles.

In the December 2010 issue of the LIBPA newsletter, there was an article about the changes at the “old” Coosaw River Estates. The new company (Manor House) had a grand opening at “Somerset Point” in January, and we thought it would be informative to find out how the project is moving along. The following was supplied by Cherimie Crane of Ballenger Realty (the listing company) -

After opening January 11, 2011, Somerset Point is off to a terrific start with seven homes underway and several more in the works! Retirees, downsizers, first time home buyers, and even second home owners comprise the types of new home owners. The four bedroom model has been the favorite, with the average price being \$250,000. Manor House builders have offered several incentives to those buying in the early stages of this thriving community to include a one time \$4000 in design options. Also, in appreciation of the contribution to the nation by our wonderful service men and women, a 1% military discount is available.

It is certainly welcome news that, in this still weak real estate market and struggling home construction industry, some developments are doing well. There are also some very important mortgage changes taking effect in April 2011. The following information was supplied by Sam McGowen of South Carolina Mortgage Associates –

The Federal Reserve Board recently dropped more bombshells on the mortgage lending industry, and Correspondent Lenders, Bankers and Brokers. The final rules limiting Lender compensation are the most dramatic ever and go into effect on April 2011. In the short term expect rates to possibly rise because the new rules limit the borrower's ability to negotiate the best loan terms.

Compensation cannot vary from loan to loan. Loan officers cannot negotiate or make any concessions to lower their compensation or offer closing cost credits. Compensation can be paid to the lender from one and only one of either: Borrower paid such as “Origination Points” or lender paid, known as “Yield Spread Premiums”. Using only one of these options will reduce the ability of the borrower to secure lower rates. Seller concessions will now only be considered to be a payment to the borrower. Existing policies allow lenders to acquire the best rates and terms from their various associate investors. Beaufort is fortunate to have many seasoned professionals, who I am sure, will be able to develop new business models, and implement the necessary changes to insure the very best service to their clients. Mortgages can be complicated and these mortgage changes can only “muddy” the water. If anyone has mortgage questions – Sam

McGowen of South Carolina Associates (843) 524-2252 would be more than willing to help.

One last item of news – Brian Gates President of the Beaufort County Association of Realtors, recently presented Missy Buskirk of Coldwell Banker Platinum Partners with the prestigious honor of 2010 Realtor of The Year award. Congratulations Missy!!