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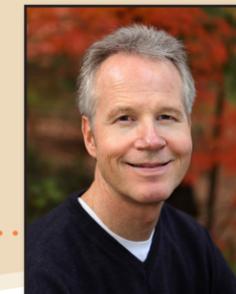
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# the Barry Ward Word

WINTER 2016



## Market Watch Article

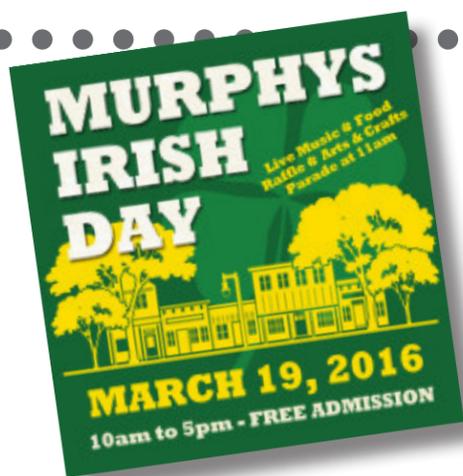
**2015 is over, inventory is dropping and prices are on the upswing!**

As promised, we have compiled the data from the Calaveras MLS to provide you with our annual summary. The statistics are for areas 2-7 (Dorrington to Hathaway Pines). The total number of homes sold in 2015 increased 13% over 2014. The average market time in 2015 stayed virtually the same at 92 days on market vs 88 in 2014. The list to sales price ratio firmed at 97%, from 96% the previous year.

The average sales price nudged up 3.7% and average list price was up 3%. There is currently a 3.6-month supply of homes for sale, so the trend is now favoring sellers. Our home inventory is typically at its lowest in January and peaks about the middle of July, so if the current sales pace continues and inventory remains low, we could see a welcoming upward pressure in prices this spring/summer. We'll keep you posted!

### Annual Market Trends – 2015 VS 2014

RESIDENCES	UNITS SOLD	AVERAGE LIST PRICE	AVERAGE SALES PRICE	% OF LIST PRICE—AVG	AVG DAYS ON MARKET
2015	306	\$268,169	\$260,337	97%	92
2014	270	\$260,293	\$251,067	96%	88



## Murphys Irish Day!

Saturday March 19th  
10:00 am-5:00 pm  
Downtown Murphys

One of the premiere annual events in the Mother Lode is Murphys Irish Day. Each year on the third Saturday in March, thousands of people from Northern California and beyond gather in the historic gold rush town of Murphys to honor its Celtic heritage and to celebrate as only the Irish can. Its picturesque Main Street is filled with booths offering hand crafted items, original art, photographs, tasty food, wine, and other beverages.

**Come join the fun!**

*It May Be Winter, But Now Is A Great Time To Book Your Summer Vacation Rental!*



★ ★ ★ ★ ★  
**RATED #1**  
Barry Ward Realty celebrates being the #1 Arnold-area office again in 2014.\*  
Thanks for your support!

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## Winter Calendar of Events

**AnimalScapes of the Sierra Nevada Foothills**  
Ironstone January 16, 2016 @ 3:00pm-5:00pm  
Ironstone Jan 16 to Feb 15

**Winter Explosion**  
January 16, 2016 @ 6:00 pm  
Bear Valley Mountain

**North Grove Guided Walk at Big Trees State Park**  
January 23, 2016 @ 12:30pm-2:30pm  
Calaveras Big Trees State Park

**Murphys Food & Wine Walking Tour**  
January 30, 2016 @ 11:00am-2:30pm

**BBQ and Music at Outer Aisle Restaurant**  
Thu, February 25, 2016

**Murphys Irish Day Parade and Event**  
March 19, 2016 @ 10:00am-5:00pm

For more events and details, please visit [www.gocalaveras.com](http://www.gocalaveras.com) and click on Events Calendar



\*Based on Calaveras County MLS Status (Area 1-7) 2014

## The Butte Fire



This summer, our community experienced a devastating and life-changing fire event. The Butte Fire started on September 9th in neighboring Amador County, and quickly gained momentum after jumping the Mokelumne River and began raging on through Calaveras County. The communities

of Mokelumne Hill and San Andreas were evacuated, as well as the town of Mountain Ranch. Advisory evacuations were issued, lifted, and reissued from Angels Camp all the way up Highway 4 to Arnold. While the threat of fire to the Arnold area was relatively mild, at one point the flames were a mere seven miles away, as the crow flies. When the fire was finally contained on October 1st the numbers of affected families were staggering. Hundreds of people ended up losing their homes in the hard-hit hamlet of Mountain Ranch and its surrounding areas. Close to 71,000 acres burned, 475 homes lost, with countless other heartbreaking outcomes.

While you have probably read about the fire and devastation online, this article is intended to highlight what it means to us to live in Calaveras County, and to serve as a reminder that there are still many people who need help especially now that winter is here.

During this fire, we witnessed our community come together in ways we could never imagine. People stepped up donating their time and resources to evacuate animals and livestock. Churches, business owners, community organizations and individuals staged numerous donation centers offering clothing, furniture, food and basic necessities for the evacuees who were in the path of the fire. The Calaveras County Fairgrounds became a micro-town unto itself, where Cal Fire set up their command post, and centers sprung up to aide the firefighters with every possible amenity, from food to clean socks. Veterinarians and vet techs gave endlessly of their time to care for injured, scared and displaced animals. Local eateries extended their hours and offered free meals for all those



affected by and fighting the fire. School children created roadside signs thanking all of the fire personnel for their efforts. The list goes on and on.

To see this kind of generosity, to experience this kind of love and fellowship, to know that we live in a beautiful and amazing community where when times get tough, we take care of each other, makes us all humbled and proud to be a part of it, even in the face of devastating adversity.

Months have passed since the fire but as the days go by, we are still seeing signs of generosity and the efforts to assist have not quieted. For those who have lost their homes, there have been benefit concerts and raffles donating all proceeds to them. There are people offering up travel trailers as temporary housing. There are people from out of town offering up their second homes as rentable housing. Again, the list goes on and on with people stepping up to the plate to give what they can. And when the time comes for these people to rebuild, we are sure to see the same grassroots effort to help those in need. If you are wanting to help by donating time, money or assets, you can join the Facebook "Butte Fire Immediate Needs" group to see an ongoing list of current needs of those affected by the fire.

If you or someone you know has been affected by this fire, please know that all of us at Barry Ward Realty have you in our thoughts. Bravo to everyone behind the scenes who gave of their time, energy and resources during the fire, and to those of you currently doing the same in the aftermath.

We all know that living in this area comes with the risk of forest fires, however we are united by the fact that the benefits far outweigh those risks. This small but vibrant section of the Sierra Foothills that we call home, and the people who comprise it are truly a shining example of what it means to live in a strong, functioning, and close-knit community.



## Winter Driving Safety Tips

Winter driving on roads and highways in the snow-capped Sierra Nevada can be a pleasant adventure or it can be a frustrating, tiring and sometimes hazardous undertaking. The California Department of Transportation provides the following information to help make your mountain driving safe and pleasant.

### Be Prepared

- Before heading to snow country make sure your brakes, windshield wipers, defroster, heater and exhaust system are in top condition.
- Check your antifreeze. Be ready for colder temperatures.
- Check your tires. Make sure the tread is in good condition.
- ALWAYS carry chains. **Even if you have four wheel drive.** Four wheel drive components can and do fail and could leave you unable to proceed in your driving. Make sure they are the correct size for the tires on your vehicle and are in working order. Chains must be installed on the drive wheels.
- Other suggested items to carry in your vehicle are an ice scraper, a broom to brush the snow from your vehicle, a shovel to free your vehicle if "snowed-in" and some sand or a piece of burlap for traction if your wheels should become mired in snow and an old towel to clean the dirt from your hands.
- Take along some extra water, food, blankets and clothing. You might have to endure a lengthy delay.
- Put an extra vehicle key in your pocket. Many motorists have locked themselves out of their vehicles while putting on chains and while visiting ski areas.

### Driving Tips

- Allow enough time, and TAKE your time. Trips to the mountains can take longer during winter conditions.
- Keep your fuel tank full. You may have to change your route or be forced to turn back or be caught in a lengthily delay.
- Remove snow from the top of your vehicle before hitting the highway. It may look cool but when it slides off your car while you're cruising down the road, not only can it cause a road hazard or cause an accident behind you, it can also slide forward onto your windshield and block your view of the road. Snap a photo of your car topped with snow, then remove it.
- **Slow down!** Snow and ice make stopping distances far greater than in good weather. Four wheel drive may allow you to "go" better on the snow and even boost your confidence, but it will not help one bit for stopping on the snow and ice. Use a slow and steady speed, avoid using your brakes. Respect the roads and the conditions.
- Be more observant and watch out for other vehicles.
- When stalled, stay with your vehicle and try to conserve fuel while maintaining warmth. Be alert to any possible exhaust or carbon monoxide problems.

### Chain Control

- You must stop and put on chains when highway signs indicate chains are required. You can be cited by the CHP and fined if you don't. There is usually a mile or so between "Chains Required" signs and the check point to install your chains. Chain control areas can change rapidly because of weather conditions.
- The speed limit when chains are required is 25 mph. Even if you have four wheel drive

or are with another vehicle that does, the speed limit is still 25 mph. Speed limits are enforced by radar.

- When you must put on chains, wait until you can pull completely off the roadway. Do not stop in a traffic lane where you will endanger yourself or impede other traffic.
- If you use the services of a chain installer, be sure to get a receipt and jot down the installers badge or ID number. Chain installers are private independent business people and are not Caltrans employees. Chain installers are not allowed to rent or sell chains.
- When removing chains, drive beyond the signs reading "End Chain Control" and pull off the roadway so you can safely remove them.

### Understand the Chain Control Requirement Levels

- R-1: Chains are required on all commercial vehicles (trucks or buses). All other vehicles (cars, pick-ups, vans, etc.) must have either snow tread tires or chains on the drive axle.
- R-2: Chains are required on all vehicles except four-wheel drives with snow tread tires on all four wheels and provided that tire traction devices for at least one set of drive wheels are carried in or upon the vehicle.
- R-3: Chains required - ALL VEHICLES- no exceptions.
- R-1 & R-2 are the most common conditions. The highway is generally closed before R-3 condition is imposed.

Check road conditions often using the Cal/Trans Highway Information Network.  
1-800-427-ROAD (7623)  
<http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/roadinfo>  
TDD 1-800-735-2929



## Winter Fun!

Just because Summer is over doesn't mean there still isn't plenty of fun to be had in the mountains, and there's more to do than ski or snowboard!

### Snowshoeing

The sport of snowshoeing has gained tremendous popularity in the last few years. Lightweight snowshoes and the discovery of cross country ski trails for snowshoers have contributed to this fun winter adventure. SNAC in Arnold (209.795.9310), and Bear Valley Cross Country & Adventure Company



carry snowshoe rentals in a variety of lightweight and sport sizes. No special shoes are necessary and this is definitely fun for everyone! A trail pass is required to use the Bear Valley Cross Country Trail system (209.753.2834) It isn't as difficult as you think! If you enjoy hiking and you love the snow, imagine a day filled with both.

Big Trees State Park also offers guided snowshoe walks through the Giant Sequoias. After the walk, head to the Warming Hut to enjoy hot cocoa or cider and sit beside a roaring fire. The area also offers excellent opportunities for back country cross country skiing and snowshoeing. Call for access information (209.795.2334)

### Sledding and Tubing

Bear Valley Cross Country and Adventure Company offers sledding and tubing for the

whole family (children 3 years and up), featuring a fun variety of gentle to moderate hills. The area is a short walk from the trailhead via a packed-down trail. Kids and adults alike enjoy this adventure area. Non-sledders: \$2 Access Fee per person. You must use Bear Valley Cross Country rental sleds and tubes, as personal sledding/tubing devices are not allowed. Children must be accompanied by a parent or guardian. Open daily 9am-4:00pm. Sled Rental: \$10.00 / Tube Rental (weekends/holidays): \$15.00 (209.795.9310).

### Sno-Parks

Have a snowball fight, build a snowman, or practice your shelter/igloo building skills! Packing a cooler of food and drinks and simply heading to a sno-park is a simple and

inexpensive way to have a whole lot of fun.

The California Department of Parks and Recreation operates two Sno-Park sites along Highway 4: Spicer - South side of Highway 4 at Spicer Road in Calaveras County, about 45 miles east of Angels Camp. Snowmobile trails, cross-country ski trails and snow play areas. Call USFS (209) 795-1381 or go to California Sno-Parks online. Lake Alpine - Winter closure gate on Highway 4, just past turnoff to Bear Valley Ski Area in Alpine County. Sno-Park site is about 55 miles east of Angels Camp. Extensive cross-county skiing. Snowmobiling trails and snow play areas. Call USFS (209) 795-1381.

*The highest compliment our customers can give is the referral of their family and friends. Thank you for your trust.*