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News To Move You Forward

Brought to you by Jill Scheppler, Bob McManus & Angie Domine

715-387-1122 • ffbmortgage@forwardbank.com

Beware of This Common Pet Owner Mistake

We humans aren't the only ones who need to watch our waistlines. Maintaining a healthy weight is essential for a long and fulfilling life for our pets, too. But they don't have control over their weight; we, the pet owners, do, and we often overfeed our four-legged friends.

In an interview for petmd.com, Dr. Jim Dobies, a veterinarian in Charlotte, North Carolina, said one of the simplest ways to gauge a pet's weight is to stand above it and look down. Both cats and dogs should taper in between their abdomen and their hip socket.

"You should be able to feel their ribs but not see them. If you can see them, they are too skinny," Dr. Dobies said. "If you can't see their ribs, and place your hands on the side of their chest and still can't, they're overweight."

Pet owners can also use body condition score charts from sources such as www.mypetsdoctor.com. These score images of a dog or cat at different weights according to how healthy they are and provide a visual guide to measure your own pet against. Feeding our pets the correct amount is critical to warding off issues that arise from obesity, such as congestive heart failure, some types of cancer, and musculoskeletal problems.

Start by consulting your pet food packaging, which typically provides a recommended serving based on an animal's size. Pay careful attention to the wording and whether the serving amount is per meal or a daily total to be divided into meals. Two meals are recommended for most adult dogs, while more frequent feedings are suggested for puppies. For cats, petmd.com recommends between 24 and 35 calories per day per pound.

Thinking of Buying a Home? Get My Free Guide



Buying a home is a complex process with many factors to consider.

Prepare for the decisions you'll need to make along the way by requesting my free report, "10 Easy Steps to Buying a Home."

Just call me at 715-387-1122 and I'll send it right out to you.

Remodels: What's Good for Resale and What's Not

You want to get the best price for your house. You're willing to do some remodeling – if it will deliver significant ROI. What's worth the effort? Here are three projects worth considering and three that you can skip.

The kitchen: Kitchens sell homes. If your culinary center is looking worse for the wear, it will likely turn off potential buyers. Updating your kitchen is a good way to increase the value and appeal of your home.

Bathrooms: These areas are also high on buyers' priority lists, so they should be on yours, too. Focus efforts on the master bath and the powder room.

Curb appeal: First impressions are important and the front of your home is the first thing buyers see. Make efforts that will boost curb appeal, such as repainting the exterior, adding plants, and sprucing up the entry with a new door. These projects can often be completed at low cost but offer high return.

Pools: While you may enjoy countless hours of fun in your pool, this feature probably won't pay for itself in home value increase. In fact, it could be a turnoff for some buyers.

Wine rooms: While they may sound elegant, wine rooms or other original-design spaces are often too niche. Their limited audience makes them a poor investment choice.

Removals: Just because you never use that fireplace doesn't mean you should demolish it. Removing features is typically not a good investment. Potential buyers may wish it were still there, and you aren't likely to recoup the cost of removing the feature.

For expert input on your remodeling efforts, contact our office. We can discuss the projects that could get the best return on investment and what I've seen in demand in your market.

Property Appeal: What Makes a Home Safe?

Location. Layout. Landscaping. A host of home features affect a property's appeal. One quality that tops many "must-have" lists is safety. What should buyers look for if they want a home that offers the best safety possible for themselves and their families?

Several features can improve the safety of a home to make it more desirable. As a bonus, these devices can also reduce the cost to insure a home. If you want to modernize your home with innovative safety measures or are looking for a new home with the latest safety features, consider these list toppers.

Smart Devices

The internet of things has taken home security and convenience to a new level. Homeowners are empowered with a host of tools and systems to keep their homes safe. In fact, technology has become so prevalent that few items aren't equipped with smart features. Appliances offer improved safety and efficiency. Garage doors offer additional security. High-tech lawn systems prevent overwatering and flooding. A few devices are particularly

desirable for homeowners interested in boosting the safety of their surroundings. These include:

Water alerts: Did you know one of the most common homeowners insurance claims is water damage? Smart leak-detection sensors can now prevent these calamities. They alert homeowners of leaks so they can take immediate action to prevent damage.

Fire detection: What happens if no one is home to hear the smoke detector? A smart fire detector will alert a homeowner via a Wi-Fi-connected device anywhere in the world. This can improve emergency response times and minimize damage.

Burglar deterrents: Smart technology has enhanced security on many fronts. Homeowners can deter thieves with timed lighting, access smart door locks to maintain tighter security, and monitor video surveillance from anywhere.

Wondering what features make the most sense for your market? Contact our office. We can review current trends and determine what safety features to look for in your next home.

Ask the Agent: This Month's Question

How do I know if I've found the right house?

Buying a house is probably the most significant purchase you'll ever make. With so many options, it can be challenging to choose just one. To determine whether a home is right for you, ask yourself a couple of key questions about each property.

Does the home meet my must-haves?
Write down a few deal breakers that a property must offer, and stick to these priorities to determine if a home is a good fit.

Does the home offer potential?
Consider your future needs. If you're planning any life changes, keep these in mind. As you weigh its potential, also consider any "wants" that the home doesn't have. If it meets all your must-haves but is lacking a few wants, does it have potential? For example, paint colors and carpeting can be changed. The number of bedrooms is harder to adjust.

I'd be happy to meet with you and discuss what you're looking for in your future home. Just give me a call to get started.

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News To Move You Forward is brought to you free by:

Jill Scheppler, Bob McManus & Angie Domine

Forward Bank, NMLS # 422932

1001 N. Central Ave null

Marshfield WI 54449

715-387-1122

ffbmortgage@forwardbank.com

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