

If You Don't Find the Home You're Looking for, We Have the Tools to Find One That's Not on the MLS

I took a class recently in which I learned to use a tool for searching public records in the same way that agents can search the MLS, using criteria that even the MLS doesn't have. Now, if you can't find a home for sale that meets your needs, we know how to conduct a search of *all* homes using those same criteria and reach out to the home owners to see if they would sell to you.

By the way, this tool is only available to agents who are Realtors — that is, members of the local and national Realtor association. Only about half of Colorado's licensed real estate agents are Realtors.

Here's how it works. Although not always up-to-date because of homeowners who did not get permits for certain improvements to their homes, the public records do contain extensive information that can be searched using this tool.

We can search not only for style, square footage, bedrooms, bathrooms and lot size, but also for finished or unfinished basements,

whether the home is owner occupied or a rental, and other criteria, including:

- ◆ Deck
- ◆ Swimming Pool
- ◆ Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU)
- ◆ Barn
- ◆ Workshop
- ◆ Corner lot or cul-de-sac
- ◆ Fireplace
- ◆ Estimated value

The estimated value is not the assessor's valuation which is often inaccurate and, at any rate, not current. The assessor's valuation is as of June 30th of the previous even numbered year (2024). This tool's valuation is based on *recent comparable sales* from both the MLS *and* off-MLS transactions.

Last, but definitely not least, we can search for homes that were purchased over 5, 10, 15 or 20 years ago. Owners who purchased their home less than five years ago are least likely to be interested in selling, so we don't bother.

By the way, this same tool can also be used instead of the MLS itself to search MLS listings using those same search criteria above, many of which are not available on MLS

searches. Also, we can add any other search criteria that is important to you, not just the ones listed above, using a key word search. These can include anything — sauna, walk-in bathtub, or you-name-it (literally).

Another important criterion for any buyer is location. You can specify any area, city or subdivision — or multiple areas and subdivisions.

So, let's say, hypothetically, that you would like us to solicit owners of two-story homes with Littleton addresses but not in Douglas County that were purchased over 10 years ago. The home must have 3-4 bedrooms and 2 or more bathrooms, and it must have a 3-car garage, a finished basement and a workshop. You will consider homes with a valuation up to \$900,000. The house should be not more than 30 years old, and it must be owner-occupied.

Working with those criteria, we come up with an Excel spreadsheet which includes the address *and* name of the owner. Using a separate app, we could add to the spreadsheet the landline and cell number of each owner.

Using a mail-merge program, we could send individually printed letters in individually printed envelopes saying that we have a

buyer who is looking for a home like theirs. We could also call the owners or give you the list and let you call them after you've signed a buyer agency agreement with us. (This would require that the home is not listed by another agent, which we can confirm.)

This tool can also be used to search expired listings without the use of lead generation services which often provide faulty or out-of-date data and don't verify that the home has not been relisted by another agent.

Although the inventory of homes for sale is much greater than it has been, this tool allows us to open up the whole universe of homes, whether for sale or not, which match your specific desires. If this sounds like something you'd like us to play with on your behalf, call me or any of our broker associates (listed below) and we'll get to work for you.

Have You Heard of 'Pig Butchering'? It's the Latest, Most Pernicious Kind of Scam

We all know someone who has been scammed. My own sister lost \$15,000 to a scammer. Since starting this column/ad in 2003, I have warned readers at least ten times about rental scams, and a few months ago I described how a scammer listed a parcel of land he didn't own with us, and we only found out that was the case when the title company sent a FedEx letter to the owner of record to verify the transaction before it was "sold" to a neighbor.

In my April 6, 2017, column I wrote about a Golden man whom I met because he wanted to buy a million-dollar property once his "inheritance" arrived from his Nigerian scammer. I couldn't convince him he was being scammed, and he died penniless and homeless, still clinging to his dream.

You and those you know probably have your own stories about scammers.

Recently I came across of an 8-part podcast by **Economist Podcasts** called "Scam, Inc." I strongly recommend listening to it.

(It costs a couple dollars per month to subscribe to all Economist podcasts, but this one is worth every penny by itself, and you can cancel after you've listened to it.)

"Pig butchering," I learned, is a Chinese term. Pork is their most precious meat, and the scam entails finding the "pig" (you), building a pig sty (messaging by text or on WhatsApp), feeding it (building rapport, and eventually guiding the person to invest in crypto), rewarding it (showing phony paper returns on the crypto investment), and ultimately butchering it (taking all your funds before you realize the investment was a hoax). Pig butchering take a lot of time.

It sounds a lot like what Bernie Madoff did, doesn't it? But this is done by English-speaking Southeast Asians, mostly in Myanmar, who find a reason never to betray themselves by speaking to you on the phone, where you would recognize they're not who they pretend to be.

Sometimes, but not always, these are ro-

mance scams, where the scammer gradually convinces you of their love and provides pictures which are stolen off the internet. The first example in the Scam, Inc. podcast, however, was of a Kansas bank president who was conned into investing his bank's reserves in crypto by a non-romance scammer who simply appealed to the banker's desire for self-enrichment. He lost \$42 million of the bank's money. The bank was ultimately forced out of business. No one who knew the president could believe what he had done.

Here's a bit of advice I learned. Take the picture you received from a possible scammer and go to the search field of Google.com. At the right of that field next to the microphone icon is an icon which says "Search by image" when you float your cursor over it. Click on that icon, drag or upload a picture, and it will instantly show you everywhere that picture appears. I uploaded my own picture and, fortunately, it only showed my own websites.

Find a link to the podcast and much more at <http://RealEstateToday.substack.com>.

Is Your Home Wildfire Ready?

My January 13, 2025, column described ways in which homes could be made fire-resistant. If you read that article on our blog, <http://realestatetoday.substack.com>, you saw multiple links to articles and reports from Colorado to California on how to harden you home against wildfire.

Since then, I became aware of a website, www.RotaryWildfireReady.com, created by the Rotary Clubs of Evergreen, Conifer, Boulder and Mountain Foothills, in cooperation with fire departments, community leaders and Fire Adapted Colorado. You'll be impressed, as I was, by how comprehensive this website is, providing a wide array of advice and resources, not just on hardening your home but on preparing for the eventuality of an evacuation order.

Environmental Film Festival

The Colorado Environmental Film Festival runs this weekend, Feb. 21-23 at the **Green Center, 924 16th Street**, Golden, on the campus of the Colorado School of Mines. I wrote about the festival in last week's column.

You can study the three-day schedule at <https://ceff2025.eventive.org/schedule> and buy tickets at <https://ceff.net/tickets>.

If you go, look for our booth in the Eco-Expo, where you can browse the display of current solar-powered homes and let us know if you'd like to see any of them.

Just Listed: 2-Bedroom Townhome in Lakewood

Don't miss this remodeled two-bedroom, one-bathroom townhome at **3355 S. Flower #59**, in the quiet Jefferson Green subdivision northeast of Highway 285 and Kipling Street. Features include new wood plank tile flooring throughout the first floor, new lighting fixtures, new stainless steel sink and range. The fully tiled bathroom has a new vanity and lighting. The bedrooms have new carpeting, ceiling fans, and the primary bedroom has a walk-in closet. There are newer windows throughout. The LG washer and dryer are included. Also included is one space in the 2-car shared garage, with a storage area included. A second designated parking spot is in the parking lot. This home is move-in ready! Listing agent **David Dlugasch** has created a narrated video walk-through tour which you will find along with lots of magazine-quality pictures at www.GRElistings.com. He'll be holding it open this **Saturday, February 22nd, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.** Or call him at **303-908-4835** to arrange a private showing.



Just Listed: 3-BR/3-Bath Patio Home in Lakewood

Meticulously maintained with many quality upgrades, this turnkey patio home at **2601 S. Kipling Court** is ready for new owners. Located in a private gated community, it is two blocks from Bear Creek Park. The large main level has vaulted ceilings and south facing windows that provide plenty of natural light. The spacious main floor is 1,911 square feet and features an updated kitchen with quartz countertops, gas range and stainless steel appliances. The living room is open to the kitchen and dining areas and has a stacked rock gas fireplace. The large primary bedroom with a 5-piece bath has a sliding door to access the outdoor patio. The main level also includes a second bedroom, a 3/4 guest bathroom and an office space. Quality wood plank tile flooring, lighting, handrails and paint add to the cozy ambience. There is a large main-floor laundry with built-in cabinets and utility sink (washer and dryer included). The basement is professionally finished with 9-foot ceilings, family room, bar, pool room (with custom pool table included), a 3rd bedroom and 3rd bath, and a large 350-sq.-ft. storage area. There is a newer high-efficiency furnace and A/C, as well as new garage door and opener. The seller is open to selling any furniture in the home. Find additional photos and view a narrated video walk-through at www.GRElistings.com. To arrange a showing, call listing agent **Jim Swanson** on his cell phone anytime, **303-929-2727**.



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Golden Real Estate lists and sells residential properties across the entire metro area.

Interested in politics? Read my left-of-center commentary at <http://TalkingTurkey.substack.com>



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