

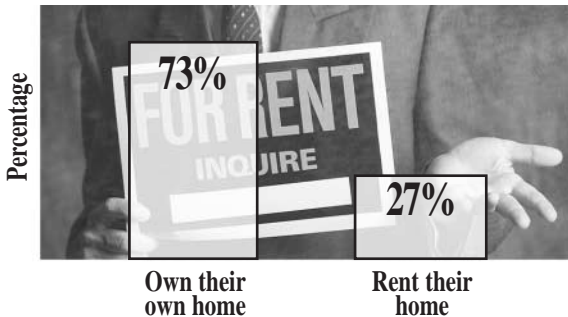


Poll STATION

With Linda Banister

With Alberta's economy still going strong, the province continues to see a steady stream of people choosing to call the province and Edmonton, in particular, home. While this growth has its effects on all of Alberta's industries, perhaps none are impacted as much as the real estate industry. This month *Poll Station* asked Edmontonians their views on real estate and the growth of this industry.

DO YOU OWN OR RENT YOUR HOME?



To begin, respondents were asked if they currently own or rent their homes. Nearly three-quarters (73 percent) stated they own, while 27 percent rent. Of the homeowners, 82 percent currently own a house, while the other 18 percent own a condo. The most commonly cited reasons for owning rather than renting were that it is an investment that builds equity (37 percent), it costs the same as renting (33 percent), and ownership allows you to do what you want to your home (19 percent).

Next respondents were asked why they chose to either buy a house, buy a condo or rent their home. The most common reasons mentioned for purchasing a house were that a house has more space including a yard (48 percent), there is more privacy and it is quieter (37 percent), and that you don't have to pay condo fees (15 percent). The main reasons mentioned for choosing a condo were price (38 percent), and that there is no yard work or maintenance involved (31 percent).

Those who rent indicated they can't afford the down payment (56 percent), and they move a lot and need temporary residence (19 percent) as the primary reasons that they don't own a home.

DO YOU KNOW ANYONE WHO HAS PURCHASED REAL ESTATE IN THE PAST YEAR?

Next, respondents were asked if they or anyone they know has purchased real estate in the past 12 months. Just under half (45 percent) claimed to either be involved or know someone involved in the real estate market, while 55 percent said they had no involvement. Of those who were involved in a purchase, 71 percent used a realtor for the transaction, while 11

percent went through private sale, nine percent used both and seven percent went through the homebuilder. When asked if they or anyone they know had sold real estate in the past 12 months, just over one-third (34 percent) had and 65 percent had not. Of those involved in selling a property, 71 percent used a realtor, 24 percent sold it themselves, and six percent tried both ways. Three percent used ComFree.

HOW WOULD YOU SELL YOUR PROPERTY?

Lastly, respondents were told about new companies such as ComFree, featured in last month's *Edmontonians* magazine, which provide private sellers with a real estate listings, signage and support service for a flat fee. Over half (57 percent) of respondents were aware companies like this existed, while 43 percent were unaware. When respondents were asked which method they would use if they were to sell any real estate they own, 42 percent of respondents said they would go through the traditional real estate agent, 28 percent would try to sell it on their own, and 10 percent would try a company such as ComFree.

Reasons for using realtors included they take care of the hassle (43 percent), they are faster at selling (17 percent), and they know other realtors (14 percent). The main reason for selling privately was that there is no commission paid (75 percent). Reasons for using a company such as ComFree were the low cost (60 percent), and friends and family have seen the benefit (30 percent).

The Poll Station surveyed 100 City of Edmonton residents on the topic and, while the results of the research are not statistically reliable, they do provide a qualitative indication of what Edmontonians are thinking. ✓

Linda Banister is a certified management consultant and the owner of Banister Research & Consulting Inc., a full service provider of market research and program evaluation services. If you have a question you would like included in the Edmontonians Poll, contact Linda at 780.451.4444 or e-mail at lbanner@edmontonians.com For further information on the firm visit banister.ab.ca.