Happy New Year! What’s Your Vision for Jefferson County in 2030?

2030 sounds like a long way off, but it’s only 15 years from today! Hard to believe, isn’t it? But that’s another column!

Any 15-year forecast would surely have to focus on population, energy and water. And even if our population does not increase as much as projected, we will certainly have to deal with energy and water.

By 2030, our state population, currently over 5 million, is projected to be just over 7 million, but the fastest growth will be in Elbert County and along the I-70 corridor in the mountains. Jefferson County is projected to have the slowest growth (<1% annually) along the front range urban corridor, however. The slowest growth of all will be in the counties along the Kansas border.

Although Jefferson County itself will be growing at less than half the rate of the state as a whole, we will still be affected by the state’s overall growth. My 15-year forecast for Jeffco is driven by the need for the state as a whole to deal with higher growth.

What growth Jefferson County experiences in the next 15 years will be concentrated in the northern areas of the county, where we have the most buildable open land.

It’s hard to ignore the great increase in natural gas production, thanks to fracking, but we can hope this will not become extensive within Jeffco. A countervailing trend is the pronounced increase in solar photovoltaic (PV) installations on open land. Many of these are “solar community gardens” which I wrote about two weeks ago. While the growth of roof-top solar is limited to homes with suitable roofs, there is no limit to the use of PV from solar gardens. Even renters and condo owners can now take advantage of solar photovoltaic, and the cost of solar vs. utility electricity makes it a no-brainer.

In transportation, the manufacture and sale of electric vehicles — both cars and trucks — will have largely replaced that of gas or diesel powered vehicles by 2030. Battery costs will plummet thanks to Tesla’s battery factory being built near Reno, and electric motors have only one moving part vs. thousands of parts in internal combustion engines. Combined with increased solar PV, we can look forward to a quieter and cleaner future.

With the increase in population, we have no choice but to reduce water consumption. I expect to see more use of low- or no-water landscaping.

Sellers, Too, May Pay Too Much in Fees

In last week’s column, I wrote about buyers paying too much in fees when they buy a home. Sellers can also pay more than they should in transaction costs. Commissions are negotiable and a purchase price of $200,000, rather than, for example, $4,000 in closing costs with a lower purchase price. For instance, a seller to pay the buyer’s closing costs in lieu of a lower purchase price. Sometimes buyers will ask the seller to pay the buyer’s closing costs in lieu of a lower purchase price. For example, $4,000 in closing costs with a purchase price of $200,000, rather than a purchase price of $196,000.

As a seller, you should demand of your listing agent that you pay commissions on the net purchase price when there are concessions involved. Read further on my blog...