

Time seen as right to invest in real estate

Expert Says Opp Ortunities Rising

BY KATHY MCCORMICK, CALGARY HERALD MARCH 7, 2009

Shaken consumer confidence due to the world economic crisis has clouded the fact that it's a great time to buy, says a leading real estate investor.

"People need to be telescopic in their thinking, not microscopic," says Don Campbell, president of the Real Estate Investment Network, which has more than 3,400 members across Canada.

"Look five to seven years from now. Eventually, oil is going to come back, albeit not super hot, but between \$70 and \$80 a barrel, which will do super well here and create jobs."

Calgary is in a relatively good position, he says.

"Calgary has a fairly diverse economy, average incomes are strong, and unemployment is down," says Campbell.

"There's strong in-migration (of people to the city) and the government is starting to spend money on infrastructure, so it will create jobs. People are coming here for jobs, but staying for the lifestyle."

However, in the meantime "we're on an 18-month roller-coaster ride," says Campbell.

The Calgary-based real estate expert recently updated his bestselling book, Real Estate Investing in Canada, Creating Wealth with the ACRE System.

Campbell says his system works no matter if it's a buyers' or sellers' market.

"What it will do is stop you from buying dogs," he says.

Campbell tracks trends in the various cities, including each area's economic outlook, migration, politics and municipal plans.

His system helps potential buyers spot markets that are over-or under-priced; before it happens, shows buyers how to spot towns that will boom or bust; and helps people accurately analyze each property.

As an example, if you're buying, "follow the transit tracks," says Campbell. "That's where real estate values are going to increase."

Interest rates are currently at record lows--and he's predicting they will drop further.

"I see a 25-to-50 basis point drop in rates in the next couple of months," he says. A basis point is a hundredth of one per cent.

"Right now, you can lock in for five years at 4.37 per cent--take it," he says.

If you're selling, "the important part is to not hope for the market of 18 months ago when you're setting your sale price," says Campbell.

"Be realistic. Think about it: today, there is a lot of competition --but there are buyers out there. Price it right and work on curb appeal."

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