

# Real Estate TODAY



**REALTOR®**  
*profile*

**Whitney Hood Gesner**  
*Broker/Owner*  
**Hood Realty Company**  
*President, Hood Enterprises*

Whitney is the broker/owner of Hood Realty Company and the President of Hood Enterprises, a rental management company with over 40 years residential and commercial properties. She is a life-long resident of Huntington, WV, graduating from Huntington High School, Marshall University (BBA and MHA). After returning to Huntington, she spent over a decade working in administrative positions at King's Daughters Medical Center and Our Lady of Bellefonte Hospital in Ashland, KY.

Whitney began her real estate career in 2011. Established in 1982, Hood Realty Company has remained a family owned and operated business for almost 40 years. Whitney is a licensed real estate broker in the states of West Virginia, Ohio and Georgia. She is a member of Huntington Board of Realtors, Kanawha Valley Board of Realtors, West Virginia Board of Realtors and the National Association of Realtors. During her career, Whitney has served on the Huntington Board of Realtors Board of Directors as well as the MLS, Bylaws, Community Service and Strategic Planning Committees. She is also an Accredited Buyers Agent (ABR) and a Graduate of the REALTORS Institute of West Virginia (GRI).

For decades, Whitney and Hood Realty Company have both personally and professionally dedicated time and funding to numerous local causes. This includes team and facility sponsorships of numerous youth sports, funding animal assistance programs at One by One Animal Advocates and Little Marshall Animal Rescue Shelter, supporting local Marshall University women's organizations and Branches Domestic Violence Shelter just to name a few. Most recently, and in keeping with the City of Huntington's ongoing efforts to tear down unsafe structures, Whitney and Hood Realty Company purchased two dilapidated structures on 6th Avenue for demolition. Reinvesting in the local community is a yearly commitment they make.

Hiring a real estate professional is an important decision. Having one familiar with not only the local real estate market, but also the neighborhoods, school districts, local businesses and community organizations is crucial. The Hood Realty Company team takes great pride in helping their buyers, sellers, tenants and property management clients with all of their real estate needs. They would be honored to do the same for you.



**Whitney Hood Gesner**  
*Broker/Owner*  
**Hood Realty**



## HOMEBUYERS EMBRACE ONLINE TOOLS

by W.G. Bunch, Associate Broker, Realty Exchange

If you are currently looking for a home, odds are you are using the Internet regularly. According to the 2020 National Association of Realtors Profile of Home Buyers and Sellers, 97 percent of homebuyers used the Internet to search for homes. However, looking for your dream home on the Internet can present challenges. To help make your online real estate experience more effective, here's a look at the top three Internet homebuying mistakes and what you can do to avoid them:

**1) Thinking you can do it all yourself.** Today, the Internet allows users to handle for themselves many tasks that could once only be performed by real estate agents. According to NAR,

the number of 2020 homebuyers who first learned of their homes on the Internet is 51 percent, up from 37 percent ten years ago in 2010. Accordingly, the number of homebuyers who first learned of their homes through agents has been declining—it was at 28 percent in 2020, down from 47 percent in 2010. But although the Internet is a fantastic resource for tips and research, it would be a mistake to assume that the wonderful Web is all you need to buy a house—unless you are an experienced real estate investor. The process of purchasing real estate is complicated from a legal standpoint, and it's easy to make a mistake if you don't have an expert advising you. And when it comes to something as expensive as real estate,

those mistakes could cost you thousands of dollars.

### 2) Falling for fake listings.

Remember, the Internet is a giant playground for scammers, and unfortunately they have penetrated the world of online homebuying as well. Online advertising brings in big money and, when a lot of people are searching for homes, the result is an inventory of fake home listings. How can you spot a fake? If there are no photos of the house, that's a big warning sign. But even if there are photos, it's not guaranteed to be legitimate. Legitimate websites will put watermarks on their home photos to brand those photos as their own. If a home's photos have several different watermarks on it, then

you can guess you are looking at the work of a scammer.

### 3. Putting too much stock in home valuation websites.

Sites like Zillow.com and Homelight.com have changed the way people buy homes by putting pricing information at buyers' fingertips. But they're not infallible. Don't assume to know what the value of a home should be based on what these sites tell you about the neighborhood. There are many elements of a home's value that home valuation sites cannot incorporate. Take their values with a grain of salt. I recommend using this information merely as a range. A REALTOR is the best source of information to help you narrow that range.