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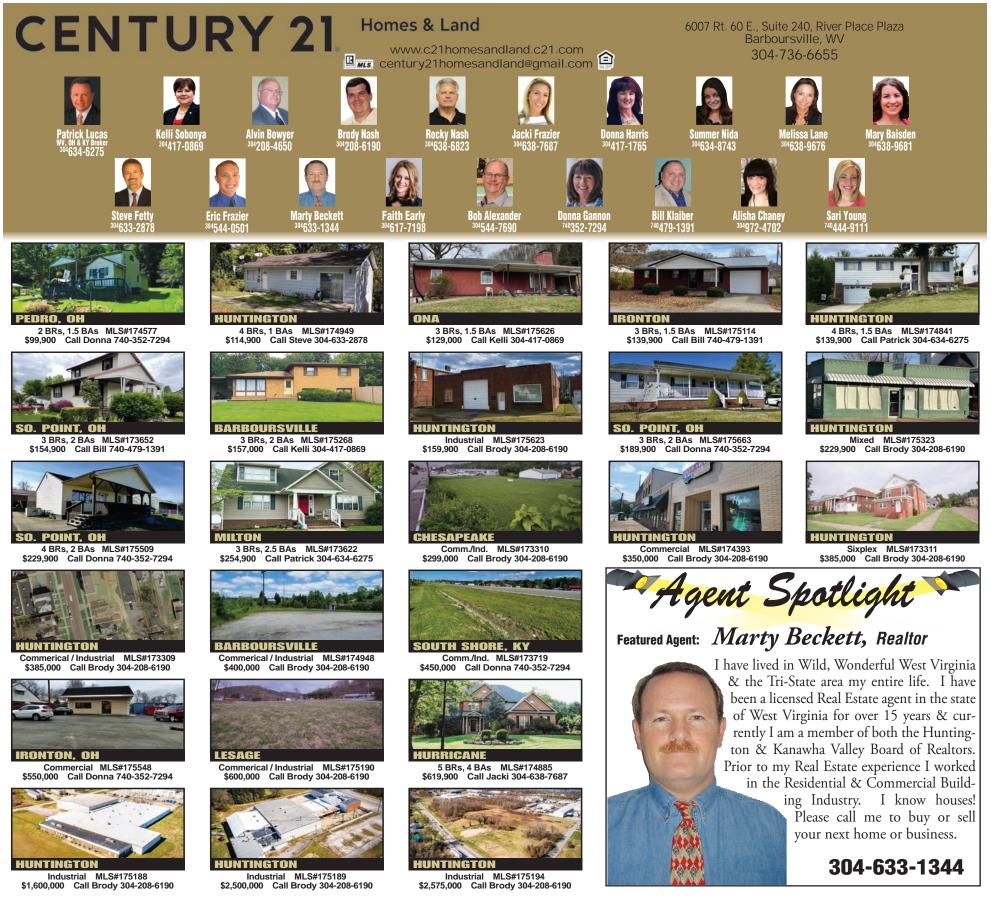
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Home Buyer's Guide





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WINTER DECLUTTERING

Patrick Rayl Realtor/Salesperson Impact Realty Group

Patrick Rayl is a Huntington resident and spent time between Huntington and Columbus since being a child. He has lived in Huntington since coming back to go to Marshall University in 2007. He worked at Marshall for over 8 years in many different roles from Housing Maintenance to Recruitment.

Patrick began his real estate career working for Eddie Mylar as an assistant in 2018. He learned how to navigate deals during his time as Eddie's assistant and started to work full time as an agent in 2020. Patrick is part of the Huntington Board of Realtors, Kanawha Valley Board of Realtors and the Ashland Area Board of Realtors. He is a licensed Salesperson in West Virginia, Ohio and Kentucky.

Patrick loves being a Realtor because he loves to help clients navigate the whole process and tries to make it as stress-free as possible. Being a Realtor gives him the opportunity to not only help but meet many different types of people in the local community.

Patrick serves as the Vice-President of the Kiwanis Daycare Board of Directors. He also is the Vice President with the Huntington Kiwanis Club. Patrick has also been an Upward basketball coach for close to 8 years. He is always looking for a way to help his community.

Patrick and his wife Sarita have been married for 8 years. They have a son, Silas, who is four years old and a daughter, Keziah who is one and half years old. They also have a dog named Cici who keeps them on their toes. Patrick loves to travel, watch sporting events and play kickball and wiffle ball.



Patrick Rayl Realtor/Salesperson Impact Realty Group



by Shelley Rowe, President, Huntington Board of REALTORS®

The cold drab days of February are great for relaxing and snuggling up on the couch with a great movie or book. But this season spent mainly indoors is also a wonderful opportunity to get a jump start on cleaning, organizing and decluttering your house. Whether you are planning on putting your home on the market for sale or to just give a good sprucing up, winter months are perfect. Did you know, decluttering and cleaning your space can also give the added benefit of lowering stress levels? According to a study by Princeton University, researchers discovered our living environment can

positively or negatively impact our ability to complete tasks as well as our overall mental health. Another study by the University of Connecticut reinforces the idea that removing and controlling clutter can reduce stress and help individuals feel less anxious and more confident. Seem like too big of a task? Here are some easy ideas to see a difference quickly. First, try the 5 minute rule. Work on an area for only 5 minutes to begin with. Amazing what can be accomplished in 5 minutes. Second, tackle the smallest area or items first. Third, designate a "donate or discard" area. This way you are removing what you

no longer need. Lastly, wipe down or dust area, sweep or mop and voila...that space is tidy!

Winter is also a good time to assess what is going on outside. Pick a milder day and take a little stroll around the yard. Any areas of standing water? Do the gutters appear to be draining properly? How is the driveway? Need to add gravel or make repair to asphalt or concrete due to weather or salt damage? Mark these areas or make a note and you will be ready to address when Spring arrives. Small efforts can make a big impact. Wishing everyone a fabulous February!



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HOMEWSE Real Estate Tips and Advice Getting a Home Energy Audit

By ANNA CHANG-YEN | Green Shoot Media

If you suspect that your home is leaking out your hard-earned dollars in the form of heating and cooling, a home energy audit is your best bet to find the literal and figurative holes and plug them.

According to the U.S. Department of Energy, having an audit and following up on the auditor's suggestions can save homeowners 5 percent to 30 percent in energy costs.

WHAT TO EXPECT

An auditor will walk through your home room by room, test your heating and cooling equipment and look over your past utility bills. He may even perform a thermographic scan to determine the relative temperature of your home at various points.

The Residential Energy Services Network offers listings of home energy auditors who meet its standards for ethics, objectivity and technical proficiency and agree to its complaint resolution procedures. Visit http://bit.ly/2lwqEnL to find professionals in your area.

AUDIT OR RATING?

RESNET certified professionals offer two different services: audits and ratings. A rating helps you understand how energy efficient your home is when compared to



other homes, as well as a projected idea of your energy costs. An audit is more thorough, "pinpoint(ing) where and how a home is losing energy, which systems are working inefficiently and what cost effective measures can be put in place to rectify the situation," according to RESNET.

A rating costs about \$450, while an audit ranges in price from \$300 to \$800.

An audit can uncover common problems, such as a home getting too hot in summer or too cold in winter, moisture problems, air leakage and out-of-control utility costs, according to RESNET. A rating is commonly ordered by prospective home buyers to gauge a home's energy efficiency.

A rater assigns homes a Home Energy Rating System (HERS) score, which RESNET calls "an MPG for homes." A lower score is better, indicating a home does a good job of retaining the heated and cooled air produced by your HVAC systems. Raters consider air leaks from both the home's external structure and the HVAC ductwork, the condition of attics, foundations and crawlspaces, the effectiveness of HVAC systems, the

REAL ESTATE 101

Do It Yourself

If you can't afford a home energy audit, the U.S. Department of Energy offers tips to complete an audit yourself. While it won't be as thorough as a professional job, you might uncover some energy problems in your home that can save you money and energy if corrected. Visit https://energy. gov/energysaver/ do-it-yourself-home-energy-audits for instructions.

efficiency of water heaters, the condition of windows, doors, vents and ductwork, as well as the effectiveness of insulation.

According to RESNET, a typical resale home represents 130 on the HERS Index while a reference home (a standard new home built in 2006) is rated at 100. A home with a HERS score of 70 is 30 percent more energy efficient than a standard new home, and a home with a score of 130 is 30 percent less energy efficient than a standard new home.

A home energy audit goes one step further than a rating, outlining measures homeowners can take to "make the home more comfortable, affordable and energy efficient," according to RESNET.

