

Gawk-worthy

The newly renovated Scott Data Center adds another “wow” factor to its nationally recognized operation. **Coming Monday**

Emotion over economics

BY CINDY GONZALEZ | ONLY IN THE WORLD-HERALD

A home or neighborhood's distinctive charm can insulate it from price declines



Kerry Hoiberg had always adored the early 1900s Tudor Revival on the boulevard just a block from her Field Club area home.

So when she heard the residence was about to go on the market, Hoiberg set aside hesitation that it would be out of financial reach and asked for a tour. She and her husband, Steve, submitted a bid before anyone else even got a chance.

“You always have a few houses you covet and think, ‘If it ever was up for sale, I’d need to buy it,’” Hoiberg said. “We loved it.”

It was the kind of emotional buy — those driven more by a home’s history, unique charm or neighborhood ambience — that has helped insulate some residential pockets from price swings that, according to one university study, has had property values in certain neighborhoods dropping 40 percent or more since the housing heyday of 2006.

Steven Shultz, professor of real estate and land use economics at the University of

Nebraska at Omaha, used three separate methods to determine how house sales have changed in the Omaha area. Depending on the approach, Shultz said, single-family home prices overall fell between 9.5 percent and 17 percent between 2006, when local housing values peaked, and 2012.

Regardless of the calculation used, Shultz’s study showed prices declining by about 5 percent in just one year, from the start to end of 2011.

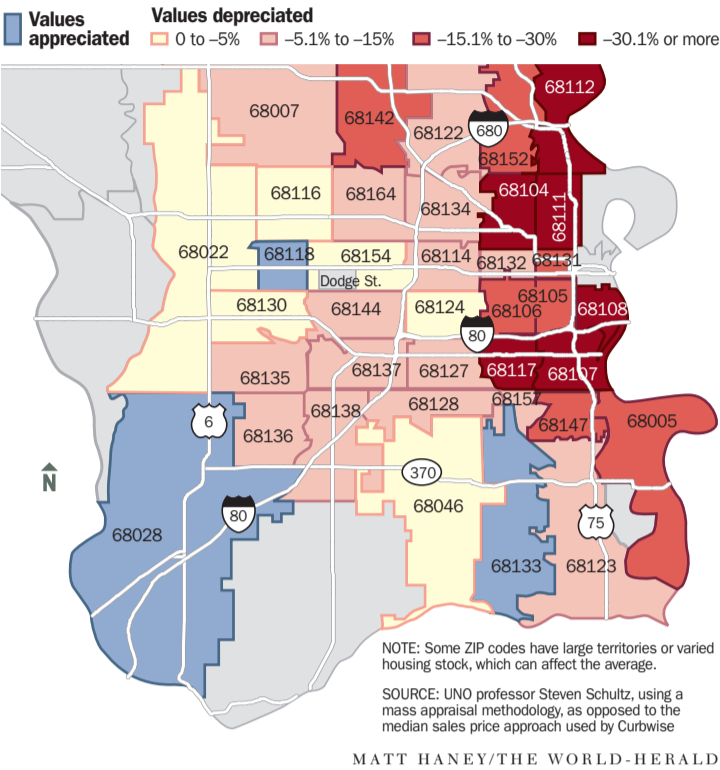
When using a “mass appraisal” approach to compare smaller areas, Shultz reported major variations in price changes across different ZIP codes, from a 49 percent depreciation since 2006 in a northeast Omaha neighborhood, to slight increases in a few areas with newer homes.

Using median sales prices to gauge change in a different way, The World-Herald’s Curbwise data show that roughly a third of about 90 Douglas County neighborhoods have seen a rise in

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HOME SALES PRICE CHANGES

A UNO study reports major variations in price changes across different Omaha area ZIP codes.



KENT SIEVERS/THE WORLD-HERALD

Timothy Reeder of NP Dodge Real Estate is among agents who say their anecdotal evidence suggests that many residences in older, midtown neighborhoods with unique personality or flair — such as this one near 51st and Jackson Streets — have retained or increased in value despite the housing market’s overall performance. “People buy older homes because of emotional reasons,” he said. “We see from experience that they’re willing to pay for that style and character.” Above, a hanging flower basket and a neighborhood watch sign add charm and security to the neighborhood.

AT CURBWISE.COM: Check out what’s happening with home values in your neighborhood.

Career on life support? You can take steps to revive it

Q: Three years ago, I was hired to set up and run a new hospital pharmacy. Everything was going fine until an external audit turned up some problems, and I was blamed for everything. I had hoped to have a career here, but now I’m not so sure.

Recently, management hired another pharmacist who seems to be after my job. She frequently accuses me of not keeping up with my work. It’s true that I don’t put in as many hours as I used to, but that’s only because I need to spend more time at home with my new baby.

Although I previously had a good relationship with my boss, now he and his manager say that I complain too much. Is my career doomed or is

YOUR OFFICE COACH



Marie G. McIntyre

there a way to fix this?

A: Your career may not be dead, but it’s certainly on life support. In addition to expressing concerns about both your competence and your attitude, management also appears to have hired a potential replacement. So you need to

take action quickly.

The key to salvaging this situation is to stop complaining and start implementing a recovery plan. To begin repairing your relationship with management, you must first acknowledge past difficulties, then present a proposal for getting back on track.

For example: “I realize that lately I have not been doing my best work, but from now on, my goal is to make this a model pharmacy. I have outlined specific steps to correct the audit issues and bring everything up to date. As I implement this plan, I would like for us to meet regularly to assess my progress.”

If you can live up to these promises, you may be able to resurrect your reputation.

But should you find that the demands of this job conflict with the demands of parenthood, then you may need to start searching for a more child-friendly position.

Q: Our new general manager is driving the whole staff crazy. She has a bad temper and appears to be incapable of giving us clear directions. She will tell us to do something a certain way, then completely forget what she said and start yelling at us for doing exactly as we were told. She is also very heavy and dresses unprofessionally.

We recently heard that her daughter moved out of the house because of her mother’s behavior, so apparently her family can’t stand her either. A couple

of people mentioned this problem to the owner, but so far he hasn’t done anything. What do you suggest?

A: Since your volatile boss is unlikely to respond well to constructive criticism, going over her head may be your only choice. If the owner has ignored previous feedback, perhaps it’s time for the entire staff to meet with him as a group. Just be sure to keep the focus on business-related issues when expressing your concerns. Discussing your manager’s weight or family problems will only make you sound petty and reduce your credibility.

Contact the writer: www.yourofficecoach.com

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