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A Note from Ann:

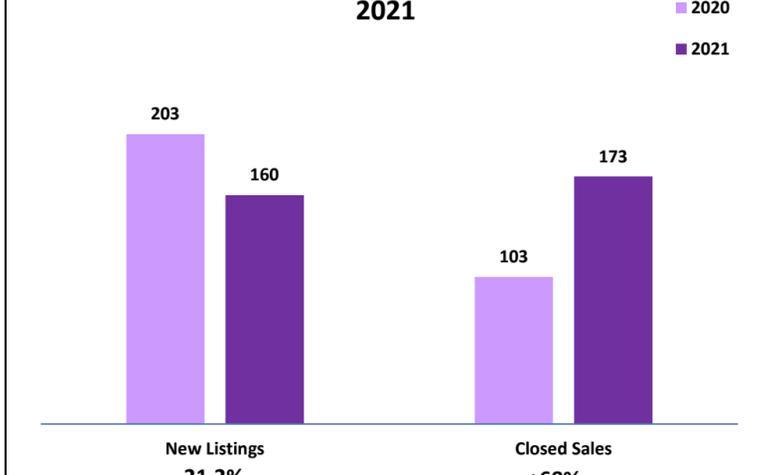
This month we are still talking about inventory - or lack thereof. It has improved somewhat - we've had 13 new listings in the past 3 days in the Bastrop, Smithville and Cedar Creek areas. But there is still as much as they get listed. I am the eternal optimist - but I do see (hope?!) it will slowly get better with warmer weather and as more people are comfortable with a more readily available vaccine. Once the pent up demand levels out we should see a leveling out of inventory. However, in some price ranges the new, higher valued comps will be the new norm - meaning prices have gone up and most likely will not go back down. If you're looking for a home, it can still be done. I did recently have one in the under \$250K range that they even got closing costs rolled in. Don't give up, just be ready to move with pre-approval in hand. If you're looking to sell - there's never been a better time!

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Bastrop Area Monthly Statistics

Below are the current home statistics for the Bastrop Area. The average home sale price for March was \$312,139, which is up 18.1% from the previous year. The average home sale price for 2021, so far, is \$289,062, which is up 11.5% from 2020.



Around Town



Upcoming Events

April 1st, 8th, 15th, 22nd, & 29th - Smithville Music in the Park

Enjoy a series of live music and artists with Music in the Park in Smithville Texas. Local musicians will be downtown Smithville at the gazebo park, First Street at Main Street, every Thursday evening in April. Free admission.

April 3rd-May 23rd - Sherwood Forest Faire

Much anticipated Sherwood Forest Faire will gather weekends in April and May in 2021 east of Austin near McDade, Texas. With over 150 live performances, 170 artisans, and the famed archery and jousting contests, this event is Central Texas' Renaissance Faire to attend. Costumes are encouraged and welcomed during these medieval times. For more information or to purchase tickets, [click here](#).

April 10th - Makers and Merchants Fair

Head out to the Makers & Merchants Fair right in front of EH Mercantile and Subway at 1509 Dorothy Nichols in Smithville, Texas on April 10, 2021, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Browse the many hand-crafted items and other wonderful wares available. Head into town for lunch or to explore the Central Business District. Come out to Smithville to shop and play and stay awhile!

Preventing Infestations

Your home should be a safe space where you can relax. That's why one of the worst feelings as a homeowner is when harmful insects invade your property. Here's how to avoid common infestations.



Ants—Be sure to sweep and vacuum indoors frequently to prevent ants from invading and feeding on stray crumbs. To get rid of these pests, use either a common insecticide, or boric acid or borax powder. Ants pick up these particles and take them back to their nest, hopefully eliminating the problem at the source.

Cockroaches—If your home is clean and tidy, these bugs won't stick around. Without crumbs or food sitting out, your home should be cockroach-free. If you see them, look for cracks in the walls or floor, and seal with duct tape temporarily to prevent the pests from moving about freely.

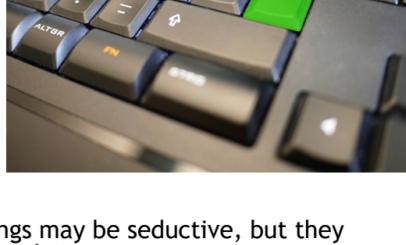
Wasps—These dangerous insects congregate around garbage bins or exposed food. They also can nest around your home, usually in garages, attics, under eaves or in nearby landscaping. You can spray the hive at night to kill the pests, but be careful—aggressive wasps may require help from trained professionals.

Mosquitoes—These pests need standing water to breed, so be sure to eliminate potential sources, including open soda cans/water bottles, kiddie pools or bird baths. If you have a standing water source, be sure to filter or clean it regularly to prevent eggs from hatching.

What You Should Really Know About Browsing for Homes Online

It's fun! It's exciting! It's important to take everything with a grain of salt!

Oh, let's just admit it, shall we? Browsing for homes online is a browser shopper's Shangri-La. The elegantly decorated rooms, the sculpted gardens, the colorful front doors that just pop with those "come hither" hues.



Browser beware, though: Those listings may be seductive, but they might not be giving you the complete picture.

That perfect split-level ranch? Might be too close to a loud, traffic-choked street. That handsome colonial with the light-filled photos? Might be hiding some super icky plumbing problems. That attractively priced condo? Might not actually be for sale. Imagine your despair when, after driving across town to see your dream home, you realize it was sold.

So let's practice some self-care, shall we, and set our expectations appropriately.

You Keep Current. Your Property Site Should, Too

First things first: You wouldn't read last month's Vanity Fair for the latest cafe society gossip, right? So you shouldn't browse property sites that show old listings.

Get the latest listings from realtor.com, which pulls its information every 15 minutes from the Multiple Listing Service (MLS), regional databases where real estate agents post listings for sale. That means that realtor.com's listings are more accurate than some others, like Zillow and Trulia, which may update less often. You wouldn't want to get your heart a flutter for a house that's already off the market.

BTW, there are other property listing sites as well, including Redfin, which is a brokerage and therefore also relies on relationships with brokers and MLSs for listings.

The Best Properties Aren't Always the Best Looking

A picture, they say, is worth a thousand words. But what they don't say is a picture can also hide a thousand cracked floorboards, busted boilers, and leaky pipes. So while it's natural to focus on photos while browsing, make sure to also consider the property description and other key features.

Each realtor.com listing, for example, has a "property details" section that may specify important information such as the year the home was built, price per square foot, and how many days the property has been on the market.

Ultimately though, ask your real estate agent to help you interpret what you find. The best agents have hyper-local knowledge of the market and may even know details and histories of some properties. If a listing seems too good to be true, your agent will likely know why.

Treat Your Agent Like Your Bestie

At the end of the day, property sites are like CliffsNotes for a neighborhood: They show you active listings, sold properties, home prices, and sales histories. All that data will give you a working knowledge, but it won't be exhaustive.

To assess all of this information — and gather facts about any home you're eyeing, like how far the local elementary school is from the house or where the closest Soul Cycle is — talk to your real estate agent. An agent who can paint a picture of the neighborhood is an asset.

An agent who can go beyond that and deliver the dish on specific properties is a true friend indeed, more likely to guide you away from homes with hidden problems, and more likely to save you the time of visiting a random listing (when you could otherwise be in the park playing with your canine bestie).

Want to go deeper? Consider these sites and sources:

- School ratings: Data from GreatSchools.org and the National Center for Education Statistics, and the school district's website
- Crime rates and statistics: CrimeReports.com, NeighborhoodScout.com, SpotCrime.com, and the local police station
- Walkability and public transportation: WalkScore.com and APTA.com
- Hospital ratings: HealthInsight.org, LeapfrogGroup.org, and U.S. News and World Report rankings

Just remember: You're probably not going to find that "perfect home" while browsing listings on your smartphone. Instead, consider the online shopping experience to be an amuse bouche to the home-buying entree — a good way for you to get a taste of the different types of homes that are available and a general idea of what else is out there.

Once you've spent that time online, you'll be ready to share what you've learned with an agent.

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