

Willits Weekly | Edition 45 | May 14, 2020

REAL ESTATE SECTION



This property is a mixed-use two-level 1,656-square-foot office building and residential unit.

The building was last used as a law office and has a new roof, including sheathing, underlayment and gutters.

Its central downtown location is close to shopping, schools, and restaurants. It has full city utilities, parking in back, a nice back yard, and borders on a year-round creek.

This property could be used as a residence if so desired.



Listed by:
Randy Weston
(Lic: 00688068)
707-459-4961

Agent of:
Summit Realty
(Lic: 00688068)
707-459-4961



Property Feature **369 South Main Street, Willits**

MLS: 22008000

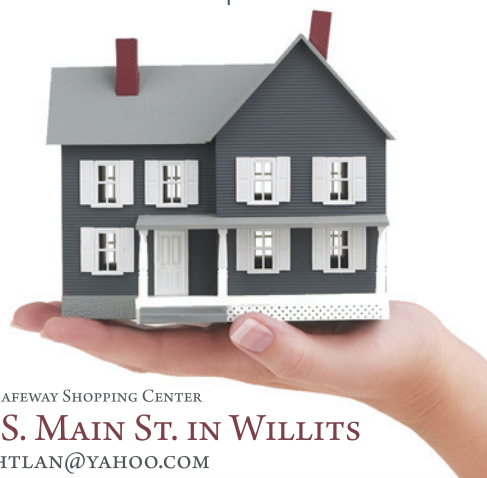
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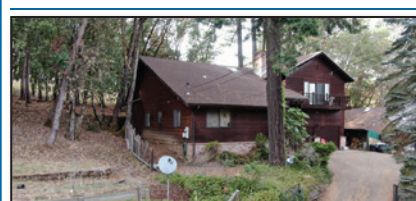
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Commercial Office Building



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New state and county guidance for real estate industry

California Public Health and CalOSHA put out a 10-page "COVID-19 INDUSTRY GUIDANCE: Real Estate Transactions" document on May 7 last week, outlining state rules for in-person real estate and rental showings. Mendocino County has also included new rules for real estate and rental showings in its latest revised shelter-in-place order issued Friday, May 8. County and city Public Health orders are allowed to be more restrictive than the state's orders, but not less restrictive. See box for the complete text of those local Mendocino County rules.

The governor's May 7 press release announcing the new "guidance" documents for many different industries deemed "lower risk," including Real Estate, states: "California will move into Stage 2 of modifying the state's stay at home order on May 8, 2020. The state's progress in achieving key public health metrics will allow a gradual reopening of California's economy."

Despite recognizing "the impact of economic hardship," the press release says, "the risk of COVID-19 infection is still real for all Californians and continues to be fatal."

Every business "should take every step possible to reduce the risk of infection," the document continues. "The goal is a safer environment for workers and customers. Businesses may use effective alternative or innovative methods to build upon the guidance."

The May 7 "guidance" document from the state for Real Estate, states its purpose is to provide "guidance for businesses operating in the real estate industry including sales and rentals of single-family, multi-family, apartment, commercial, and industrial properties to support a safe, clean environment for workers."

The document has a number of main headers, with recommendations and requirements, some of them that apply to reopening protocols for businesses in general, and some more specific to Real Estate.

Under the "Shown Properties Specific Plan" header, the document states real estate businesses must "Establish a written COVID-19 prevention plan to be followed by agents who show properties" and also "Display a set of rules for agents and home viewers at the entrance of the property that are to be a condition of entry."

These posted rules "must include instructions to use face coverings and hand sanitizer. It must include instructions to maintain physical distancing and avoid touching surfaces of the shown property. The rules or a link to the rules should be part of online public and MLS listings. Posted rules should be clearly visible and include pictograms."

There are eight bullet points under "Cleaning and Disinfecting Protocols for Shown Properties," mostly about cleaning hands and surfaces, but also including "Provide and strongly recommend clients, real estate licensees, and inspectors to use

face coverings and hand sanitizer. Place these items at the property entrance so that people can put them on before entering. Ensure disposable covers are properly discarded after use, for example in a trash bag that is sealed prior to disposal."

Local real estate rules

Mendocino County's revised May 8 shelter-in-place has some specific rules regarding real estate and rental showings.

Section 14 g. xii of the May 8 order lists real estate service providers among "essential businesses" that "shall follow industry specific guidance as issued by the State at <https://covid19.ca.gov/roadmap/#guidance>" in order to reopen on May 8. Here is the complete text of that section of the May 8 county order:

xii. Service providers that enable real estate transactions (including rentals, leases, and home sales), including, but not limited to, real estate agents, escrow agents, notaries, real estate brokers, and title companies. Agents who show properties should follow industry specific guidance (<https://covid19.ca.gov/pdf/guidance-real-estate.pdf>) and appointments and other residential viewings must only occur virtually, if feasible. If a virtual viewing is not feasible, in person viewing of properties is only allowed if:

- The viewing is made by appointment,
- The viewing includes no more than one buying party at a time and one individual showing the unit,
- The viewing does not involve travel with overnight accommodations,
- The residence being shown is unoccupied during the showing, and no one who has been living in the residence has been in an isolation or quarantine for 14 days or more, and no one has had COVID-19 related symptoms for 14 days or more prior to the showing.
- The person showing the property ensures that every surface touched during a viewing is disinfected, that everyone present for the viewing wears a facial covering at all times, and that social distancing requirements are adhered to at all times.

Under "Physical Distancing Guidelines for Shown Properties," there are nine bullet points, including: "Utilize virtual tours in lieu of open houses via digital technologies, social media, etc. in lieu of property showings whenever possible. If virtual tours are not feasible, limit the number of people present during showings. When a real estate licensee or renter is present, maintain physical distance at all times."

The "Physical Distancing" section of the Real Estate guidelines also says: "Ensure current occupants are away from property during showings, consistent with their legal rights."

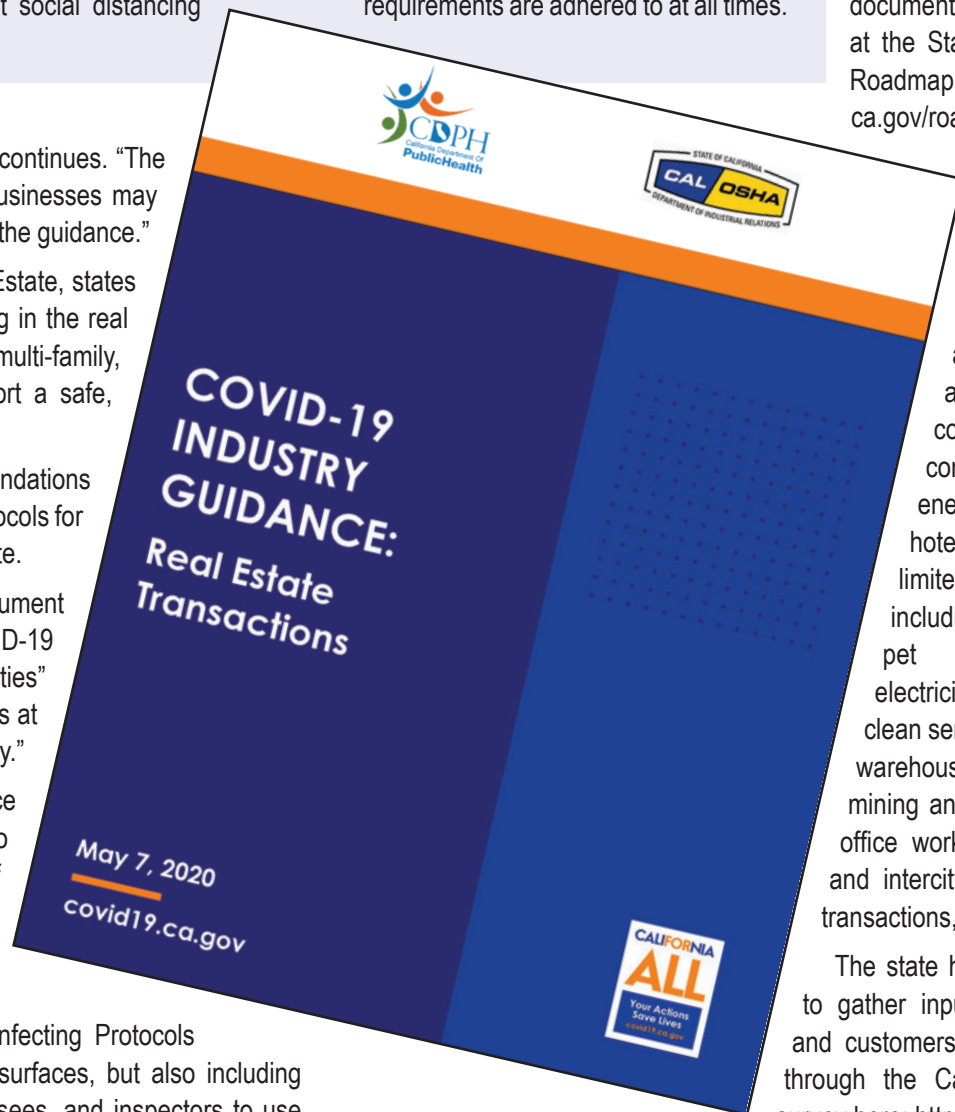
The link to the full May 7 guidance document for real estate can be found here: <https://covid19.ca.gov/pdf/guidance-real-estate.pdf>

Guidance for other industries

There are many other new guidance documents posted for various industries, at the State of California's "Resilience Roadmap," posted here: <https://covid19.ca.gov/roadmap/>. Most were posted May 7, but retail, restaurants, outdoor museums, and limited services were posted May 12.

Industries include: agriculture and livestock, auto dealerships, child care, communications infrastructure, construction, delivery services, energy and utilities, food packing, hotels and lodging, life sciences, limited services (multiple services, including laundromats, landscapers, pet grooming, car washes, electricians, general contractors, clean services and more), logistics and warehousing facilities, manufacturing, mining and logging, outdoor museums, office workspaces, ports, public transit and intercity passenger rail, real estate transactions, restaurants, and retail.

The state has also set up a mechanism to gather input from businesses, workers and customers on future industry guidance through the California Recovery Roadmap survey here: <https://input.covid19.ca.gov/#top>.



COLUMN | How's the Market?

Got some extra time at home? Safety projects: Part 2

This is a continuation from last month's column, sharing ideas to make you and your family safer around your home. Again, a big thank you to Selzer Construction and Maintenance Director Matt Jacobson for his expertise.

1. Extension Cords

Extension cords are a necessary evil masquerading as a helpful tool. I say this because one of my children almost died when he was a toddler by putting the end of an extension cord in his mouth. Thankfully, he "only" ended up with third-degree burns inside his mouth. Keep extension cords away from toddlers!

Extension cords can also be tripping and fire hazards. To avoid tripping, be sure to secure cords and keep them out of high-traffic areas. And be aware, if an extension cord has been safely stowed under a rug, it can fray without anyone's notice, making it a fire hazard.

2. Uneven Flooring

Ripped carpet, torn vinyl, loose floorboards and thresholds, or cracked cement are tripping hazards that can (and should) be avoided. A handyman can make short work of re-stretching carpet, replacing torn vinyl, or securing a loose floorboard. Fixing cement is often a slightly more involved repair, but not terribly expensive or time-consuming.

3. Roof Walks

Walking on the roof should be avoided if possible. It's bad for the roof and potentially dangerous, but sometimes there's no way around it. If you were to fall off an 18-foot roof, you'd have about a 50 / 50 chance of survival (depending largely on what you fell onto and how you landed – aim for the freshly tilled garden). Walking on the roof is safer if you use the buddy system. It's great to have someone watching out for you to alert you to danger (or if things don't go well, to call the ambulance).

Getting up to and down from the roof requires good ladder safety, including having someone secure the bottom of the ladder and making sure the top of the ladder goes at least three feet above your exit point.

4. Chimney Fires

At the end of the winter season, we make fewer fires, but sometimes a chilly morning or evening just calls out for a fire. If you haven't had your chimney inspected for a few years, you'd be amazed at how blocked it can become, putting you at risk for a chimney fire that can spread to your roof and then burn your house down.

your house down.

The good news? Chimney fires are relatively easy to put out. If you throw a cup of water on the fire inside the fireplace, the steam will go up through the chimney and put out the fire. The other good news? If you have your chimney inspected every year or so, and you have a spark arrester, your chances for a fire are pretty remote.

To keep your chimney clean, burn seasoned hardwood. Soft wood or unseasoned wood often has too much sap. If you buy wood a year in advance, you'll know for sure it's well seasoned.

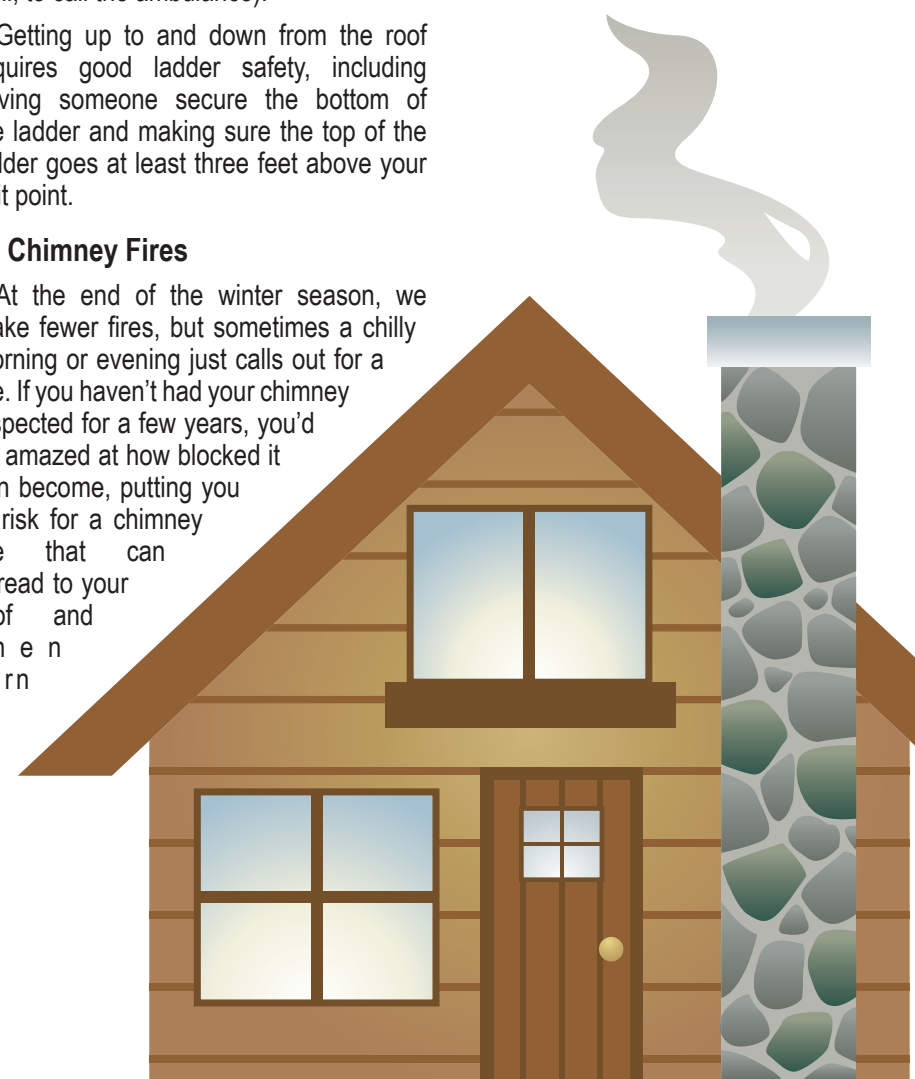
5. Fire Alarms and Fire Exits

Since we're on a roll with the fire theme, let's keep going. Every home should have a fire alarm and a carbon monoxide alarm. It used to be that Daylight Savings signaled the time to replace the batteries in your smoke alarm. Now, combination smoke / carbon monoxide alarms have a 10-year battery that shouldn't be tampered with. Install it per the manufacturer's instructions and sleep soundly.

Sleep soundly, that is, until the alarm goes off – then run for the nearby fire exit. Every sleeping room with an accessible window or door should be setup as a fire exit. If the window has burglar bars, they should have a fool-proof opening mechanism from the inside.

If you have questions about real estate or property management, contact me at rselzer@selzerrealty.com. If you have ideas for this column, let me know. (If I use your suggestion in a column, I'll send you a \$25 gift card to Roland's Bakery!) If you'd like to read previous articles, visit www.selzerrealty.com and click on "How's the Market."

Dick Selzer is a real estate broker who has been in the business for more than 40 years.



How home design trends are evolving for social distancing

COVID-19 has brought changes to everything, and home design is no exception. Experts are expecting to see lasting impacts on everything from the materials we use to the rooms we prioritize. Check out these and other noteworthy trends:

Houses over apartments: Many people who live in condos or apartments do so to be closer to work, entertainment and shops and never planned on spending much time at home. But the pandemic has changed that, and more people are going to want a home that offers plenty of room and outdoor space in case they need to self-isolate again.

Self-sufficiency: A hard lesson we've learned is that things and services we thought we could count on aren't necessarily a sure thing, so items that increase self-reliance will become very popular. Expect to see more homes with sources of energy like solar panels, sources of heat like fireplaces and stoves, and even urban and indoor gardens that allow you to grow your own produce.

Outdoor living: Between playgrounds closing and parks becoming overcrowded, many of us are turning to our balconies, patios and backyards for fresh air and nature. This means we're going to be investing more in our outdoor spaces, with functional kitchens, soothing water features, cozy firepits, and high-quality outdoor furniture to create a much-needed escape.

Healthier spaces: Thanks to spending more time indoors and reprioritizing our health, we'll turn to design to help ensure our homes are safe and healthy for our families. We'll see a rise in products like water filtration systems as well as materials that improve indoor air quality. For new homes and additions, alternatives to wood-framing like insulated concrete forms offer improved ventilation for healthier indoor air quality and an environment that's less susceptible to mold, will be key.

Home office space: Business experts are suggesting many companies will see that working from home is not only possible but offers tangible benefits, like saving money on office space rent. With working from home on the rise, creating a home office space that inspires productivity will be a major project many of us tackle. Luxury home office furniture that feels chic and blends into your decor as well as ergonomic chairs and desks will see a major boost.

Custom and quality: With the hit to the economy, people are going to be buying less, but what they do buy will be better quality, while at the same time making an effort to support American businesses. When it comes to design, trends will shift to locally made furniture, custom-built homes and pieces and materials that stand the test of time.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® 'Economic Pulse' survey

WASHINGTON (May 7, 2020) – More than 3 in 4 potential sellers – 77 percent – are preparing to sell their homes following the end of stay-at-home orders, with half completing do-it-yourself home improvement projects, according to a new survey from the National Association of Realtors®.

"After a pause, home sellers are gearing up to list their properties with the reopening of the economy," said NAR Chief Economist Lawrence Yun. "Plenty of buyers also appear ready to take advantage of record-low mortgage rates and the stability that comes with these locked-in monthly payments into future years."

NAR's latest Economic Pulse Flash Survey – conducted May 3-4 – asked members how the coronavirus outbreak has impacted the residential and commercial real estate markets. Several highlights include:

- Five percent of Realtors® said their clients are shifting neighborhood preferences from urban areas to suburban areas due to COVID-19.

- About 1 in 8 Realtors® – 13 percent – reported buyers have changed at least one home feature that's important to them due to COVID-19. For these buyers, the most common home features they identified as important are home offices, yard space for exercising or growing food, and space to accommodate family.

- Nearly 3 in 4 Realtors® currently working with sellers this week – 73 percent – reported their clients haven't reduced listing prices to attract buyers.

View NAR's Economic Pulse Flash Survey report here:

<https://www.nar.realtor/research-and-statistics/research-reports/nar-flash-survey-economic-pulse>.

View NAR's Weekly Housing Market Monitor here:

<https://www.nar.realtor/research-and-statistics/weekly-housing-market-monitor>.

The National Association of Realtors® is America's largest trade association, representing more than 1.4 million members involved in all aspects of the residential and commercial real estate industries.

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Living the good life



In 1932 at the height of the Great Depression, Helen and Scott Nearing left New York City and moved to a remote location in Vermont to create new lives for themselves. Scott was a college professor, Helen a musician and teacher. Scott was in his 70s, Helen middle-aged.

In the 1950s they wrote a book about creating their new and very successful lives in their book “Living the Good Life.” The subtitle is “How to Live Sanely and Simply in a Troubled World.”

They described their move to rural America as “a laboratory.” They wrote, “We left a society gripped by depression and unemployment, falling a prey to fascism, and on the verge of another world-wide military free-for-all.” Sound familiar?

The Nearings raised most of their own food. They were what would now be called vegans since they did not believe in eating flesh or enslaving animals either as a food source or to do the work for them. Since there were plenty of rocks to use as a source of raw materials, they built largely with stone – and they were prolific builders.

Even in the much cooler climate of Vermont, they were able to grow most, or at least a large part, of their food year-round. In 1977 their book “Building and Using Our Sun-Heated Greenhouse” was published, after they had started their “laboratory” anew upon moving to Maine.

They described themselves as “amateurs” at gardening but their years of raising their own food and thriving throughout the Great Depression and beyond created a wealth of knowledge on how to build, create healthy soil, garden year-round, and live a healthy, well-balanced and joyful life.

When Joe and I moved to Willits in the 1980s, one of the first things we did was read local author and gardener John Jeavons’ book “How to Grow More Vegetables.”

Our double-dug garden that year was so abundant with huge heads of crisp, luscious Romaine lettuce and broccoli, that we brought cases of fresh vegetables to town and gave them away on the street.

We had raised all of our seedlings for our garden from seeds started in our cheaply-built greenhouse made of plastic pipe and plastic sheeting.

As our garden grew larger, we shared our produce with everyone we knew. My clients and friends would often find an unexpected bag of sweet, delicious tomatoes, lettuce or squash on their front porch.

When we sold our country house after 22 years to move into town, we planted a big garden for the next owners before we left. When they moved in in the summer, they had veggies and tomatoes in abundance as a gift from us to them and a thank you to the land we had loved for so many years.

In this challenging science-fiction world we are now living in as a world-wide pandemic changes how we live and see our world, we are once again faced with widespread unemployment, creeping fascism, and government mismanagement, and the out-of-control military-industrial complex that Republican President Dwight D. Eisenhower warned Americans about when he left office in 1961.

President Eisenhower said “... we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist ... We should take nothing for granted. Only an alert and knowledgeable citizenry can compel the proper meshing of the huge industrial and military machinery of defense with our peaceful methods and goals, so that security and liberty may prosper together.”

Nature reminds us with COVID-19 that it will always do what is necessary to regain balance with indifference to human suffering. Balance and harmony of the natural world benefit not only humankind, but all of the planet. We are not “in charge” as many humans like to imagine. We are a part of the whole.

There was an old bumper sticker in the hippie days “Nature Bats Last.” As long as we remember that and honor our planet Earth, which we are temporary guests on, we will be able to enjoy “Living the Good Life.”

Bill Barksdale was a 2016 inductee into the Realtor® Hall of Fame. He is a referral agent with Coldwell Banker Mendo Realty, CADRE# 01106662. Read some of his articles at www.bbarksdale.com.



Bill Barksdale
Columnist, GRI Realtor®

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