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DS MEDIA

# CENTRAL TEXAS HOMES

WINTER 2019 EDITION

HGTV brothers

offer seller tips

*Roll out your home's sold mat*

# Picture Perfect

## MAIN STORY

**S**cott brothers, Drew and Jonathan offer tips for buyers and sellers preparing to navigate today's real estate market. **Page 6**

## INSIDE

**L**ooking Ahead. Buyers seeking new construction farmhouses, "she" sheds and more. **Page 3**

**N**ot so fast fixer-upper. Time-poor buyers expand concept of turnkey to suitcase-ready. **Page 4**

### From Record Low to High

Experts hesitate to forecast demise of real estate's Golden Decade. **Page 8**

### Area Market Statistics

Check out your market's start to this year. **Page 9**

### International Staging Conference Wrap-up

Broker earns luxury home staging certification. **Page 10**

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Editor and publisher Debbie Stevenson is a licensed real estate broker in the state of Texas. She and her husband, Dale, have made their home in Central Texas since 1988 after transferring with the military to Fort Hood. While on the move with the military, Stevenson spent two decades in journalism, covering the military, defense industry and business beats. She worked her way up from community newspapers to regionals and eventually an international wire service. She also was called upon to comment on major news headlines for international news media, such as the BBC, CNN and Deutsche Presse-Agentur or DPA. Stevenson is broker-owner of the JB Goodwin North Team in Salado. Designations include Certified Luxury Staging Professional, Corporate & Military Relocation specialist, Luxury Home Specialist, Farm and Ranch and New Home Construction.



# Looking Ahead

Transitional Farmhouses, She-Sheds,  
Defined Spaces top 2019 buyer lists

## UNFITTED

Have a grand piano and heirloom Persian rug? You don't have to get rid of it. Both can be anchors and the splash of color for your neutral and modern light and bright palate. Simply put, in 2019, it is not only OK to mix the old and the new, it is chic and in.

## COLOR

The dark side is returning to kitchen back splashes and accent walls are going – well – black and dark matte – to create a bold and sophisticated statement for the formerly all-white kitchen. And while we are at it, the outside is going dark, too. Yes, the darker the paint on the exterior, the better – as long as it complements the light and bright interior. So neighbors, don't be surprised to see color popping up, particularly charcoal and black – combined with white, beige, and other primary and accent colors for dramatic effect.

## TECHNOLOGY

Hello Alexa! From Ring to Nest, wire is out, smart is in. Homes are getting smarter and more efficient, thanks to increasing interaction between smartphones and tablets and house fixtures. Let's not forget multi-tasking smart mirrors. This technology is evolving into smart devices that can double as computers, windows, TVs, lighting entertainment systems, health trackers, and even ironing boards. So, from basic security monitoring to smart appliances, window coverings, irrigation, entertainment systems, it's a techy world out there.

## WELLNESS

Yes. Your home is getting in on the healthy



living trend. In a report titled *"Build Well to Live Well: Wellness Lifestyle Real Estate and Communities"*, Katherine Johnson, senior researcher with Global Wellness Institute, noted, "We're at the beginning of a new movement in home and community design that tackles our uniquely modern problems: Sedentary lives, unhealthy diets, stress, social isolation and loneliness, pollution, nature-deprivation." As solutions, real-estate developers are creating and expanding "wellness homes and communities," which the report defines as structures that aim to support the holistic health of its residents.

## FLOORPLANS

The pushback seen in 2018 on the open floor plan is expected to grow as homeowners have become tired of hearing the television blaring across the entire home. But before you start putting back those walls that were torn down, open is still here. It is just transitioning to "defined open spaces." Defined open means different working or living zones set off by



ABOVE: Buyers are building custom farmhouses such as this home by Carson Speers Builders. BELOW: The backyard "She Shed" is now women's answer to the "Man Cave."

changes in floor levels, area rugs, low level walls, changes in the ceiling heights, furniture groupings and islands to separate the kitchen from the dining and family spaces. Pantries and room-style mudrooms/family entrances to the home are making a comeback, along with comfortable and functional laundry rooms.

And guys, along with the his and her closets, we are now giving you the "man bath" His and her bathrooms are a "must have" for 2019.

## HOUSE STYLE

And expect to see homeowners in 2019 moving from just remodeling Mid-Century Modern homes to actually building new homes in the Mid-Century Modern style. These homes take the best elements of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century design and add a few touches that are more practical for today's household, especially storage and technology. In fact, the transitional or "modern" farmhouse was voted the top pick for 2019 by designers and builders.

## OUTSIDE

Dudes, your man cave time's up. Well, it's still there, but now you've got it to yourselves as women are favoring the "she shed" as the escape from their hectic schedule.

The funkier or more upscale, the better. The she shed is all about comfort, rest and relaxation. You could say her childhood dollhouse just got woman-sized.

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# 'Time-Poor' Buyers Kicking Fixers to Curb

*Moving in with just a suitcase sees increasing popular appeal*

By **DEBBIE STEVENSON**

Selling a fixer home is getting tougher as "time-poor" buyers embrace the concept of inserting the key and walking into a home with just their suitcase.

Buying a fully furnished home is nothing new. Builder model homes, complete with their designer-placed accessories, often are sold long before the builder is done with the development the house is marketing. Furnished remote or vacation homes, where choices are difficult and expensive to acquire, also have that same convenience appeal.

What has been especially interesting in recent years is the move at the luxury level for designer-complete homes. This new concept of turnkey is expanding in the United States, from established second-home markets like Miami and Mexico to places such as New York City and beyond.

"Turnkey makes all the difference in the luxury market now," said Dora Puig, broker and owner of Luxe Living Realty in Miami, in an interview with mansion.com. "But I'm seeing turnkey more and more in single-family homes."

Buyers want homes "that not only have luxury-driven features, but also to have it designer-ready before they enter the residence," Paulo Bacchi, CEO of Artefacto, a high-end Brazilian furnishings brand, told mansionglobal.com.

There is no specific demographic of buyers driving the concept, with both international and domestic buyers signing on. And, it has been part of a gradual trend by buyers away from taking on "fixer uppers," according to the property portal Prime Location. The portal found searches for "furnished" homes for sale increased by 51 percent in 2017,



while interest in distressed properties fell.

It makes sense. When the buyer walks through the door of the home they finally select, there is something about it that separates the property chosen from the ones that did not make the cut. More often than not, it was the lifestyle the winning home presented. And properly placed and sized furnishings are a big part of that lifestyle package.

Cost differences between turnkey versus traditional vacant homes can vary greatly, based on the property and the type and level of the furnishings. Some costs are wrapped

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Debbie Stevenson has lived in and served the Bell County area since 1988. JB Goodwin REALTORS® is a licensed real estate broker providing brokerage services since 1972, 3011 N-1435 Round Rock, TX 78664.

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into the list price. Others are taken on separately in line-item or a package price list. Overall, expect to pay about a 30 percent markup on a staged or furnished home.

Navigating the furnishings side of the property sale is being taken on increasingly by staging professionals with access to the wholesale market. Typically, stagers have a retail sales tax permit and access to wholesale pricing and direct delivery options.

"I have a detailed price list for every home," luxury Florida stager Sandra Holmes at told an audience at the recent International Association of Home Staging Professionals conference in Charlotte, N.C.

"I have a showroom and warehouse," said Holmes, who has been staging homes in Florida's Broward county since 2005. "You cannot stage without it anymore."

While a value-added transaction of convenience for the cash and higher end market, in the mid-level and third-party finance transaction, turnkey can get tricky at appraisal. This is especially true when a home price is flirting close to its value cap. If the appraiser sees too many "non-real estate" items in the sale, a detailed cost list will be compiled and factored into the sale price analysis.

Still, even with a retail markup, the fact that the furnishings are in place can make turnkey an economical alternative to spending time, money and added delivery costs for the same results. Plus, the design time has been paid.

*EDITOR'S NOTE: Debbie Stevenson is a licensed broker in Texas and is a certified luxury staging professional. She spent 25 years in journalism, which included business and real estate before becoming a licensed Realtor.*

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# Picture Perfect

Selling tips from the HGTV's The Property Brothers



HGTV's Jonathan, left, and Drew Scott address the International Association of Home Staging Professionals during their October conference at the Westin Hotel in Charlotte N.C.

By **DEBBIE STEVENSON**

Unless you are the "Property Brothers," it doesn't always take two, but selling and staging a home does take skill, a quality HGTV's Drew and Jonathan Scott, will quickly point out.

On air uninterrupted since 2011, Calgary's identical sons have proven, with several top-rated shows, that they are experts in the real estate field, from construction to design and sales. Aside from their reality real estate shows, they are tapped often to be keynote speakers and experts for professional conferences and news shows.

They brought that knowledge to the International Association of Home Staging Professionals annual conference in Charlotte, N.C. this past October.

Speaking before on and off-air staging talent, the brothers emphasized the need for quality and expert advice, from design to sale.

"Rely on an expert," said Jonathan, a licensed contractor, in later remarks. "Selling a home is a big deal. Why would anyone do it without the advice of professionals?"

For their shows, the brothers hire local contractors to do the work on the house they are



FILE PHOTO

**Bold palates are okay in 2019. Just make sure it has broad appeal, says Realtor Drew Scott, HGTV “Property Brothers” star.**

featuring. “Every city we go to, I hire local general contractors and I assign a local construction, and design lead as well, to every project so that nothing gets missed,” Jonathan told PopSugar in an interview. He went on to add that they are able to get the work done quickly in every city they go to by creating about 150 jobs. That also ensures the contractor is still there after the show has gone, should there be a need for warranty work.

A good stager or agent will make the difference in a buyer or seller’s experience, Jonathan added. Hire an “expert in helping clients get a champagne look on a beer budget.”

While not adverse to completing some must-do projects, Jonathan sounded a note of caution. “DIY is fine unless you’re an idiot, then don’t do it,” he laughed. “Don’t take shortcuts.”

Drew, who is the licensed Realtor, echoed Jonathan’s advice. “You will spend more money on a hack job,” he warned.

The same is true for staging, he said.

“When you stage a home, you are showing people how they could live in that home,” he added. Spend the money, hire an expert and listen to them. “Don’t put personal pieces out. Instead, appeal to

**S**elling a home is a big deal. Why would anyone do it without the advice of professionals?

Jonathan Scott, Licensed Contractor  
HGTV ‘Property Brothers’

most number of buyers with appealing, neutral items.”

“Make sure it is something buyers will want in the neighborhood,” Jonathan added.

Drew winced at a memory he chose not to share.

“Keep in mind you have to really know the neighborhood before renovating,” he said.

“We made that mistake in the beginning.”

And don’t make a house too appealing in its photographs, with doctored photography or “virtual” staging, an online trend that simulates what the room would look like furnished, Drew said.

As they did throughout their on-stage address, Jonathan finished his brother’s thought. “Be careful about making it look spectacular, but then (buyers) walk through the door and it is a ‘P.O.S.’”

In preparing your house for sale, Drew recommended focusing on the kitchen with two-tone cabinetry and adding a focal point.

“It could be an art piece,” he said. “In the living room, it could be a sofa, something that draws the eye in a positive way.”

If new kitchen counters are needed, he strongly advised to stay away from granite. “Move on from it. Steer clear of it.”

Most of all, he said, declutter and clean. “Clutter tells buyers there is not enough closet space,” he said. “Spending on cleaning can add an extra \$5,000 (to a buyer’s offer).”

# From record low to high

Housing experts hesitant to forecast after golden decade defies odds

Predictions for U.S. and Texas housing in 2019 are all over the board, with many experts hesitant to commit to one course, given how many times the trillion-dollar residential real estate market has defied the odds.

Despite initiating one of the deepest recessions since the Great Depression of the 1930s, this past decade has seen housing soar from its fiery death in 2008 to a record golden age by 2018.

The only consensus for experts is politics and interest rates are housings wild card. Climbing interest rates have been blamed for a sudden stall this fall across the country. The loss of property tax exemptions this year shouldered the blame for the slowdown in high-tax, high-cost markets such as New York City and San Francisco. Others have fretted openly about the impact a split government will have on consumer – and homebuyer – confidence. Still, as with politics, real estate is local. Shifts, dramatic or minor, differ from region to region and even within neighborhoods and cities. As an article in Forbes Magazine noted, "Cities that experienced an extreme price run-up in a short span of time, like Seattle, San Jose and even Austin, will be more prone to a market correction, as opposed to some Southern cities, such as Atlanta, Nashville and Orlando, which have appreciated at a more tempered pace."

Austin is one of the top housing markets to watch next year, according to a Nov. 29 report from real estate website Trulia Inc. The analysis highlighted 10 metros poised for soaring growth in 2019. Austin ranked No. 5, behind Colorado Springs, Colo.; Grand Rapids, Mich.; Jacksonville, Fla. and Bakers-

field, Calif. One other Texas city, military-influenced El Paso, made the list at No. 9. Trulia measured the housing markets in the 100 largest U.S. metros by employment growth, residential vacancy rates, the median listing price of starter homes, the share of the population under 35 and Trulia website data on home searches. Austin performed well on most of those metrics with a low vacancy rate and high job growth, ranking 12th and 14th respectively. Austin also ranked No. 4 in population below 35.

Austin outperformed all other housing market cities in the top 10 in terms of the vacancy rate and young population. But Austin ranked poorly on starter home affordability, coming in at No. 79. That was also the second-worst among the top 10 housing markets behind Fresno, Calif.

Yet despite what many fear has been a dramatic slowdown this fall in the Austin Metro residential sales and a rise in inventory, local experts still believe Austin will continue to have momentum.

Jim Gaines, chief economist at Texas A&M University's Real Estate Center, said the city would remain robust due to a 3.7 percent job growth and swelling population.

He expected the median home price to climb about 5.5 percent from its current \$319,000. A median price means half of all homes sold for less, the other half for more.

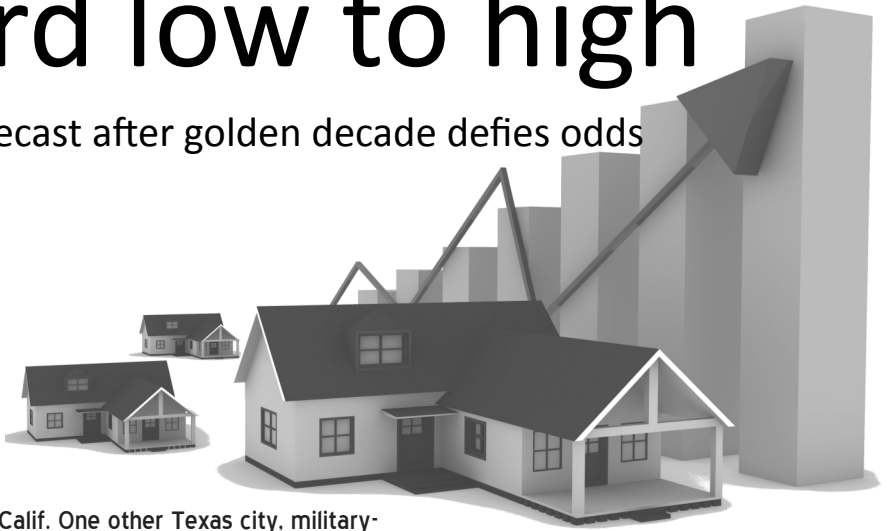
"This area has just been booming," Gaines told the Austin Board of Realtors. "It's still going strong, but it will slow down, eventually."

The Austin Metro encompasses Georgetown to its north and San Marcos to its south.

Gaines' predictions of another record year contrasts with a more modest forecast by Realtor.com for the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex.

"Local D-FW-area home prices will grow 4.3 percent next year," Realtor.com's analysis noted. "That's down a bit from this year's 5 percent year-over-year median home sales price increase."

Still the Metroplex tops Realtor.com's nationwide 2.2 percent home price forecast for 2019, citing higher mortgage costs and years of rising home values have chased some buyers out of the housing market this year.



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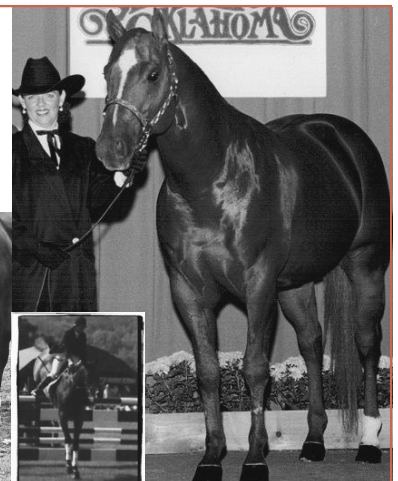
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**BELTON—Bell Co.**

191 listings Jan 1-Jan 11  
 Average days on market: 91  
 Properties sold: 6 *Pending: 57*  
 Average Home & Price:  
 4Bed/2bath 2,248'/\$134.33/SQFT \$313,608  
 Median Home & Price:  
 4Bed/2bath 2,046 \$120.48/SQFT \$239,900

**COPPERAS COVE—Coryell Co.**

199 listings Jan 1-Jan 11  
 Average days on market: 86  
 Properties sold: 7 *Pending: 70*  
 Average Home & Price:  
 4Bed/2bath 1,821'/\$83.72/SQFT \$107,921  
 Median Home & Price:  
 4Bed/2bath 1,783'/\$84.27/SQFT \$110,000

**FLORENCE—Williamson (AUSTIN AREA MLS)**

20 listings Jan 1-Jan 11  
 Average days on market: 103  
 Properties sold: 0 *Pending: 3*  
 Average Home & List Price:  
 3BR/3bath 2,322'/\$205.60/SQFT \$475,287  
 Median Home & List Price: \$409,500  
 3Bed/3bath 2,201 \$177.28/SQFT \$409,500

**GATESVILLE—Coryell Co.**

92 listings Jan 1-Jan 11  
 Average days on market: 94  
 Properties sold: 2 *Pending: 19*  
 Average Home & Price:  
 3Bed/2bath 1,916'/\$61.55/SQFT \$106,400  
 Median Home & Price:  
 3Bed/2bath 1,740 \$61.55/SQFT \$106,400

**HARKER HEIGHTS—Bell Co.**

152 listings Jan 1-Jan 11  
 Average days on market: 85  
 Properties sold: 13 *Pending: 45*  
 Average Home & Price:  
 4Bed/2bath 2,221'/\$157.56/SQFT \$302,100  
 Median Home & Price:  
 4Bed/2bath 2,182 \$94.44/SQFT \$197,700

**JARRELL—Williamson (AUSTIN AREA MLS)**

101 listings Jan 1-Jan 11  
 Average days on market: 79  
 Properties sold: 7 *Pending: 28*  
 Average Home & Price:  
 3Bed/2bath 1,865'/\$123.64/SQFT \$190,786  
 Median Home & Price:  
 3Bed/2bath 2,075 \$122.01/SQFT \$187,900

# Your Market by the Numbers

As of 01/11/2019

**KEMPNER—Lampasas Co.**

47 listings Jan 1-Jan 11  
 Average days on market: 79  
 Properties sold: 1 *Pending: 10*  
 Average Home & Price:  
 4Bed/2bath 1,686'/\$119.22/SQFT \$201,000  
 Median Home & Price:  
 4Bed/2bath 2,036 \$119.22/SQFT \$201,000

**KILLEEN—Bell Co.**

710 listings Jan 1-Jan 11  
 Average days on market: 85  
 Properties sold: 36 *Pending: 241*  
 Average Home & Price:  
 3Bed/2bath 1,828'/\$69.95/SQFT \$134,015  
 Median Home & Price:  
 3Bed/2bath 1,633 \$73.17/SQFT \$120,950

**NOLANVILLE—Bell Co.**

170 listings Jan 1-Jan 11  
 Average days on market: 112  
 Properties sold: 1 *Pending: 12*  
 Average Home & Price:  
 3Bed/2bath 1,731' \$107.77/SQFT \$220,000  
 Median Home & Price:  
 3Bed/2bath 1,731' \$107.77/SQFT \$220,000

**MORGAN'S POINT—Bell Co.**

6 listings Jan 1-Jan 11  
 Average days on market: 32  
 Properties sold: 0 *Pending: 0*  
 Average Home & Price: *Previous Qtr*  
 4Bed/2bath 2,198' \$119.83/SQFT \$247,030  
 Median Home & Price: *Previous Qtr*  
 4Bed/2bath 2,075 \$107.96/SQFT \$169,900

**SALADO—Bell Co.**

80 listings Jan 1-Jan 11  
 Average days on market: 100  
 Properties sold: 4 *Pending: 12*  
 Average Home & Price:  
 3Bed/2bath 2,880'/\$137.87/SQFT \$381,180  
 Median Home & Price:  
 3Bed/2bath 3,096 \$128.13/SQFT \$398,361

**TEMPLE—Bell Co.**

455 listings Jan 1-Jan 11  
 Average days on market: 94  
 Properties sold: 15 *Pending: 114*  
 Average Home & Price:  
 3Bed/2bath 1,798' \$92.29/SQFT \$174,753  
 Median Home & Price:  
 3Bed/2bath 1,776 \$104.98/SQFT \$175,500

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Median Home and Price means half of properties exceed this size/amount and half are below. Figures pulled from residential listings with 2 or more bedrooms in the governing Multiple Listing Services used by Realtors to market properties. Most of Central Texas is governed by the Central Texas Multiple Listing Service. ACTRIS, the Austin Metro MLS was used where stated. Counties listed are primary for each city. Some cities, such as Copperas Cove cross county lines. Listings used are from Jan 1-11, 2019 Not all new construction sales are posted to MLS. Non-REALTOR licensed agents also cannot use MLS.

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# Broker earns luxury home staging certification

Conference affords professionals  
stagers insight to trends, plus time  
with HGTV's Property Brothers

Charlotte, NC - Debbie Stevenson, a local professional Home Stager/Real Estate Broker® in Salado earned the Certified Luxury Home Staging Certification from the International Association of Home Staging Professionals.

The certification was received during the annual conference for the International Association of Home Staging Professionals held in late October at the Westin Hotel in Charlotte, N.C.

"We decided to issue the LHS Designation and Certification as part of our 2018 IAHP® Conference & EXPO, and it was a huge success," said Jennie Norris, IAHP® Chairwoman. Attendees of the Charlotte conference learned from experts in luxury home staging how to market to these clients and obtain luxury projects. Topics also included how to price the projects, how to source inventory suitable for higher end



price ranges and how to ensure the finished product reflects the luxury market and targets the appropriate buyer. Brokers and Realtors in attendance receive their LHS designation and certification to help them secure higher end listings, and ensure these properties are staged and look their best before coming on the market.



Salado broker Debbie Stevenson received a signed copy of "It Takes Two" by HGTV Property Brothers Drew, left, and Jonathan Scott. At 6.5, they towered over Stevenson at 5.6.

Stevenson was among the attendees with the completed luxury staging sales and projects required to receive the additional certification.

"Attending the Charlotte conference and



IAHSP founder Barbara Schwartz urges the audience to have fun while providing quality service.



Stagers from around the world enjoy networking at the conference awards dinner. Salado broker Debbie Stevenson, second from right, is seated with two stagers from China.



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receiving the luxury staging credentials was important to me," Stevenson said. "The takeaway was the latest in trends and an amazing and expanding opportunity for my team in Salado and our Central Texas sellers."

Stevenson is a professional home stager and broker-owner of the JB Goodwin Realtors North Team and DS Central Texas Staging Showroom and Gallery in Salado. For more information on staging/selling your home, contact Stevenson at 254-947-7110, debbie-stevenson@jbgoodwin.com or go to www.dscentraltexasrealtors.com

IAHSP® is the premier home staging industry association for professional home stagers, designers and re-designers with thousands of members worldwide.

Since 1999, IAHSP® has helped guide the staging industry with education, excel-



Canadian-born twins Jonathan, left, and Drew Scott provided an in-depth look into their HGTV shows during their conference presentation. Now in their 40s, Jonathan joked that HGTV is not ready for him to be on camera with what has become his natural color, gray.

lence and ethics standards.

The IAHSP Foundation is a 501-C3 charitable organization supporting Worldwide Staging Service Week.

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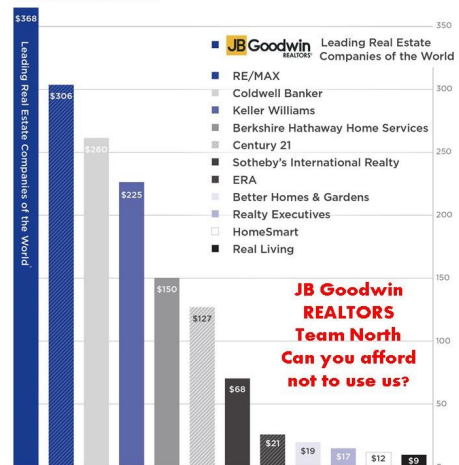
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