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## A Note from Ann:

### Choosing a Real Estate Agent

With the recent growth in our area, the real estate field is once again becoming overloaded. When the economy is good, everyone jumps into the field thinking it's easy money (most don't realize what Realtors actually do, it's more than turn on lights and open doors). I started in 2007 and you should have seen the field empty out during the recession! In any case, I'm seeing a lot of inexperienced agents that truly don't know what they're doing and a lot of Austin agents coming out our way that don't know our area; and we have things that you have to know and disclose in this area, so it could really affect you if they're in the dark. We have an Endangered Species (Houston Toad), a formerly used Defense Site area, a moratorium on building in a certain area, former fires and floods, and water district areas. It's important to pick not only a well educated and experienced agent, but one that you feel comfortable with as you will be working closely with them.

Some of the things to look for are:

- **Past client reviews:** Check Google, Yelp, and their website.
- **Credentials:** Education or designations they've earned. For instance someone with ABR with have additional training in working with Buyers, CRS is a Certified Residential Specialist, SRS has added education in representing sellers. All of the letters behind the name mean something, find out what and how it will work for your situation.
- **Experience:** This is a biggie, how long have they been in the business and how long have they worked in your area.
- **Awards:** If you can find out about past awards you should, especially those that are from peers in the business, that speaks loudly.
- **Personality:** Everyone is a little different and if you and your agent don't "click" find someone that you feel comfortable with.

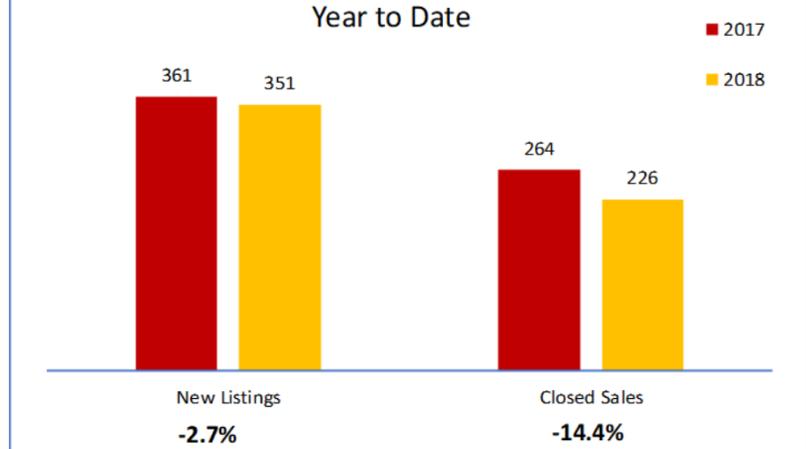
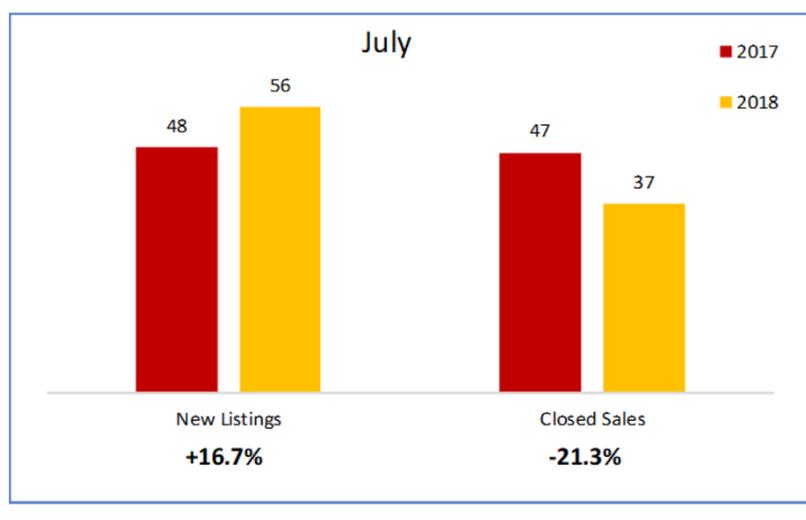
Real estate agents handle the issues behind the scenes that most people are not even aware exist. When you're making, what is probably one of the largest transactions you will make in life, you want someone who knows what they're doing in your corner. Ask questions.

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## Bastrop Area Monthly Statistics

Below are the current statistics for the Bastrop Area. The average home sale price for July was \$235,879, which is up +1.4% from the previous year. The average home sale price for 2018, so far, is \$226,089, which is up +7.8% from 2017.



## Around Town

### Upcoming Events

#### July 31st–Aug 4th - Bastrop Homecoming and Rodeo

Festivities include three nights of live entertainment, rodeo, a carnival, food and gift vendors, the Mike Mathison Memorial Horseshoe/Washers Tournament, the Fred Wright, Jr. Memorial Golf Tournament, high school class reunions, 4-H Cake Auction, and exhibits. A Grand Parade is held Saturday morning at 10am. Immediately following the parade, an all Alumni Class Reunion is held at the Bastrop Alumni Center. Free Shuttle Ride to events on Mayfest Hill (location of dances, rodeos and carnival) will run every 15 to 20 minutes Friday and Saturday nights. Park at Bastrop Convention Center located at 1408 Chestnut Street. For more information, [click here](#).

#### August 11th - El Camino Real de SUP

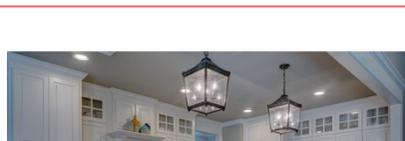
El Camino Real de SUP, Texas' original down-river race, is for beginners, elite paddlers and weekend warriors. The race extends six miles. Meet at Fisherman's Park in Bastrop at 3 pm on August 11, 2018, to register. Adults \$65/Youth \$45. For more information and to register, [click here](#).

#### August 24th–25th - Boogie Back to Bastrop Western Swing Festival

Come get your swing on at the Boogie Back to Bastrop Western Swing Festival! We have an awesome lineup of top-notch entertainment, and are so excited to bring back this event to Western Swing lovers and dancers! Our musical guest Jeff Woosley & The Dancehall Kings and the Rocky King Band will be performing both days. August 24 & 25, 2018 1pm-11pm, both days. Doors open at 12:30pm. Food & Alcohol Concessions will be available. For more information and to purchase tickets, [click here](#).

## Kitchen Confidential

Each year brings about new home design trends, and one of the most popular rooms to study is the kitchen. Looking at trend studies can provide inspiration for homeowners considering updating or remodeling their kitchens, so check out these findings from the latest Houzz report:



**Organization and decluttering are top priorities.** Seventy-five percent of homeowners want clutter-free countertops, and 63 percent said adequate storage was the most important feature in a kitchen. Custom storage options have become popular, especially pullout waste and recycling bins, utensil and dish organizers, and wine/bar cabinets.

**Countertops are getting a new look.** Countertops are the most commonly upgraded feature in the kitchen (94 percent), as well as the one homeowners are most willing to splurge on. Engineered quartz has also gained popularity over granite.

**Open layouts are in.** Half of renovating homeowners open their kitchen to other interior spaces, with a completely open transition or double doors being the most common. One in 5 homeowners made their kitchen more open to the outdoors, usually by installing exterior doors.

**Design is transitional.** Iconic styles such as modern and traditional are falling out of favor as homeowners lean toward transitional, contemporary and farmhouse styles. And they are choosing shaker-style and flat-panel cabinets over raised-panel.

**But what about color?** White is a predominant color chosen for cabinets, countertops, walls and backsplashes, while wood is the top choice for floors. Natural wood continues to be most popular, but is on the decline as homeowners are choosing engineered wood or laminate flooring.

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