St. Croix Valley **ST. CROIX VALLEY'S PREMIER HOME TOUR OFFICIAL FALL GUIDEBOOK**

OPEN: Sept. 9-10, 16-17, 23-24, 30, Oct. 1 Saturdays & Sundays: 12Noon-6pm





ST. CROIX VALLEY TOUR OF HOMES 2017 FALL GUIDEBOOK

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WELCOME

I was born and raised in Minneapolis. Growing up right outside the metro, and being a city girl through and through, I still thought the country sounded so intriguing. The thought that usually put the brakes on for me was "What if I get bored?"

But I have called the St. Croix Valley home for more than 37 years and have found that there is an allure here that just cannot be duplicated.

For many of us, what drew us to the St. Croix Valley is the fact that you have this completely unique blend of quaint countryside mixed with City savvy. There is no lack of rolling hills, nature trails, true neighbors, honest core values or horses for that matter. But your



Tami Kuchera, President St. Croix Valley Home Builders Association need for Community, arts, entertainment and one of a kind shops are met as well. The St. Croix Valley has a beautiful small town ambiance that attracts many commuters to live in the escape of her tranquility while being close to the bustle of St. Paul and Minneapolis.

I love it here. Many of you do too. But whether you call the St. Croix Valley "home" or you live in the Twin Cities, I would like to personally invite you to explore the corners of her landscape by visiting our Tour Homes. There is a great display of talent in these homes and I think you will find that, while the communities in this valley have a lot to offer, the varied builders who build this community do as well.

HOMEOWNERSHIP: Opportunity is Knocking!

Homeownership is an important part of the American way of life. Today there are many opportunities in the housing market – including low mortgage rates and new homes that are built to fit your lifestyle – to find a home that is right for you. But market conditions can change, and these opportunities may not be around for long, so home buyers shouldn't wait.

Low Interest Rates

Today's low interest rates are helping home buyers find affordable housing options. But, it's important to keep in mind that interest rates are sensitive to market forces and can change quickly. Even a slight rate increase can push monthly payments to the point that a buyer might miss out on their first choice for a new home.

Large Downpayments Not Necessary

While lenders are looking more closely at borrowers today than in recent years, there are options for purchasing your home without a 20% downpayment. For example, the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) offers loans to first-time home buyers with downpayments as low as 3.5%. However, these loans require mortgage insurance.

To ensure that the process goes smoothly, buyers should consider pre-qualifying for a mortgage and having financing in place before shopping for a new home. Buyers also may find that some home builders have arranged favorable financing for their customers or offer financial incentives.

Built to Fit Your Lifestyle

Designed to accommodate today's busy lifestyles, new homes – including urban condos and single-family homes – feature open floor plans, flexible spaces, low-maintenance materials and other amenities that make them more appealing than ever before.

With energy costs near the top of consumer concerns, it's good to



know that new homes can be more energy efficient than ever. Innovative materials and construction techniques mean that today's new homes are built to be much more energy efficient than homes constructed a generation ago. Not only can they be more affordable to operate, new homes also are significantly more resource efficient and environmentally friendly.

And in many areas, prospective home buyers who wish to live in age-qualified communities for those 55 and older will find a large selection of homes tailored to the evolving lifestyles of the baby boom generation.

Benefits for Home Owners

Homeownership also provides important benefits to owners.

Tax Benefits: For Home Owners Only

Unique tax benefits that apply only to housing help lower the cost of homeownership. Both mortgage interest and property taxes are deductible. Moreover, for married couples, profits of up to \$500,000 on the sale of a principal residence (\$250,000 for single taxpayers) are excluded from tax on capital gains.

The Advantage of Leveraging

Leveraging is another advantage of homeownership. A buyer can purchase a home and receive the full benefit of homeownership with a cash downpayment that is only a fraction of the total purchase price. This is called leveraging, and it makes the rate of return on a home purchase greater than on other purchases with the same value, such as stocks, where the buyer must put up the entire price.

Building Personal Resources

For most Americans, homeownership is a primary source of net worth and an important step in

NAHR

accumulating personal financial assets over the long term. For most families, home equity represents the largest share of net worth.

There Really is No Place Like Home

Although there are many positive financial aspects to homeownership, a home cannot be valued in monetary terms alone. Not only can homeownership be a stepping stone to greater financial well-being, it provides a permanent place to call home and great personal satisfaction.

Academic research also shows that homeownership provides a wide range of social benefits and strengthens the nation's people and its communities.

Homeownership is truly a cornerstone of the American way of life.

Courtesy of NAHB

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1959 Lexi Street, River Falls, WI 54022

\$224,900 (Includes Lot)

Home will be partially furnished and decorated

Welcome to a brand new development, Spring Creek Estates South. This home is easy living at its finest. This 2 bedroom, 2 bathroom home has 1,288 square feet of one level living space. An open space with fireplace, kitchen with granite tops and higher-end appliances. All knotty alder cabinets, doors and trimwork throughout. Tiled bathrooms and industrial lighting. A spacious mudroom and laundry right off the kitchen/living area. Nice patio space off the dining area. You don't want to miss this single level living quality built home!

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WOODLAND SPRINGS WI2337 884th Avenue, River Falls, WI 54022

\$386,000 (Does Not Include Lot)

Home will be fully furnished and decorated

A Step out of the Ordinary. Lund Builders has mixed Turn of the Century Modern with Wisconsin Warmth then tucked it into a hilly and sprawling development. Simple and rich is achieved with white symmetry stone exterior carried through to the interior fireplace with white oak floors as well as Walnut kitchen cabinetry, trim and doors. You will see painted bath and laundry cabinets combined with the unique look of Marmoleum flooring as well as tile showers and granite counter tops throughout. An inspiration to every generation, this model is a unique expression of the diversity of Lund Builders' custom work.

94 East to Carmichael Rd. exit, EXIT 2 toward Country Graction Hwy-F. Keep right to take the ramp toward Prescott. Merge onto S. Carmichael Rd. Turn right onto Ilwaco Rd. turn left onto 890th Ave., take the 2nd left onto 1245th St., then 2nd left onto 884th Ave. Tour Home is on the right.

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Growing Trends In Today's Homes

Although the heydays of the real estate boom of the early 2000s have not quite returned, things look positive. In the United States, 1,226,000 new homes were built in 2016, according to data from Consumer Reports. That was the most since 2007.

Resales also have been more promising. The National Association of Realtors® says the median number of days a home was on the market in April 2017 reached a new low of 29 days. However, low supply levels did stanch existing home sales somewhat. By mid-2017, the market was a seller's market, with more people in the market for homes than properties available. But sales during that time were still outpacing sales figures from a year prior. In fact, in May 2017, home sales in Canada increased to their highest level in more than five years, according to the Canadian MLS® Systems.

Low interest rates on mortgages

and more confidence in the economy has driven many people to make improvements to their existing homes. As is typical, the things homeowners are looking for in 2017 have evolved from years past. The following are some trends that are helping to steer the real estate market further.

SMALLER HOMES: Home sizes in the United States steadily increased for decades, eventually leading to an average of 2,453 square feet in 2014, according to U.S. Census figures. However, Realtor.com reported in 2015 that new construction homes have already begun to shrink by 40 square feet. There seems to be a slight trend toward more modest homes as people consider affordability and maintenance on larger properties. The National Association of Home Builders states buyers are now looking for smaller, more livable homes with flexible floor plans,



energy-efficient appliances and plenty of storage space.

MATTE FINISHES: Stainless steel and luster have been popular for years. However, the next big thing is matte finishes on faucets, appliances and even in countertops. These less flashy finishes are prized for their warmth and elegance. While some high-end models with matte finishes have been available for several years, even less expensive models are now available.

SMARTER TECHNOLOGY: Many

homeowners are embracing smart technology throughout their homes, but it's not just lights that turn on with voice command or more efficient thermostats. Innovative technology includes toilets that can autonomously stay clean and sanitized, refrigerators equipped with cameras so homeowners can see the contents inside and indoor food recyclers that can turn food waste into fertilizer.

Staying abreast of the ever-changing trends in home improvement and real estate can help consumers make the best choices with regard to buying and building their homes.

Courtesy of Metro Creative Graphics





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