

In real estate, mountain properties call for a mountain guide

Local real estate professionals are an invaluable part of every transaction

By **Lauren Glendenning**

Brought to you by the Summit Association of REALTORS®

Technology is streamlining the process of buying and selling real estate, but there's something it simply cannot do: replace the value and expertise of a professional, local real estate agent.

"Real estate is often the largest investment you'll make in your lifetime — you need professional guidance," said Tom Coolidge, president of the Summit Association of Realtors.

"The realtor adds a significant level of education and ethics. Beware of these companies saying you don't need a realtor — you do need help."

Here are just some of the tools that members of the Summit Association of Realtors bring to the table.

TIMELY, RELEVANT LISTING INFORMATION

Not all of Summit Listings are on the Internet, and many of the mass-market real estate listing sites are not updated frequently enough to stay current. To get access to most of the listings on the market in Summit County, you need to work with a Realtor who has access to the Summit MLS (multiple listing service). Because Realtors have access to live, comprehensive market data and statistics, they will provide robust expertise on the local market, including available listings, listings coming on the market, and accurate estimates of a home's value.

EXPERT MARKET KNOWLEDGE

In a market like Summit County with so many vacation homes, unique communities and homeowners organizations, a local real estate agent is going to provide expertise that someone out-of-market cannot.

The Summit Association of Realtors' members are engaged in the community, both personally and professionally. They are parents, neighbors, volunteers, youth sports coaches and



SHUTTERSTOCK IMAGES

In a market as complex and unique as Summit County, professional realtors act as guides through every step of complex real estate transactions.

friends. They can also help clients find local tradesmen such as plumbers, carpet cleaners and electricians. The Summit Association of Realtors also offers scholarships to high school students, sponsors various nonprofit programming, and assists with wild-fire preparedness education for area homeowners.

A local agent is going to know that the "too-good-to-be-true" ski-in/ski-out condo listing comes with \$1,000 per month HOA dues — the equivalent of a \$200,000 mortgage.

Local realtors will also know how to find the right comparables for a property. In Park County, for example, Coolidge said the most accurate comps might be on the other side of Hoosier Pass.

FULL ACCESS TO PROPERTIES FOR SALE

If you want to see a property, using a Realtor is the only way you can gain access. Online sites, including the

MLS, might display 30+ photos of a property, but the only way to know for sure is to step inside, see the views and truly feel what it would be like to live there.

PROFESSIONAL, ETHICAL STANDARDS

The 1.3 million members of the National Association of Realtors must take code of ethics classes every two years. The class updates realtors on 17 articles within this code that address a realtor's duty to clients, the public and to other realtors.

By hiring a professional realtor who abides by this code, you're ensuring that he or she will protect your best interests, disclose important information about the property, provide competent services and other important actions that maintain the integrity of each transaction.

"Every facet of the real estate transaction is covered in the code of ethics," Coolidge said.

GUIDANCE THROUGHOUT THE TRANSACTION

The Summit Association of Realtors believes in the value of using a professional real estate agent who can guide buyers and sellers through a complex process. Coolidge has been in real estate for 35 years. He likes to refer to industry professionals as guides, because they truly guide their customers through a long and often complicated process. This includes negotiating important details in every transaction.

A local agent will know how to find his or her clients the right lender, and perhaps most importantly, these realtors are going to spend an average of 50 to 100 hours managing each and every deal.

"Your realtor will help you through the process over the complete timeline," Coolidge said. "Buyers and sellers have to be protected through integrity of the transaction."