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A Note from Ann:

With the dreary, cold and wet days of February upon us, we look forward with angst for Spring! However, since our area enjoys such a mild winter, we are still experiencing a good market. There are a lot of buyers needing or wanting to move to the area and just not enough homes to fill their needs. This is normal as we still have those sellers that want to “wait for Spring” - and compete with everyone else. Sell now and be a big fish in a little pond - and potentially get more for your home as buyers compete.

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With that said, I'd like to make sure you are aware we have a very large Bastrop County Board of Realtors, over 200 strong. I have the honor of being President of the Board this year and with that am tasked with the challenge of educating the local community about our local agents. We are having far too many Austin agents (even Houston agents!) come out here to list our homes or represent buyers. While we have nothing against these agents, YOU need to know what they don't know. 90% of them do not know about our Camp Swift Defense Site Addendum that is needed for properties off Hwy 21 and 95. They are certainly uneducated in the Houston Toad, our endangered species, which also requires a special addendum; ask them about the moratorium on Pine Forest Unit 6 - worse yet, let them sell you one of those lots unawares that you will not be able to build. They don't know what areas have flooded, even though they're not in the flood plain, or what areas burned. Not to mention being familiar with our schools, or county or city subdivision rules. There's a lot to know in our special little corner of the world!

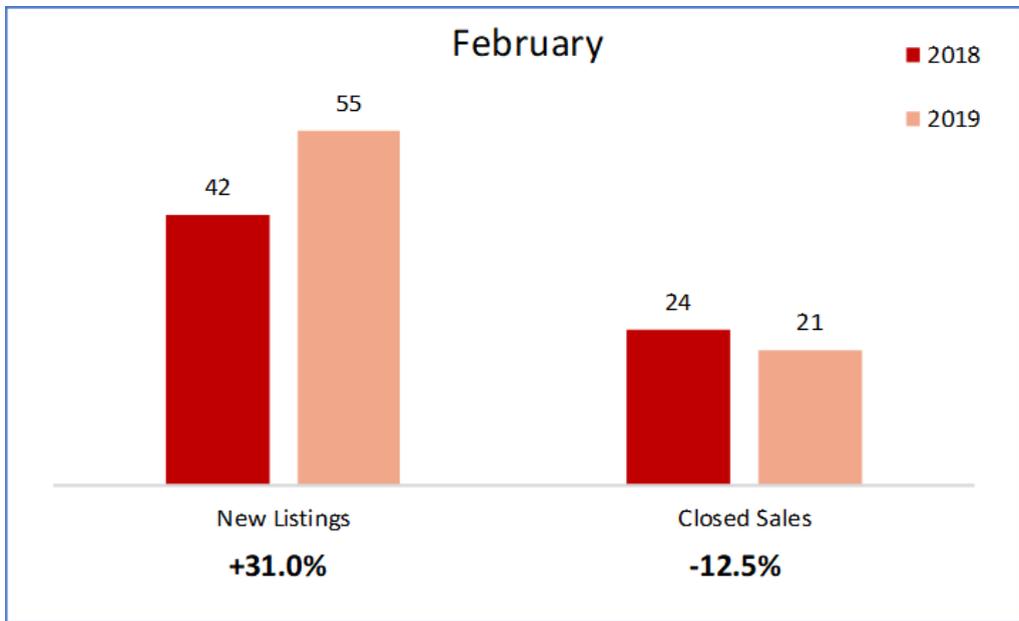
Agents that list your home or sell you something in an area they are not familiar with are truly stepping outside our ethical guidelines, as they are not (albeit it innocently) providing you with important information you need to make an educated decision. Be sure to Shop Local - especially when it comes to something as important as buying or selling a home - there's more to it than a lot of people understand - that's why we're the Local Experts!

Happy Valentines Day!



Bastrop Area Monthly Statistics

Below are the current statistics for the Bastrop Area. The average home sale price for January was \$228,041, which is down 1.02% from the previous year.



Around Town



Upcoming Events

February 14th-16th - Cupid Zip Line Tours

Experience romance at Zip Lost Pines this Valentines Day! Cupid's Full Tour for two and Half Tour for two available. After the tour, enjoy two glasses of Champagne or Apple Cider with chocolate covered strawberries! For more information, [click here](#).

5 Home Features That Might be a Waste of Money

When looking for a home, there are always features seemingly everyone says you need. But by reconsidering those, you may save yourself a pretty penny. Here are five features to reconsider, especially if you're trying to buy a house on a limited budget:



- 1. Close access to mass transit.** Regular commuters and people who don't own cars might be vying for homes near public transit systems. But if you won't be relying exclusively on these systems, you can save yourself a lot of money by living farther from these hubs.
- 2. A big yard.** All of that open outdoor space may look tempting at first glance. However, ask yourself how often you'll really be using the yard. Do you have pets or children that will play in it? Will you do any outdoor entertaining? If not, the cost and time spent on lawn maintenance and landscaping may not be worth it.
- 3. A top school district.** Some parents will pay top dollar to send their kids to specific schools—and to live in the best school districts. If you don't have or plan on having children while living in this house, you may want to do a little research into school districts during the homebuying process and avoid the areas where costs are higher.
- 4. Amenities you won't use.** Whether it's a built-in wet bar or a double oven in the kitchen, the cost of these amenities are reflected in the home's final price. Ask yourself if you'll really take advantage of these features before committing to the purchase.
- 5. More space than you need.** While large living spaces and extra rooms are nice to have, will you really use them? Be honest with yourself—and save money on the price of a home, as well as on heating, cooling and cleaning costs, by buying a smaller home.

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