



Affinity Title Services, LLC

Affinity Title

**AFFINITY TITLE IS
CHICAGO & NW
INDIANA'S PREMIER
TITLE INSURANCE
PROVIDER**

*We are your closing
specialists!*

This Issue:

WOW Factor

2019 Real Estate Recap

**Best Practices to prevent
wire fraud**

Home Shopping Mistakes



*Kindness is like snow-
It beautifies everything it covers.*

WOW Factor, ATS Indiana!

My husband and I refinanced our home with our preferred lender and chose Affinity as our title company. We closed this Tuesday and after the 3-day recession the loan will fund next Monday. We were headed out of town for our Christmas Holiday in the Caribbean so by the time the loan funds and is recorded there would be no time to refile our exemptions. Cara proactively obtained the forms, had us sign them at closing and offered to personally file them for us when she files our mortgage docs so that we won't lose our exemptions for 2020. It's above and beyond what any other title company in our area has ever offered. So blessed to have Cara in the Elkhart office!

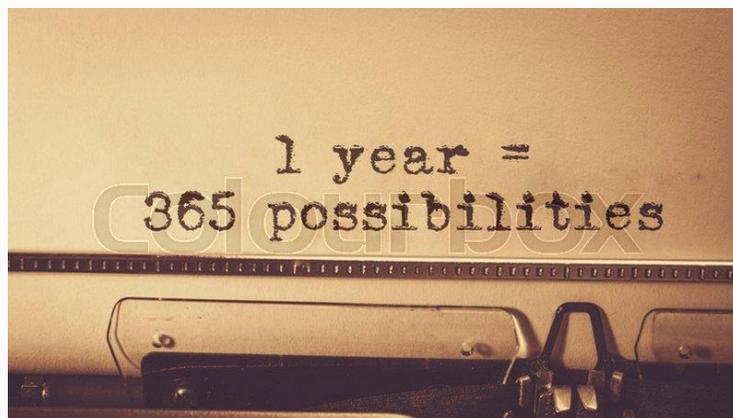
Let's Recap the 2019 Real Estate Market:

According to Lawrence Yun, chief economist at the National Association of REALTORS® (NAR), interest rates are trending low, multi-generational homes are becoming very popular and New Construction will continue to increase in 2020.



Best practices for recognizing and preventing wire transfer fraud and stopping these scams before they result in losses include:

- Be on the lookout for common red flags that are associated with any compromised email. These include a sense of urgency, misspellings, poor grammar and emails sent outside of normal business hours.
- Be wary of emails that contain changes in payment type, such as changing from a certified check to a wire transfer, or changing account numbers at the last minute.
- Credit unions should require title companies to send wire transfer instructions using encrypted email.
- Credit unions should establish procedures to verify the legitimacy of wire transfer instructions received by email. They should also establish a passcode in advance, which can be used for verification purposes with a closing agent or title company.
- Credit unions should always confirm that members received wire transfer instructions via email and, if they did, credit unions should verify information and instructions with the closing agent or Title Company individually before sending funds on a member's behalf.
- If you are unable to verify wire instructions, send a check instead of wiring funds.
- If you are in a business that regularly wires funds, check with your insurance company to see if you can obtain insurance to cover losses from wire fraud.
- Companies and credit unions should educate agents, members and employees about wire transfer scams, warning them about what to look for and how to best protect themselves from this threat.
- Both title companies and credit unions should ensure that they have implemented an effective business email security gateway that provides complete, end-to-end control of their email and prevents fraudulent mail from reaching the inbox and perpetuating wire transfer fraud.



Home Shopping Mistakes to Avoid in Winter

Winter can be a great time to snag a deal in real estate. But there are several pitfalls your home buyers will want to watch for at this time of year. Here are a few:

Accumulating too much holiday debt. The holidays can be an easy time to add on more debt. But if you're in the process of buying a home, you need to make sure you don't add on any more debt. Even if your credit is in good standing, suddenly racking up a ton of holiday shopping debt will change your debt-to-income ratio.

Not seeing past all the winter blahs. Homes don't always look the best in the winter. Bare tree limbs and dead grass isn't the best for curb appeal. But buyers need to think past the gray backdrops and envision what the home looks like at other times of year so they don't miss out on a great house.

Oblivious to closing date delays. The winter can pose several delays to closing, particularly for new builds or anything that needs to be fixed on the home. Be prepared. While many trades will work through winter, there are certain processes that cannot be completed during heavy snowfall or dramatically low temperatures, this can be frustrating and particularly problematic if the home buyers' closing date on their current home is coming up quickly.

Making lowball offers. Don't assume you can always score a discount just because it's the winter months, when the real estate market tends to slow. A lot of buyers assume they can get a better deal in the winter because [fewer] people are competing, that's not usually the case. Inventory is lower, so the number of people who are competing is smaller.



Our network of Attorney Agents and realtors choose Affinity because we ensure a positive and compliant real estate settlement experience. We can close anywhere in Illinois or Indiana, including but not limited to any of our 15 convenient locations or your office if you prefer.

We are proudly underwritten by **Attorneys' Title Guaranty Fund, First American Title Insurance, Fidelity National Title, Chicago Title and WFG National Title Insurance.**

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We are proud to be part of this program – Homes for Heroes!

