

The Los Angeles Times

Many homeowners refinancing mortgages to shorter terms

Borrowers who can afford higher mortgage payments, and who meet lenders' stricter loan guidelines, often opt to replace their 30-year mortgages with shorter term loans at near-record low rates.

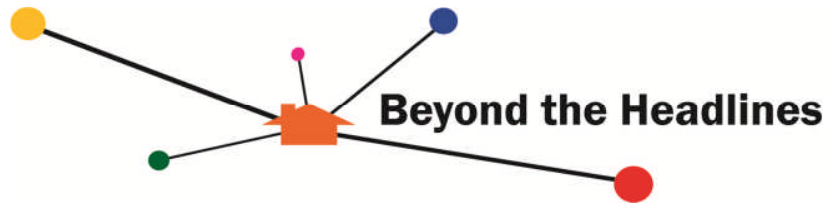
Making sense of the story

- The latest Freddie Mac quarterly survey of homeowners who refinanced found that more than one in three borrowers who refinanced from a 30-year fixed-rate loan opted to replace it with 15-year or 20-year mortgages at near-record low rates.
- Homeowners considering refinancing into a shorter-term mortgage must have the income or financial reserves sufficient to pay the extra money each month.
- Borrowers not only need to have the income or financial reserves, they also have to qualify for a refinance, have the credit score needed, and the home appraisal to support it.
- For some low-cost refi programs, lenders want to see at least 25 percent equity in the house. Higher FICO credit score requirements by Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac are another impediment, as both companies reserve their best rates for borrowers with FICO scores of 740 or higher.

Read the full story

<http://lat.ms/kmv9mS>

May 26, 2011



The Wall Street Journal

While home prices may be falling, insurance premiums are on the rise

After five years of relatively stable premiums, some of the country's biggest insurers have raised rates – or say they plan to.

Read the full story

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704281504576327391187988696.html?mod=WSJ_RealEstate_LeftTopNews



Sacramento Bee

Housing crash means bargains for some buyers

Distressed properties – short sales and foreclosures – continue to dominate the market, driving down prices for everyone. That's bad news if you own a home and are watching it slowly slip under water. But for investors, first-time buyers, and those with the ability to move up, the market couldn't be better.

Read the full story

<http://www.sacbee.com/2011/05/22/3644881/housing-crash-means-bargains-for.html>



Los Angeles Times

California creating mortgage fraud task force

California Attorney General Kamala Harris is creating a 25-person task force to target mortgage fraud of any size – from small operations that preyed on troubled borrowers to corporations that sold risky loans as safe investments.

Read the full story

<http://lat.ms/jWf9DP>



Los Angeles Times

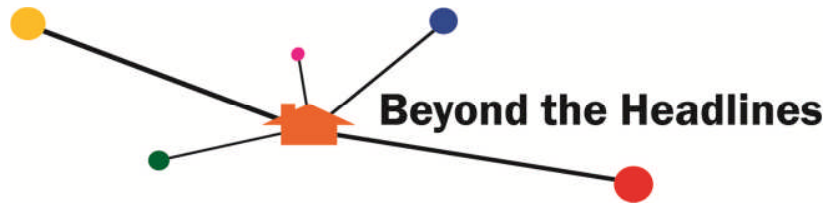
Foreclosure rate slows as repossession timeline lengthens

Increased scrutiny of how lenders foreclose on Americans has dragged the repossession process out to unprecedented lengths, driving down the pace at which banks are taking back homes.

Read the full story

<http://lat.ms/iu1Ynf>

May 26, 2011



CNN Money

Remodeling your home? Watch out for scams

For many homeowners, the warmer months is the prime time to remodel a kitchen or bathroom. But beware – there are some contractors who may offer a deal that’s simply too good to be true.

Read the full story

http://money.cnn.com/2011/05/23/pf/saving/home_remodeling_tips/index.htm



Los Angeles Times

Mortgage delinquencies level off

The percentage of homeowners who are behind on their mortgage payments inched higher in the first quarter while the number of new foreclosures declined, a lobbying group for the home-lending industry says.

Read the full story

http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/money_co/2011/05/new-mortgage-delinquencies-slow.html



CNN Money

Foreclosures for sale: Big supply, low prices

Foreclosures accounted for 45 percent of sales in California and Arizona, and 28 percent of all existing home sales during the first three months of 2011, according to RealtyTrac.

Read the full story

http://money.cnn.com/2011/05/26/real_estate/foreclosure_sales_report/index.htm?iid=HP_River



Orange County Register

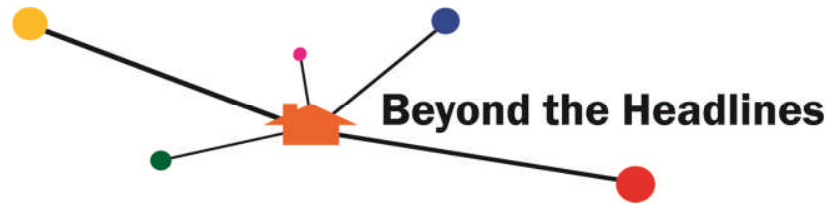
Calif. pending home sales fell in April

The CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®' pending home sales index shows that the number of new deals going into escrow decreased 11% from March and was down 19.2% from April of last year.

Read the full story

<http://lansner.ocregister.com/2011/05/20/calif-pending-home-sales-fell-in-april/110511/>

May 26, 2011



What you should know about the market

- Mortgage rates are still relatively low, and with an abundant supply of inventory, house hunters have plenty of opportunity. Nevertheless, the changed housing market has brought new aspects to consider when looking to purchase a home.
- During the peak of the current housing cycle, developers began breaking ground on “up and coming” neighborhoods, to meet demand. Unfortunately, that demand stalled in many areas, leaving home buyers to question whether location is still considered favorable. Before housing hunting, buyers should research the county auditor’s website, consult with their REALTOR® on the amount of time homes in the neighborhood take to sell, and inquire about foreclosure rates.
- The days of buying a home with no money down are virtually over, with the exception of some very specific VA and USDA loans, which are reserved for certain kinds of borrowers. Additionally, most conventional mortgage mortgages now require at least a 5 percent down payment, and FHA loans generally required approximately 4 percent down.
- The housing market will recover, but many analysts disagree on when. Homeowners may have no choice but to stay in their newly purchased home for many years, so buyers should think long term about the size of the home, location, and how it fits into their lifestyle.