



nerej

What's worse: Weather, the economy or the Celtics?

February 13, 2014 - Appraisal & Consulting

Whats worse? The weather, the economy or the Celtics chances of getting into the lottery? The weather stinks and the economy is not much better. With Rondo back people are bemoaning the Celtics ability to tank. What nonsense. What about Celtics Pride. Red is rolling in his grave at such talk. But enough about sports and yet spring training is a few weeks away so take heart. At least there's something to be excited about regarding the weather, it should get better. Not sure we can say that about the real estate market. Everything I'm hearing and seeing lately is far from good. Appraisers are finding little or no work, brokers are not seeing the traffic they had expected and refinances have dried up. As a result of the lack of activity and weakening of the markets, mortgage rates have started to decline. Home values, per the most recent S/P Case-Shiller report showed the first downturn since 2012. Real estate brokers are less optimistic with quotes like, "the market is going sideways" popping up with much more regularity. Even with lowering interest rates the prospects for a rapid upswing in activity is unlikely.

Once again, we as appraisers are in a precarious situation. Our profession is taking another in a series of hits that make it more and more difficult to recover. We are hearing about the crack downs Freddie and Fannie are making based on their enhanced ability to analyze an appraiser's performance as a result of UAD, and the steps they will take against appraisers who are not performing up to standards. Let's not cry wolf over this one. If we are doing our jobs in a professional, ethical and competent manner, then you should have no worries. If you've been "finagling the bagel" so to speak, then you should worry; and, in all likelihood, you will be caught. Again, this is not a bad thing. The sooner the bad apples are ousted, the better.

This July will be my 40th anniversary as an appraiser. I guess that really meets the definition of a one trick pony. In all honesty, it's been a blast. As I've said on numerous occasions, other than being a weatherman, who gets paid for his opinion and never has to be correct, we have the second best profession in the world, because we also get paid for our opinion but we do have to be correct. I've seen the ups, the downs, the sideways and everything in between. Are we at the end of the line? I don't think so. Will it continue to be a challenge and will it continue to be difficult? Without a doubt, it will. How do we succeed? The same way as before, work hard, and then work harder. Keep current, stay abreast of the market and all of the challenges it represents. Network, take courses, visit The Appraisal Foundation's Appraisal Practices Board website and read up on the latest Valuation Advisories for a better understanding of the best practices in our profession. If you're not a member of a professional appraisal organization, then join. The benefits are innumerable and some are actually directly impactful to your pocketbook. If you are a member, then volunteer. It's nice to see the same faces being recycled into the various positions but every organization needs new blood, new energy and new ideas. Sure, I could have rolled out my two favorite words in all appraising, "IT DEPENDS" to the above questions, but now is not the time to be indecisive. Now is the time to be

decisive and make a concerted effort to improve your standing and stature in a profession that has and will continue to be an extremely important cog in the economy throughout the world.

Steven Elliott, SRA, MRA, is principal at Elliott Gottschalk & Associates, Ashland, Mass.

New England Real Estate Journal - 17 Accord Park Drive #207, Norwell MA 02061 - (781) 878-4540