

When Buying or Selling Your Home, Don't Overlook the Cost of Moving!

When calculating the cost of selling one's home, commissions, title insurance and other closing costs are typically at the forefront of sellers' thinking, perhaps overlooking the cost of the move itself, which can cost thousands of dollars.

Buyers, on the other hand, happy that the seller is paying for the commissions and title policy, tend to focus on their loan costs, again overlooking at first the cost of moving.

Although there surely are positive reviews of moving companies, mostly we hear the horror stories, such as a recent one from a client of mine who moved from Arvada to Connecticut. In her case, the moving company miscalculated what would fit in the moving trailer they'd assigned to the job (it also contained other clients' furniture), so they didn't put all her belongings in the original trailer (without telling her until arrival), and were unable to tell her when the remainder of her belongings might arrive!

Understandably, movers want to combine loads of different customers moving in the same direction. But as the example above demonstrates, the process can disappoint (and even anger) the customer.

Perhaps you or a friend had a similarly unpleasant experience – it happens all too often.

As for myself, I consider frequent moving an occupational hazard of being a real estate agent, since I am likely to tell my wife about a great home I just showed. Since getting married in 2004, Rita and I have moved three times — not counting our dual moves into the home we bought prior to our wedding.

Fortunately, I took delivery of our first moving truck in early 2004, so none of those moves required hiring a professional moving company. My long-time handyman and I did all the moving using that truck.

Over 90% of our clients have been able to take advantage of our free moving trucks for their in-state moves. This coming week, one of my sellers is even taking our truck to the Western Slope for a full week, paying only for the gas used. But what are the options for people who can't take advantage of our trucks?

The most obvious, of course, is to hire a professional moving company. For interstate moves, a sales representative will come to your house and estimate the weight of the items you want to move. Your final cost will depend on the actual weight, which could result in an unpleasant surprise. You will be charged by the hour for the workers who will be loading and unloading the truck, and that could be pretty expensive, especially if you also want them to do the packing. These workers should be bonded (insured against damage and loss), although the claims process can be discouraging and lengthy. You will also pay for boxes and packing materials. Figure on paying at least 4-figures, even for a local move.

Most full-service moving companies are local franchises of a larger national moving company. The logistics of long-distance combined loads is challenging, and requires careful coordination. Local moves, how-

ever, are completed within the franchise and in a single truck, which helps to ensure quick service through the use of their own workers and trucks. The quotes I got were typically \$120/hour for two men and a truck, plus \$1 or so per mile, charged from their depot back to their depot, not just from your current home to your new home.

A second option is one where you handle the loading and unloading. There are probably several vendors for this type of service, but the company with which I'm most familiar is U-Pack (www.upack.com). They'll deliver a trailer or container to your current home, give you three days to load it, then pick it up and deliver it to your new home three to five business days later, where you'll have another 3 days to unload it.

Speaking of containers, PODS (www.pods.com) is a brand of a similar type of service, but one that allows you to take more time to load. Once you're finished loading, you lock the container and PODS will pick it up and store it until you tell them where to deliver it. I like this approach because it allows you to de-clutter your home for better staging by removing much of what you know you'll be moving anyway. Most people use their garage for this de-cluttering process, but your garage shows better when it, too, is de-cluttered.

U-Pack and U-Haul offer services similar to PODS, and there are probably other vendors out there as well.

As a side note, you might want to use PODS when you aren't actually moving, such as to get furniture out of your house during renovations. Trucks can also be used for that purpose. U-Haul makes its money on miles traveled — about \$1 per mile. Their daily rate of \$19.95 is a cheap storage solution if you just need

temporary storage and have a place to park the truck for several days. When we carpeted our office (which had a tile floor), we moved all our office furniture into a truck for 3 days, then back into the office after the work was completed.

That brings up option #3, which is renting a truck and doing all the moving yourself. As I said, you'll pay \$1 per mile **plus** the cost of gasoline (figure 30 cents/mile). U-Haul's website (www.uhaul.com) makes it easy to estimate the cost of local or one-way moving without actually making a reservation or giving your name and contact info. I tried to get estimates from professional moving companies but had to give my phone number and email address and was bombarded with sales calls! The only website I found with good consumer-friendly info was www.relocation.com.

Your final and best option if you sell or buy your home **using Golden Real Estate** and are moving within Colorado is to take advantage of our free **moving trucks**. We also provide **free moving boxes and packing materials**, even if you don't use our trucks, such as for a move out of state. You pay only for our truck's gas. We can connect you with a driver and movers for \$20 to \$25 per man-hour. They are unbonded and not Golden Real Estate employees, so any agreement you have is with them, but the feedback we've received indicates that they are hard-working and trustworthy. Because they're not bonded, you will want to supervise them yourselves and perhaps move fragile items and valuables in your own vehicle.

Note: When you both buy **and** sell locally using Golden Real Estate, earning us a commission on both transactions, we pay for the labor & gas. We call it **Totally Free Moving**. You just pack and unpack!

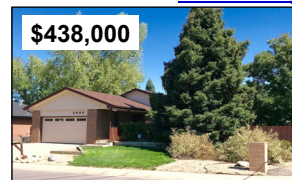
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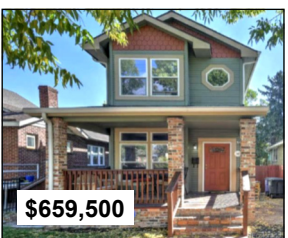
By **JIM SMITH**, Realtor®

Two Further Price Reductions in Denver & Lakewood

These price reductions by motivated sellers have brought the listing prices well below what my favorite valuation software, Realtor Property Resource (RPR), shows for each property. The property at right, **3932 Tejon Street**, in northwest Denver, was originally listed at \$715,000. Take my narrated video tour of it at www.SunnysideHome.us. Open **Sat. 11-2** and **Sun. 2-4**.



The Lakewood listing at left, **2000 Lewis Street**, is now \$30,000 below its original listing price. You can take a narrated video tour of it online at www.LakewoodHome.info. The listing agent, Andrew Lesko, will be holding it open this Saturday, **Oct. 27th**, from **11 a.m. to 3 p.m.**, or call him at **720-710-1000** for a private showing.



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Jim Smith
 Broker/Owner
Golden Real Estate, Inc.
 CALL OR TEXT: **303-525-1851**
 OFFICE PHONE: **303-302-3636**
 EMAIL: Jim@GoldenRealEstate.com
 WEBSITE: www.GoldenRealEstate.com
 ARCHIVES: www.JimSmithColumns.com
17695 South Golden Road, Golden 80401

