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Do You Know Who the Registered Sex Offenders Are in Your Neighborhood?

The presence of a registered sex offender near your home and family can be a scary thought, and understandably so. There are websites where you can learn their whereabouts, but I favor going to the police department, where you can obtain a list that is dependably accurate and up to date.

When the presence of a sex offender was asserted recently by a client, I tested the process for myself, and it was quick, easy and free. I visited the Golden Police Department, asked for a list of registered sex offenders, and, after showing my driver's license, was given a list of Golden's registered offenders. It was as easy as that.

Presumably the process would be just as easy at the Arvada, Lakewood, Evergreen, Edgewater or any other police department, as well as at the Jeffco Sheriff's Office for unincorporated areas of Jeffco.

As a Realtor, I believe that the presence of a nearby registered sex offender is a "material fact" that should be disclosed to a buyer, although the Real Estate Commission is silent on the issue. For several years there was a section in the state-approved contract to buy and sell real estate which advised the buyer to consult with local law enforcement if the presence of a sex offender was of concern to them. Not only is that advice now missing, but the Seller's Property Disclosure form, which contains eight pages of questions about every conceivable aspect of a property, including the presence of noxious weeds, doesn't ask about nearby sex offenders.

I can only speculate as to why the Real Estate Commission is so silent on this issue, since I am not a member of their forms committee.

Perhaps one reason is that the definition of "sex offender" is so broad. You can become a sex offender required to register for life, for example, if you "moon" someone (indecent exposure). If everyone my age (60) who engaged in that prank as a college student (I did not, by the way) had been prosecuted under today's laws, we would have quite a few more registered sex offenders!

One thing I like about the police department list which I now keep in my files is that for each sex offender it gives a basic description (indecent exposure, child enticement, etc.) plus the name and phone number of the offender's probation officer in case you'd like to ask any questions, such as whether the offender is dangerous..

One last note: We all know that people have been wrongly convicted or murder, and it's inevitable that some have been wrongly convicted of sex offenses, too. Can you imagine being a registered sex offender for life — and innocent?

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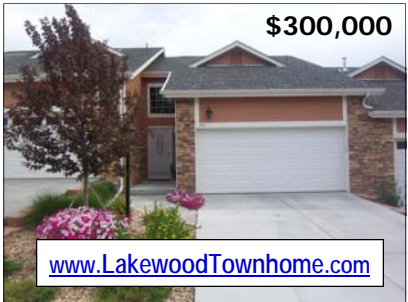


By JIM SMITH, Realtor®

This Week's Featured New Listing:

Lakewood Townhome Has Main-Floor Master

Located in the new subdivision known as "Thraemoor in the Park," this 2007 townhome has some great features, including its location at the very top of the subdivision, over a block from Yale Avenue, despite its address of 6711 W. Yale Ave.



With this home, you not only have a main-floor master, but a guest bedroom, family room and bathroom in the fully finished walk-out basement. There are hardwood floors, slab granite kitchen counters, and a 327-square-foot loft. Because this home sits higher than the homes below it, you also have nice foothills views. Above this home is open land. Take a video tour on the website.

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