



Our exceptional agents and staff at Elk Creek Realty are here to provide you unique knowledge, negotiating skills and devoted service necessary to attaining successful results. Whether you are looking for a charming first home or looking to sell your home, Elk Creek Realty will help you every step of the way. Do not hesitate, give us a call so we can help you achieve the results you want while providing you with the service you deserve.



**477-6561**

## Tips For First-Time Homebuyers

Are you a first-time homebuyer eager to get into the market? Here are steps to take to help you decide whether you are ready to take the plunge.

1. See what you can afford. The most effective way to do that is to find a mortgage lender to see if you pre-qualify for a mortgage loan. Go to the bank that holds your checking or savings account, or ask for recommendations from your realtor who has worked with several. Just go in and ask to talk to a loan officer. They will ask you to fill out an application, which does NOT obligate you to buy a house or accept the loan.
2. Find out what your total monthly housing cost would be, including taxes and homeowners insurance. To get a feel for the maximum amount you should spend, including taxes and insurance. To get an idea of what you will pay in insurance, pick a property in the area where you want to live and make a call to a local insurance agent for an estimate. You will not be obligated to get the insurance, but you will have a good idea of what you will pay if you buy.
3. Find out how much you will likely pay in closing costs. The upfront cost of settling on



your home should not be overlooked. Closing costs include origination fees charged by the lender, title and settlement fees, taxes and prepaid items such as homeowners insurance or homeowner's association fees.

4. Look at your budget and determine how a house fits into it. It is recommended that buyers spend no more than 28% of their income on housing costs. Go much past 30% and you risk becoming house poor.
5. Talk to your real estate agent about the real-estate market. Do they believe prices will continue falling or do they think your area has hit bottom or will rise soon?
6. Remember to look at the big picture. While buying a house is a great way to build wealth, maintaining your investment can be expensive if not careful. When unexpected costs for new appliances, roof repairs, and plumbing problems crop up, there is no property owner to turn to so these are things you should be aware of by getting a home inspection of the property.

You should consider these things when you think you could be ready to buy your first home. Determine whether you are ready for the expense and effort of homeownership before pulling the trigger.

## Easter Peep Trifles

- 1 box yellow cake mix (plus ingredients called for on package)
- 1 container whipped cream or whipped frosting
- Easter M&M's
- 1 package Peep bunnies
- 12 pint-sized Mason jars

Prepare cake mix as directed. Cut half of cake into 1-inch cubes, if you're being neat. (I let the kids just break it up with their hands). We only needed half the cake, so go ahead and eat the other half. Place one Peep bunny in the jar; add cake cubes behind and around it to support it. Add layer of whipped cream and M&M's. Repeat.

Refrigerate until ready to serve.

