



## Mortgage Rates Coast Ahead Of Next Fed Meeting

The Federal Reserve meets again next week to review recent economic activity and set monetary policy for the near term. The benchmark Fed Funds rate was just raised at the last meeting so it is unlikely to see another increase so soon. There are, however, at least two more rate hikes expected before the end of this year. Most likely these will be over the summer and again in December.

With inflation low and the economy in a moderate growth cycle we've seen mortgage rates rather stable over the past 60 days. Any fluctuations in the coming weeks will be due to reactions to routine reports from various economic sectors, i.e. energy, industrial production, retail sales, etc. Of course the wild card is always international news which can spike interest rates either up or down rather quickly.



## Workplace Benefits Trends



In addition to standing workstations and HSA's, one of the hottest current benefits categories is financial wellness. According to SHRM's 2017 Employee Benefits Survey, nearly one-half (49 percent) of employers offered some type of financial advice, which included providing resource materials or referrals, group instruction and one-on-one advice with a financial counselor.

Of course financing a home is not a frequent event. But when it does happen it is important for businesses to have a relationship with knowledgeable, local professionals who will assist the employee with the process outside of work hours. This includes everything from in-person consultations to phone calls/texts. Many will provide this type of service, but there is only one place to go where the employee will receive the added advantage of negotiated discounts to closing costs and real estate commissions. Please consider including GroupMortgageBenefits in your voluntary benefits package. It costs nothing to offer, there is no administration necessary and we can save employees \$100's to \$1,000's on their transactions. They will thank you.

## The State of Telecommuting

Last year, FlexJobs and Global Analytics issued a report on telecommuting in the US Workforce. Here are some of the highlights:

- ◇ the number of people telecommuting in the U.S. increased a whopping 115% in the last 10 years
- ◇ 3.9 million U.S. employees, or 2.9% of the total U.S. workforce, work from home at least half of the time
- ◇ about the same population of women and men telecommute
- ◇ most common among baby boomers
- ◇ the average age is 46 or older, has at least a bachelor's degree and earns a higher median salary than an in-office worker
- ◇ the biggest employer of telecommuters is, interestingly enough, the U.S. government at 3.1%



## New Mexico Real Estate Update

February 2018's 1,959 reported sales make this the best February since the Realtors Association of NM started keeping statistics in 2008. Median prices also continue to climb. February's \$193,500 median was nearly 2% higher than January's \$190,000 median.

The best news may be that there were nearly twice as many properties on the market in February than in January. Mortgage rates, which continue to be at historic lows, are on the rise, making it harder for some would-be home buyers to qualify for a mortgage, however, those that do qualify are finding more choices in the market.

## Free Lunch & Learn Class

Many employers feel that home ownership leads to more productive employees. If you would like to educate your staff on topics such as

*Preparing to buy a home*

*Overcoming credit issues*

*Down payment assistance options*

...and more, please reach out to us. This will be informal, educational and without a sales pitch. Contact [charlie@GroupMortgageBenefits.com](mailto:charlie@GroupMortgageBenefits.com)

## 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.

*"If you think hiring professionals is expensive, try hiring amateurs"*  
 ~ Anonymous

GroupMortgageBenefits™ is a network of local mortgage & real estate professionals who provide significant discounts to employers and their employees.



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