

INSIDER VITAL SIGNS

A monthly snapshot of
Northeast Wyoming's economic health

Current List Price Average

	Residential-Gillette	Lot-Gillette
YTD 5/31/08	\$273,080	\$104,343
YTD 5/31/07	\$270,944	\$94,148

Current Sale Price Average

	Residential-Gillette	Lot-Gillette
YTD 5/31/08	\$226,594	\$56,173
YTD 5/31/07	\$223,177	\$75,555

Current Number of Listings

	Residential-Gillette	Lot-Gillette
YTD 5/31/08	421	526
YTD 5/31/07	286	411

Average Days on Market

	Residential-Gillette	Lot-Gillette
YTD 5/31/08	92	229
YTD 5/31/07	56	114

Highest Average Sales Growth by Subdivision— Year Over Year Comparison

College Park 67%	Stonegate 51%	Rocky Point/Sundog 47%	Moon Shadow/Moon Meadow 41%
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Highest Average Sales Decline by Subdivision— Year Over Year Comparison

Sunburst -26%	Westover Hills -20%	Crestfield Estates -16%	Sutherland -16%
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Highest Number of Listings by Subdivision— Year Over Year Comparison

Moon Shadow/Meadow 108	Rural Residential 92	Sage Bluffs/Sage Valley 61	RC Ranch 56	Westover Hills 56
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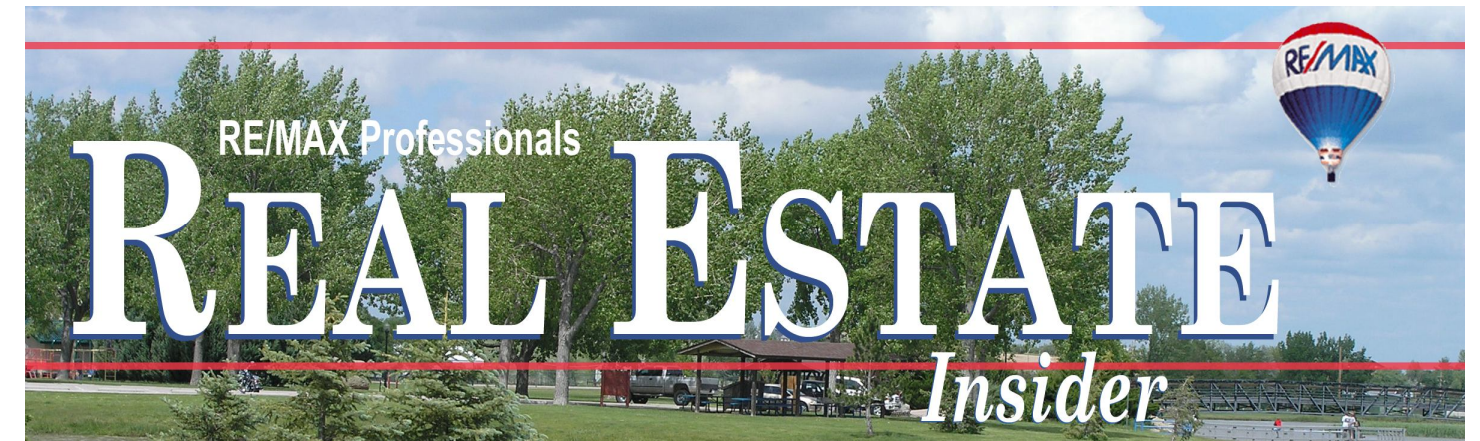
Source: MLS

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Gillette continues to demonstrate strong commercial growth

Both Tom Hammerquist of First National Bank and Justin Holcomb of First Interstate Bank believe Gillette continues to show strong commercial growth. Hammerquist sees most of his loan requests come from construction and oil and gas companies with plans to expand or build new shops. He notes more investors are looking into purchasing income producing properties, whereas spec home development is declining. Despite national economic concerns, Gillette's real estate economy remains robust. Holcomb asserts, "Over the past few years commercial real estate has remained a strong portion of the bank's overall portfolio. Year after year the portfolio has increased due to increased commercial real estate as well as increased prices. We continue to see people and businesses invest into commercial real estate." Hammerquist sees few retail requests cross his desk, but he is noticing more and more interest in refinancing as interest rates continue to drop. Holcomb notes the same trend and states, "On the banking side of things there has been good opportunities for both the bank and for the customers due to current interest rates." He goes on to explain, "Most local banks base their commercial interest rates to the Wall Street Journal Prime rate. Over the past year we have seen WSJP drop over 3%. Many businesses have taken advantage of these rates by refinancing their commercial loans. With escalating costs this has helped with cash flow as well as allowed some businesses to expand."

With the advent of warm weather, Gillette is currently being bombarded with large scale construction projects from a new recreation center, college dormitories, and the expansion of Highway 59. Although most of these projects are not directly funded by local banks, Hammerquist adds that he sees a definite trickle down affect from these sources. Sub-contractors and contractors alike are currently accommodating the construction boom with continual expansion and shop requests. National crises aside, this is definitely a busy season for Gillette.

Developers see light at the end of the tunnel for financing

Buyers and sellers of retail centers are slowly starting to agree on property values, a trend that bodes well for a sluggish retail real estate finance sector, said investors at the International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC) recently. "The main problem is that none of us is smart enough to estimate a property's value right now," said Adam Raboy, managing director of the Credit Suisse real estate group. But small improvements in the capital-lending markets over the past 45 to 60 days are an encouragement. "The light at the end of the tunnel is no longer an oncoming train," he said. "By this time next year business should be back on its way to normalcy." Jones Lang LaSalle surveyed 120 retailers, investors and developers at its ICSC booth and found that 60 percent expect the industry to take 14 months or longer to achieve pricing equilibrium. Nearly 40 percent of those surveyed indicated that the amount of their retail equity investment would remain unchanged this year relative to last year, while 22 percent said it would increase by up to 20 percent. "We see an increase in activity from the private investor sector looking to purchase retail assets," said Larry Krasner, managing director of Jones Lang LaSalle retail investment sales team.

Source: Shopping Centers Today Week. May 27, 2008. Volume 13 No. 21.



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If you would like to post an event in *The Insider* feel free to call Jenny or Traci at (307) 682-6622 or email us at traciconklin@vcn.com.

INSIDE THE INSIDER

- P2** Water conservation in landscaping
- P3** Jamming with the Jazz Luck Club
- P4** Economic indicators

INSIDER EXTRA

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Going green: The smart way for homeowners to create and maintain local lawns and other vegetation

Watering restrictions in Wyoming are becoming more the norm than the exception. Many areas in the state are high-elevation deserts, and some areas receive less than 10 inches of precipitation each year. This makes landscape water issues necessities rather than options. In the landscape there are all sorts of wonderful plant types from annuals to evergreens that do not require much water. For plants that require a bit more irrigation, there are watering systems and mulches available to keep water in the soil where plants need it. Years ago, Denver Water coined the term “xeriscape” to denote landscaping with low-water-using plant material. Unfortunately, many people think this means using gravel and cactus, but nothing could be farther from the truth. Others have used the term “water wise.” Either way, there is a definite process involved in landscaping to cut down on irrigation needs. There are seven steps involved in setting up a water-wise landscape or xeriscape. These steps are, briefly: 1) developing a landscape plan, 2) reducing turf areas, 3) improving the soil, 4) selecting appropriate plants, 5) mulching the soil, 6) irrigating efficiently, and 7) maintaining properly. Always keep in mind that any new perennial plantings will require consistent moisture until they are established (usually two to three years, depending on the plant), especially during the winter.

Interested in xeriscaping? The first step is surveying your yard

Observe turf grass areas that are difficult to water and maintain. These include: along fences; on steep slopes where water tends to run off; corners of lawns where it is hard to water without overlapping into other areas; narrow strips of lawn between the house and a sidewalk or driveway; and irregularly shaped lawn areas that do not fit the normal pattern of most sprinklers. If you have an underground sprinkler system, turn it on and observe where the water goes. Better yet, place shallow containers, such as plastic margarine tubs or metal coffee cans, in various locations and measure the water depth after 20 minutes. Areas that don’t receive as much water as others may be good candidates for a change from turf to other plantings, such as low-water ground covers, shrubs or garden flowers. Steep slopes, especially those on south and west exposures, waste water through runoff and evaporation. These areas can be converted to ground covers that tolerate the exposure and thrive with less water than most turfgrasses. They also are easier to maintain because you won’t need to mow them. Study the normal foot traffic areas in your yard, including play areas for children and pets. These areas are best left in turfgrasses that can take the wear. Other areas, however, can be converted to shrub borders, flower gardens and nonturf ground covers that use less water. Look for lawn areas that do poorly because of heavy shade from trees or structures. Rather than keep these areas in turf, plant alternative ground covers that tolerate the shade or, if the location is appropriate, install a patio or raised deck.

Xeriscaping goes local

Diane Monahan, Water Services Manager with the City of Gillette, offers several ways that local homeowners can incorporate water conservation techniques into their own yards. Her advice ranges from simple tips that can immediately be implemented to more complicated strategies with lasting results. All home and business owners need to only water when necessary. Monahan states, “Three times a week is normally sufficient for an established lawn. One of the most common mistakes homeowners make is over-watering.” Everyone in Gillette is asked to water during their assigned days from 7PM-7AM. Watering schedules are determined by address: even addresses can water on Wednesdays, Fridays and Sundays, whereas, odd-numbered addresses are asked to water on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. The City asks for no watering on Monday. This break allows their storage tanks to refill. Monahan goes on to explain, “We are in the third year of our voluntary Water Conservation Program. Our logo is ‘Conserve like a Camel.’ Our peak [watering] months are June, July and August. In the past our peak usage was just over 15 million gallons of water per day. Due to the efforts of our citizens, we reduced our peak usage to 12 million gallons per day.”

In addition to following the City’s watering schedule, Monahan asks homeowners to “Mow as infrequently as possible and higher than normal. Mowing puts the grass under stress and that requires more water. Longer leaf surfaces promote deeper rooting and shades the root zone. Never remove more than a third of the leaf blade in one mowing. Return mulched clippings to the lawn.” Another simple water conservation step, according to Monahan, is “don’t water the pavement.” Sprinklers should be efficiently positioned so that water falls on lawn and gardens, not rocks or sidewalks. For more extensive water conservation, homeowners can install automatic irrigation systems for lawns and gardens or drip irrigation systems for trees and shrubs. Drip irrigation systems allow water to flow slowly to tree and shrub roots allowing them to grow strong and deep. If you are unable to invest in an irrigation system, use a kitchen timer to monitor your watering. Utilizing native plants and trees is the most water efficient option when creating a landscape. The key, Monahan advises “is to have a plan when landscaping.” Buffalograss is native to this area and is a water efficient option to the more traditional Kentucky bluegrass. Unfortunately, Buffalograss does not have the same green lush qualities of Kentucky bluegrass and it does take a while to establish. Therefore, Monahan believes it is important to “Look at your family’s outdoor activities and then decide how much grass you really want to maintain. Contact your local Master Gardeners at the University of Wyoming Cooperative Extension Service at (307) 682-7281 for more information on local lawn ideas.” You can also visit the Water Services website at <http://www.ci.gillette.wy.us/util/water.html> for Campbell County native plant choices and other landscaping tips from both the University of Wyoming Extension Office and Colorado State University Extension Office. Monahan invites anyone who is interested to drive by the City’s xeriscaped Demo Garden located at Boxelder and 4-J Road. The Water Services Department also has a list of local residences with a “Go Native” theme and Campbell County friendly plants. Feel free to contact their office at (307) 686-5276 or 686-5204 for more information.



The Jazz Luck Club brings together good food, good music and good people

Food, music and friends is the basic theme of Jazz Luck Club events and the backbone to their growing success. With its inclusive attitude toward participation and a celebratory approach to jazz, the club is cultivating a kind of musical awakening in the community. The Club feels that their events are about tasting something new in your life, literally and figuratively because jazz music is a pot-luck of different sounds and styles. They also want to emphasize that you don’t have to be a jazz guru or expert musician to appreciate their music or join their club. Adam Hart, one of the founders of the group, admits “I knew next to nothing about jazz and I organize the club.” Their mission statement affirms, “The Jazz Luck Club provides entertainment, education, and personal and cultural growth of the jazz art form to its participants. The Jazz Luck Club offers the community the opportunity to increase its knowledge of jazz as a cultural form via the presentation of educational material such as documentary films and live musical performances.” In addition, the Club encourages everyone to enhance their musical knowledge by performing with trained jazz musicians in a social setting.

Renee Fritzen grew up in a family that had a great appreciation for music, especially jazz. Her mother was always spinning jazz records during family time and during her day-to-day activities. Although Renee is not a jazz history aficionado, all the great jazz classics and standards were the soundtrack to her childhood and she can recognize a melody, not knowing who it is, like remembering the smell of her mother’s perfume. The Jazz Luck Club was inspired by Fritzen’s fond memories and love of jazz music. Renee brought the idea to Adam Hart and Craig Jennings and they came up with a simple plan. Get together, relax, and socialize about once a month or so with friends, food and music. Hart remembered a book by Amy Tan titled *The Joy-Luck Club* so he proposed the Jazz Luck Club as the their name since food at the gatherings would primarily be pot-luck. If you are interested in joining the Club for a jam session or would like to attend one of their events you can e-mail Hart at jazzluckclub@gmail.com or visit their website at <http://jazzluckclub.googlepages.com/> for more information.

Beware! Tick season is here

Only a small percentage of ticks transmit Rocky Mountain spotted fever or Lyme disease and the chance of contracting these afflictions are remote. The diseases are occasionally reported in Wyoming, however, the risk is real enough to observe the following practices:

- Wear light-colored clothing so ticks are more visible and easier to discard. Tuck your pant cuffs into socks to help block access to skin.
- Apply insect repellent, particularly to socks and boots.
- When outdoors, check your clothing and skin several times a day for ticks and conduct a thorough search for ticks when removing clothes at the end of the day. It takes several hours after a tick is attached to the skin to transmit the infecting organism.
- If you take your dog along, frequently check and remove ticks from it.
- Remove embedded ticks by grasping the bug as close to the skin as possible and gently pulling. (If a little of your skin is removed, don’t be alarmed. It’s an assurance the entire tick is removed).
- The symptoms of tick-transmitted diseases vary among victims, but generally include fever, headache, body aches, nausea, fatigue and joint stiffness. Lyme disease often induces a red rash around the bite.
- Untreated, the diseases can produce nerve and muscle disorders and may lead to other health problems. Early detection is critical in the treatment of tick-transmitted diseases. See a doctor promptly if symptoms develop after a trip outdoors.

Here is a homemade tick repellent recommended by the Wyoming Game and Fish Department:

2 cups white vinegar, 1 cup Avon Skin So Soft bath oil, 1 cup water, and 1 tablespoon eucalyptus oil. Put this mixture into an old spray bottle and use before going into areas where ticks are likely to be present.

Source: Wyoming Game and Fish Department. 4/20/07 Press Release.

Calendar of events for June			
Date	Time	Event	Location
June 2-30	10 AM– 5 PM	Joan Sowada Retrospective Exhibition	AVA Community Art Center
June 10 & 17	10 AM– 12 PM	Concrete Garden Art	AVA Community Art Center
June 12-13	6-9 PM	Oil Painting Workshop– Discovering Color Theory	AVA Community Art Center
June 19	5:30– 7:30 PM	General Membership Meeting BBQ and Fun Night	Cam-Plex Park
June 20	10-11 AM	Little Tikes/Big Tikes Working With Clay	AVA Community Center
June 24	7 PM	The Civilian Conservation Corps in Gillette Program	Campbell County Public Library
June 26-27	Varies	Performing Arts Workshop Performances	Cam-Plex Heritage Center
June 27-28	Varies	Oil Painting Workshop-Plein Aire (Outdoors)	AVA Community Art Center
June 28-29	Varies	Wyoming Celtic Festival	Cam-Plex Park

