



Federal Reserve Hikes Rates For 3rd Time in 6 Months

The Federal Reserve announced today, (June 13), that it is raising their benchmark Fed Funds rate by .25%. This was fueled by recent data showing inflation accelerated to the fastest pace in more than 6 years, which was due in part to the spike in energy/oil prices over the past couple of months. There was one more rate hike expected before the end of this year, but the Fed has now prepared the markets for two. This news was expected so mortgage rates are stable today. The Fed Funds Rate is now at 2%, the level it was at in October 2008. Previous rate hikes of .25% each were on March 21 of this year and December 13, 2017.



What is a bit of a surprise though, is that the uncertainty ahead of the Trump/Kim summit this week barely caused a ripple with mortgage rates.

Address Financial Concerns To Reduce Stress

A recent article in *Human Resources Today* makes a good point. "Employers should call upon HR and benefits departments to discuss opportunities to help employees learn from financial education programs and get acquainted with additional resources."

In other words, utilize your employer's service providers to educate yourself for free. 401k contributions are of course at the top of the list, but there are aspects to financial wellness that include HSA's, managing student loans, resolving past credit issues and simple budgeting that can reduce stress and improve your life. We can help with some of these.



Our preferred mortgage lender, Finance Of America, also has a Student Loan Refinance program. It can be used to lower the interest rate/payment on existing loans, consolidate payments and/or remove a cosigner. We can also help in cleaning up credit and improving credit scores, so please feel free to contact us at GroupMortgageBenefits with your needs. We do more than just help with mortgage and real estate transactions!

New Mexico Real Estate Update

Once again, housing market numbers for April 2018 continue to set records compared to previous years. 2,895 April 2018 sales is over 40% more than April 2017. And median prices also continue to climb. April 2018's median price of \$200,000 is nearly 10% higher than April 2017's median of \$181,000.

New Mexico's market continues to be strong, however a lack of inventory in many areas continues to plague our market. Rising home prices are good news if you are selling your home but can be a barrier to buyers who need to qualify for a mortgage.

A Credit Line That Grows?

When a primary residence has a lot of equity, it could make sense to take an 'equity conversion' line of credit, especially if you don't need to draw on it now.

If you qualify for a \$100,000 credit line today and just let it sit with a \$0 balance, in 10 years it will grow to nearly \$150,000 and in 20 years it will grow to over \$200,000.

Consider this when putting together a retirement plan as access to funds may not be easy years down the road.

Opt-Out of Credit Offers

Does your mail box fill up with unwanted offers for credit cards and similar solicitations? And do you wonder how they know you are 'approved'?

Whenever a bank wants to sell more credit cards - other than using Samuel L. Jackson on TV - they contact a credit bureau and ask for X number of files that fit within a certain criteria, (i.e. zip code, income range, age, etc.), and then your personal information is sold to them willy-nilly.



There are a couple of ways to stop this. The quick and easy way is to either

call (888) 567-8688 or go to www.optoutprescreen.com. Of course "they" don't want to lose you for too long, so that will only keep the junk mail at bay for 5 years.

For a permanent solution you need to fill out the Permanent Opt-Out Election form available at each creditors' website which entails printing, signing, and mailing their form.

"Never hire someone who knows less than you do about what he's hired to do."
 ~ Malcolm Forbes

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For complete details please visit www.GroupMortgageBenefits.com or call Charlie Sparks, 505.350.3745.

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We Are Your Local Resource

Our local and experienced "GMB" professionals are here to help you whether you need a mortgage or not. Please feel free to contact us with your questions. Our network of lenders, Realtors and other service providers are at your disposal for advice and information at no charge or obligation.

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