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# Mountain West News

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## Water Rights and Real Estate

It’s not surprising that one of the most important questions we get asked when showing properties to buyers is “How good are the water rights?” This is not an easy question to answer, and the truth is, it probably shouldn’t be answered by a Realtor®. Although it certainly helps for us to have a basic knowledge and understanding of water rights and water law, it’s a complicated subject and we are not experts. The question would better be referred to a water attorney, a water commissioner, or a water company representative. The problem is, one of these is not present at the showing, and the buyer usually wants some information and guidance to as to better rate the property in question.

In the case of irrigation, the water rights are often described as a number of shares in a ditch company. In these cases, we often offer a commonly-accepted “rule of thumb” as to the number of shares required to irrigate one acre of land. For example, in the Paonia/Hotchkiss area, the Fire Mountain Canal is a major source of irrigation, serving properties from Somerset to the west end of Rogers Mesa. It’s widely accepted that it takes 25 to 30 shares to irrigate one acre. This “rule of thumb” can vary considerably between different ditch companies. Another company’s “rule of thumb” might be 50 shares per acre, or maybe 1 share per 5 acres. There is no consistency between companies, so as Realtors®, we need to have a general knowledge of numerous companies.

We can also offer information as to the length of the irrigation season of a particular ditch company in a normal, i.e. non-drought year, which involves the priority of that ditch company’s water decrees. This is usually communicated as an estimate of when that particular ditch gets shut off during the irrigation season – again, in a normal year. And, as with estimates of how much water, this information should always be accompanied by a recommendation to confirm with the ditch company or water commissioner.

All of this information being offered to a buyer should also be presented accompanied by some caveats. These include the fact that much depends on the type of crop grown (hay, pasture, orchard, grapes, vegetables, etc.), on the type of irrigation system used (open ditch, gated pipe, flood, sprinkler, drip, etc.), on the the volume of the water flow, and on the experience (or lack thereof) of the person doing the irrigating. If the water right is measured by flow rate, i.e. a

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### REAL ESTATE BY THE NUMBERS

The real estate market continues to move along at a screamingly fast pace. It’s not that there is NO inventory, it’s that inventory is moving VERY quickly. Compared to 1 year ago, there’s a 60% reduction in months supply of inventory. This is defined by the National Association of Realtors as the numbers of months it would take for current inventory of homes to sell, given the current sales pace. In addition, days on market dropped by over 8% — so, as you can see, properties are not sticking around on the market for very long.

Other county economic news shows the effect the pandemic has had: health care and social assistance jobs had both the best wage increases, AND the second-most job losses (unsurprisingly, accommodations and food services had the most job losses). Construction was the strongest industry in terms of adding jobs.

Did you know? Delta County has a higher percentage of real estate/renting/leasing workers than Montrose or Mesa Counties, and higher than the state too. We must be doing something right!

SOURCE: Colorado Mesa University “Delta County Economic Update” Second Quarter, 2021

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certain number of cubic feet per second, or by volume, such as a certain number of acre feet, we can offer information as to the definition of these terms, and if necessary, conversion factors that might help the buyer understand.

If the buyer is inquiring about domestic water, we can often obtain information like the cost of a certain number of gallons per month in the case of domestic pipeline companies, or pump tests (flow rate) and water quality tests in the case of wells.

The bottom line is that all water information being offered by the Realtor® is intended to give a general idea, based on that Realtor’s® experience, of the quality and quantity of the water rights for a particular property. But it should always be emphasized to the buyer that water rights and water law are outside the Realtor’s area of expertise, and that any information about water should be independently verified by the buyer with someone who is an expert in that field.

From the desk of our Cedaredge Managing Broker:

The Cedaredge Applefest is in the planning for 2021! Things are a bit different this year - if you are driving around the Surface Creek Valley, you will see it’s buzzing! In real estate terms the market remains extremely strong and buyers continue to be drawn to our quality of life.

For the residents that are already here, they are again able to go out on the town. Restaurants are busy, Grand Mesa Performing Arts Center is again holding live events, sidewalks are bustling, Cedaredge has a new bakery in town, and people are smiling a bit brighter this year. As always people are drawn to the Grand Mesa for all of its recreational opportunities, including approximately 300 lakes to enjoy during the summer months. Stop in and see us and we can talk numbers.

What I do want to say is Hello again, it’s been a while since we have seen you around town, Thank You for staying diligent during this tough time, and get out and enjoy! If you see any of us around town please stop and say Hello. It’s what our area was built on, friendly people living a friendly life!

— John Freeman



RE/MAX Mountain West



POSTAGE

TO:

If your property is currently listed for sale, this is not intended as a listing solicitation.

FESTIVALS, FAIRS, AND LOCAL SUMMER FUN!

- |                |                                                                                                             |
|----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| July           | Cedaredge: <b>Silent Summer Games.</b> Weekly bike competitions around the area.                            |
| July           | Cedaredge: <b>Summer Outdoor Concerts</b> at Grand Mesa Arts Center. Free! Bring your lawn chair.           |
| Jul 22 - 25    | Delta: <b>Deltarado Days.</b> Parade on July 24th and food/car show/shopping/rodeo/racing/dancing.          |
| Jul 31 - Aug 7 | Hotchkiss: <b>Delta County Fair and Rodeo.</b> Exhibits/livestock/roping/broncs/live music.                 |
| August         | Paonia: <b>Pickin’ In The Park.</b> Thu. nights live music in the Park. Bring a chair & your dancing shoes! |
| Aug 6 - 8      | <b>West Elks Wine Trail.</b> Tastings/fine dining/live music at celebrated area wineries.                   |
| Sep 23 - 26    | Paonia: <b>Mountain Harvest Festival.</b> Celebrating local arts, foods, crafts and music.                  |
| Oct 1 - 3      | Cedaredge: <b>Applefest.</b> Bountiful local fruit harvests/5k run/live music/crafts/foods.                 |

For more information on any of these events (and much more!), visit [www.deltacountycolorado.com](http://www.deltacountycolorado.com).

