



## JUNE 2020

Whether you own a home or are looking to buy or sell one, here are some useful tips, ideas and advice. When you're ready to make your move, give me a call or drop me a line.

### HOMEOWNERS' ADVICE



#### SOUND SURROUNDINGS

One of the greatest pleasures of owning your own home is being in better control of your environment, including the sounds you listen to. Imagine waking up to the cheerful melodies of chirping birds, instead of your neighbor's clanging, banging and muffled conversations.

Consider buying a home with a garden where you can attract songbirds, such as robins, tanagers and finches. Songbirds can be captivating to watch as well as to listen to throughout the year.

Create an alluring habitat where the birds can feel at home. Plant some native brush that will provide birds with their basic needs - food, protection and a place to nest. Be sure to scatter leaves, twigs and other small debris you've raked up under your shrubs and flower beds to attract insects and worms. The twig and leaf debris is great for songbirds to collect for nest building and insects will provide food for the birds.

Birdbaths are great accessories to welcome birds. Moving water, such as small fountains or drippers can create a "visual magnet" to attract birds to bathe and investigate your yard for other comforts. Their splashing and chirping will delight you as well as the natural beauty you've helped create.

### FINANCIAL ADVICE



#### FEDERAL SOLAR ENERGY TAX CREDITS FOR 2020

This year may be the ideal time to go solar. The Investment Tax Credit (ITC) allows you to deduct 26% of the cost of buying and installing a solar energy system from your federal taxes. In 2021, the credit reduces to 22%.

ConsumerReports.org says that an average-sized residential solar system with about 400 sq. ft. of solar panels costs \$18,000. With the ITC, the cost is reduced to \$13,320.

And that's just the beginning. You can also receive incentives from the state where you live, as well as manufacturer rebates. You can sell excess energy you collect back to your local utility through net-metering. All totaled, you can reduce monthly utility bills down to a fraction, depending on which panels you buy and how much they save you in kilowatts. The tax credit is available no matter how much you spend on installation and labor.

According to Solar-estimate.org, the cost of solar panels varies among manufacturers, as well as "how much electricity you use, where you live, your roof characteristics and the percentage of your power bill you'd like to eliminate." The average U.S. home uses about 900 kilowatt hours per month, so check your utility bills for kilowatt usage.



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