



HOME DELIVERY

Residential Real Estate Trends, Issues and News for Consumers

The National Association of REALTORS® distributes *Home Delivery* every month to real estate, personal finance and consumer journalists as a resource for background or story ideas.

They Come to America

Last year, nearly one in five Realtors® sold a home to an international client, according to NAR research. International clients are foreign citizens living abroad who have purchased a second home in the U.S.

Most of these buyers purchase homes for vacation, retirement and investment. A majority – 69 percent – financed their purchase with a mortgage, but 27 percent bought entirely with cash, which is about double the U.S. average.

The South and West are the most popular regions for these buyers, representing 37 and 31 percent, respectively, of all international purchases. For a copy of the research report, visit

[www.realtor.org/Research.nsf/files/07IntlSurveyProfile-final-07-27-07.pdf/\\$FILE/07IntlSurveyProfile-final-07-27-07.pdf](http://www.realtor.org/Research.nsf/files/07IntlSurveyProfile-final-07-27-07.pdf/$FILE/07IntlSurveyProfile-final-07-27-07.pdf).

Story Springboard

- Think globally, act locally. Realtors® who want to serve international buyers can earn the Certified International Property Specialist (CIPS) designation. Talk to CIPS designees in your area about what trends they're seeing locally in terms of international buyers – where these buyers are coming from, what kinds of properties they're looking for, and why they want to buy property in the U.S. To find a local CIPS designee, visit www.realtor.org/international and click on "Find an International Specialist."

Baby, You Can Drive My Car, Right into My Oversized Garage

It seems that America's love affair with cars extends to their homes. Despite rising gas prices, the percentage of home buyers who think having a garage with two or more spaces is very important has risen dramatically over the past three years.

According to the *2007 Profile of Buyers' Home Feature Preferences*, 57 percent of home buyers in 2006 said an oversized garage was very important, compared with only 41 percent in 2003-2004.

Other features high on buyers' lists included central air conditioning, a walk-in closet in the master bedroom, and a home that is cable/satellite TV-ready.

Story Springboard

- Area buyers think alike. Where buyers live can influence what they want in a home. According to the NAR survey, 91 percent of buyers in the South placed a high priority on central air conditioning, while only 41 percent of buyers in the Northeast did so. Age also has an impact. Buyers over age 45 were more likely to want a home that was less than 10 years old than were their younger counterparts, and single-level living becomes more important as buyers get older. Interview Realtors® in your area about what their clients are looking for in a home and what really wows different buyers in your community.

What's in Your IRA?

Many people know that housing is a good long-term investment, but how many consumers have integrated real estate into their retirement strategy?

These days, people can use pensions, 401k accounts, and IRAs to invest in real estate as part of a retirement plan. Self-directed IRAs in particular allow investors the flexibility to invest in real estate. As an added benefit, if investing through a Roth IRA, capital gains on the property are generally tax-free because contributions have already been taxed.

When considering whether to invest in real estate through an IRA, consumers should consult an expert, since the transaction can be complex, and mistakes can be costly. Intrepid investors, though, can benefit from adding real estate to their retirement portfolio.

Story Springboard

- Building wealth by investing in buildings. Talk to Realtors® and financial planners in your area to learn about any of their clients who are considering or who have included real estate as part of their retirement strategy. Interview these investors about their motivations, results and lessons learned.

Please contact Stephanie Singer, 202/383-1050, or via e-mail at ssinger@realtors.org, for additional ideas, sources, data and resources.