



THE MICHAEL GROUP

R e a l E s t a t e & M a n a g e m e n t

Edition 68

December 2011

Volume 78

**MAY YOUR HOLIDAY SEASON BE
FILLED WITH JOY, PEACE AND
LOVE**



Best Wishes from The Michael Group

Messages From Management

Important News and Information from The Michael Group

* The office holiday schedule is:

~Closed Monday, Dec. 26th

~Office hours 12/27 thru 12/30 will be 10 am to 2 pm.

~Closed Monday, Jan. 2nd



* We are in the process of adding our agents to our website. If you have a website and want the website to be included with your name and cell number, please email melissa@themichaelgroup.com and give her your website link. If for some reason you do not want your info on our website, email her and let her know that also.

* Please update your home address , cell number or email address with us if any of this info has changed.



Training Center~ MCE Classes will resume in January!

Some Unique Closing Gift Ideas for your clients from Realtors around Texas...

- ~Frame their new home's survey or blueprints.
- ~Have a painting done of their new home.
- ~Have an energy audit performed on the house.
- ~ Pay for a few weeks of lawn service.
- ~Take a photograph of your clients walking into their new home and frame it for them.
- ~Hire a cleaning service to come in after closing but before they move in.
- ~Make a donation to charity on behalf of the clients.
- ~Pay for a locksmith to change their locks.
- ~Buy a gift card to a home improvement store.
- ~Provide fire extinguishers, carbon monoxide alarms and other safety devices.

Source: texasrealtors.com

Your Monthly Green Tip:

Buy Local this Holiday Season

Look for opportunities to buy from local artists, artisans and businesses. That way the dollars you spend contribute more to the community where you live. Downtown business districts have suffered in the last generation as shoppers got in the habit of shopping at suburban malls, but you can join the movement to revitalize city districts by spending your holiday dollars there. A vibrant downtown helps preserve outlying farms, forests and open spaces by attracting development to urban centers.

Stats Geek?

The Texas comptroller has a Web Site for you.

Knowing what's going on with the local economy puts you in a stronger position to help your clients. **TexasAhead.org**, a Web site from the Texas comptroller's office, offers a slew of statistics and reports you can peruse to gain insights in a number of areas.

Delve into key economic indicators such as employment, tax collections, retail sales, building permits, and population trends for the entire state or any Texas county. Check out an economic outlook from the comptroller. Find information on schools, crime, natural resources, infrastructure, and transportation. You can even look at real estate statistics.

For numbers specific to your county, visit the *Texas EDGE Data Center* section of the site and check out the county interactive-map tool or run a report based on the indicators that interest you. You also can sign up for e-mail updates on specific pages and topic areas of the site.



Discount MCE Classes!

MCE at a discounted rate is now available online through our website! Click 'MCE' under 'resources' on the left hand side of our home page. Once you are on our page, you can register under The Michael Group to receive the discount. 15 hrs of MCE will cost \$80. There are many courses and options to choose from. SAE is also available for new agents.

StateCE



Don't forget to...

Two free ways to send yourself reminders via e-mail and text message

If you spend most of your time e-mailing and texting clients, why not have reminders for appointments and tasks that come via e-mail and text message? NudgeMail (NudgeMail.com) is a free service that enables you to send an e-mail to yourself at a later time, either by forwarding an existing message or creating a new one. For example, your seller sends an e-mail confirming a meeting at her house on December 12. Forward that e-mail to nudge@nudgeemail.com with the subject line *December 11*. NudgeMail will send your seller's original message back to you on December 11, putting it at the top of your in-box as a reminder. Oh, Don't Forget offers a reminder service with text messages. Go to OhDontForget.com, enter your mobile number, the date and time for the message, and the reminder you want to send. That's it. Oh, Don't Forget offers a free basic service as well as upgrades for longer messages, recurring reminders, and tech support.



8 No-Cost and Low-Cost Ways to Tweak Your Listings

Got a listing that needs a new look? Here are some inexpensive ways to make it shine.

- 1. Move it.** Simply rearranging the furniture can reenergize a room. Mirrors are particularly useful when it comes to updating a room.
- 2. Plant it.** Houseplants are a generally undervalued design component that can add texture, warmth and color to any room. Group plants of differing heights, fullness and color for the most dramatic effect.
- 3. Paint it.** Use dramatic colors in powder rooms and dining rooms and more neutral colors in living spaces.
- 4. Organize it.** Try hooks and shelves inside the door to hang coats and keys, while canvas bins or natural baskets help contain magazines and mail.
- 5. Hide it.** Banged up wall? Paintable wallpaper will smooth out an uneven wall or hide minor dents and dings. Your intent should never be to mislead buyers; be sure to disclose flaws that would affect home value.
- 6. Replace it.** Cabinet handles, switch plates and other small pieces of housing hardware can update a home for just a few dollars a piece. Scan each room to see what looks worn or outdated and replace it. Fresh towels and a new toilet seat go a long way toward making a bathroom feel clean and new.
- 7. Light it.** Light is a mood setter. Create a cozy feel just by turning down the lights. Add dimmers in the dining room, bathrooms, kitchen and even the hallways for less than \$5 each. Adjust the lighting to create the mood you want.
- 8. Clean it.** Turn a critical eye to the flooring to make sure it's up to snuff. Scrub grout and seal natural stone. Rub out scratches and nicks on wood floors with scratch cover.

Your Favorite Charity

What is your favorite charity? Every month The Michael Group makes a donation to an agents favorite charity.

Email or call us with the name of your favorite charity and we will put it in our drawing.

The charity chosen for December is: The Tarrant Area Food Bank

~ Serving Christmas dinners to the needy

For more info on these charities or to put your favorite charity in our monthly drawing ,
please email carol@themichaelgroup.com.

Thank you to all agents who have responded. Keep sending your nominations!

Did You Know?

- ◆ Mistletoe (*Viscum album*) is from the Anglo-Saxon word *misteltan*, which means “little dung twig” because the plant spreads through bird droppings.
- ◆ The first state to recognize Christmas as an official holiday was Alabama in 1836.
- ◆ The traditional three colors of Christmas are green, red and gold. Green has long been a symbol of life and rebirth; red symbolizes the blood of Christ and gold represents light as well as wealth and royalty.
- ◆ The poinsettia is native to Mexico and was cultivated by the Aztecs, who called the plant Cuetlaxochitl (“flower which wilts”). For the Aztecs, the plant’s brilliant red color symbolized purity, and they often used it medicinally to reduce fever. Contrary to popular belief, the poinsettia is not poisonous, but holly berries are.

Happy Holidays

Wishing you a peaceful and profitable 2012

