Fall maintenance helps with upkeep of homes

(Kingston, PA) - Fall is a great time to focus on some simple projects to keep your home properly maintained.

"Now’s the time to hire someone to sweep the chimney," said Luzerne County Association of REALTORS President Matthew Hodorowski. "A professional chimney sweep will perform maintenance to prevent chimney fires and carbon monoxide poisoning during the winter months. They’ll also make sure your wood-burning fireplace burns more efficiently."

Trimming trees around the home is also helpful. "Once the leaves have fallen, it’s easy to trim branches, keeping them at least three feet from the house," he said.

Taking the time to wash windows - inside and out - can help detect other issues. "Clean windows allow us to enjoy the winter sunshine and brighten the home," he added. "But while you’re cleaning, you can also check for cracked windows, beehives or siding issues. And you’ll have plenty of time to fix them before the temperatures fall."

Consider adding some light to your landscaping. "Outdoor lighting along the sidewalks, driveway and porch rails gives some extra safety to your home, as well as making it look attractive," Hodorowski said.

Speaking of lighting, make the effort to replace all traditional light bulbs in the home with compact fluorescent lights. CFLs have come down in price since hitting the stores. "According to Consumer Reports, replacing one incandescent bulb with a CFL will save nearly $60 a year for the lifetime of the bulb," he said. CFLs last an average of five years.

The Luzerne County Association of REALTORS is the voice for real estate in Northeastern Pennsylvania.
Reaching Millennial Buyers

Millennials are people born between 1980 and 2000, and according to the National Association of Realtors, they are a dominant force in the housing market. In fact, a 2016 study by the group showed they comprise the largest segment of today’s buying market.

To impress this young group of buyers, convenience, technology, and modern design are key. Knowing the audience to whom you are selling will make the sale much easier.

REAL ESTATE 101

What Millennial Buyers Want

After a 2016 survey of home shoppers, Realtor.com predicted that more than half of homes bought in 2017 would be bought by first-time buyers — most of whom would be millennials.

Seven out of eight of buyers 25-34 were expected to be first-time buyers. Thirty-nine percent of millennials were expected to be in the market for a single-family home, with 34 percent shopping for townhomes.

Smart Home

Today’s technology offers some exciting innovations in how people live in their homes. To stand out in a market with many options, consider installing some of these “smart products” before putting your home on the market:

- **Smart light bulbs**: Creating a network of light bulbs that are controlled by mobile apps on smart devices can be appealing to a generation who grew up as technology users and want to show it with their living space.
- **Smart thermostats**: Innovative thermostats that are networked to a home’s heating and air units has been rising in popularity. Those who are already concerned with the environment will likely rise in the coming years.

A Home Office

According to the United States Census, more than 13 million Americans work from home, and that number will likely rise in the coming years. A home featuring a dedicated space for professionalism will outweigh homes without.

Even if your spare room is currently set up as a bedroom, your Realtor might choose to portray it as an office during an open house or other showings.

Modern Kitchen and Bath

Remodeling these rooms before your home goes on the market can provide great advantages. Experts say most millennials are on limited budgets, and these rooms generally cost the most to renovate.

Offering these rooms as move-in-ready and appealing to a younger audience will motivate buyers.

Of course, since the kitchen and bathrooms are considered the most expensive for renovations, you need to be honest with your budget, as well. Gather quotes from licensed contractors to learn how much it would cost you.

It also can be a good idea to share your plan with your Realtor to find out how much of an impact these renovations would actually have in your local market.

Energy Efficiency

There has been a surge in buying “green” homes. Millennials are generally concerned with the environment and want to show it with their living space.

Consider updating to Energy Star appliances or even contact an energy provider about going solar. Solar technology will pay for itself over several years. This is another expensive investment that you won’t see the benefits from when you sell your home.
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Deb Roccograndi
Is Real Estate Ready for your Real Estate Goals

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12 Doe Drive, DALLAS

This 5 bedroom colonial is so full of character and warmth! Gorgeous molding detail and hardwood. The impressive wood burning fireplace with it’s brick hearth is the focal point of the family room. It’s just what the doctor ordered for those chilly winter nights! Situated in one of the back mountains most desirable neighborhoods, and within walking distance of a park. Check this house out!

MLS# 17-236   $339,900

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Amazing home on 49.46 acres! Private, but convenient to I-80! Large living room with vaulted ceiling and stone, wood burning fireplace. Great kitchen with a Viking gas range, stainless steel appliances and large island with granite. 3 big bedrooms, the master bedroom has a vaulted ceiling & great master bath with soaking tub and separate shower. 4 car, oversize garage with 2nd floor storage.

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Increase Your Home’s Value

With housing prices increasing again, there has never been a better time to invest in your home.

There are always ways to improve the value of your home — no matter your budget. Check out the following suggestions, categorized into three modest price points.

**IMPROVEMENTS UNDER $500**

Paint. Simple and cost effective, fresh paint will have a dramatic impact on a space.

**Remove outdated ceilings.** In the 1980s and 90s, popcorn ceilings were fashionable, but with a little coat paint and 3-5 hours of your time, you can transform your space into a modern, stylish retreat.

**Add new flooring.** There are always ways to improve the value of your home — no matter your budget. Check out the following suggestions, categorized into three modest price points.

**$200-300 Price Reduction**

**Find a hunting property!**

**$300-400 Price Reduction**

**Install a new front door.**

**$400-500 Price Reduction**

**Add a new garage.**

**$500+ Price Reduction**

**Add a new bathroom.**

****

**ATTEND TO SMALL REPAIRS**

This means things like a loose hinge, a cracked window or a leaky faucet. With these small repairs taken care of, potential buyers will be more impressed by the home's overall condition and will be more likely to make an offer.

**See Increase Your Home’s Value on Page 7**

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**QUALITY INVENTORY - MOVE IN READY - MOTIVATED SELLERS!**

**TASTEFUL VICTORIAN HOME GRANDEERED WITH GINGHAMED TIME**

This 4-bedroom, 2-bath, 1st floor master bedroom suite features tasteful, original woodwork with a beautifully remodeled kitchen and bath. The home features a 2-car garage, walk-out basement, 2nd floor loft, 2nd floor family room, front porch and rear deck.

**$249,900**

**$279,900**

**$295,000**

**$320,000**

**$495,000**

**$649,000**

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Thank you!

All too often in the rush of doing business, we forget to say, Thank you! But, not this time. Thanks for making 25 years of selling real estate in Northeastern PA a success. Over the years we have participated in helping thousands of families find homes, including Artists to find a home for their Art League and assisting investors with investing in our wonderful community. Here’s hoping for continued success for all of us! 

Just some of the wonderful commercial properties throughout the area that we have had the opportunity to participate in selling!

HUNLOCK CREEK
Estate surrounded by over 50 acres of woods. The owner of this property will enjoy tennis court, in ground pool, 160’ of deck space, whirlpool tub, game room, 3 ponds, 6 stall horse barn and many more amenities. No drive bys please.

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41 Hale Street, Yatesville
Solid investment property with $141,000.00 of annual income. Separate utilities makes this a turn key property a good choice to any investment portfolio.

318 East Northampton Street, Wilkes Barre
Solid investment property. Tenant occupied will need 48 hour notice for showings.

667 Hazle Street, Wilkes Barre
Great investment opportunity fully occupied 3 unit. Solid property newer windows off street parking convenient location to shopping and bus stop. Tenant occupied will need 48 hours notice.

78 Zerby Avenue, Edwardsville
Fully occupied investment property. Tenant occupied please give 48 hour notice for showings.

81 North Main Street, Ashley

47-57 East Broadway Street, Larksville
Solid investment opportunity. 6 unit property with low maintenance. 48 hour notice for showings.

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hinge on a kitchen cabinet, burnt out light bulbs, squeaky doors and jiggly handles. While these things may not seem like much, they speak to the care of a home.

**IMPROVEMENTS $500-$1,500**

*Install closet storage.* Closets can be a blank canvas for clutter. Installing organizers keeps things in their place, and provide a little luxury.

*Improve small bathrooms.* This could be as simple as new light fixtures, an updated vanity or new shower curtain. You are guaranteed to see a return on investment on most bathroom upgrades, so this is a safe area to spend in.

*Upgrade old appliances.* Kitchens add big value you to your home, so even updating the sink or swapping out a room upgrades, so this is a safe area to spend in.

*Provide a little luxury.*

**IMPROVEMENTS $1,500 AND UP**

*Update flooring.* This could be as simple as replacing the tile in the small hall bath or removing the wall-to-wall carpeting and installing hardwoods throughout.

*Refresh exterior paint.* Curb appeal is a big deal and can increase the property values of an entire neighborhood. A fresh coat of paint keeps things looking clean and crisp.

*Resurface concrete.* While a cracked driveway or walkway may not seem like much, the weeds growing in the cracks whisper of neglect. A solid surface stained an attractive color may not seem like much, but it makes the difference between weeds growing in a crack and a beautiful, well-maintained sidewalk.

Remember that the cost and payback of each project will vary depending on your region of the country, neighborhood within that region, as well as the overall condition of your home.
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Hosted by Karen Parcinski

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How a home is marketed can have major impacts on how quickly it’s sold and the final sale price. A big part of marketing homes for sale in the modern age is photography.

From multiple listing service feeds to data aggregators such as Zillow and Trulia to social networks, once your home is listed, the data is shared far and wide across the Internet. That means the photos accompanying your home listing will be worth much more than a thousand words as they bounce around the web luring potential buyers peek inside.

Consider these numbers: According to Trulia, 80 percent of buyers start their home search online and make a decision about whether or not to see a home in person after looking through the listing’s online photos. In addition, a listing with more than six photos is twice as likely to be viewed by buyers than those with fewer photos. While it’s possible to overload it with multiple copies of photos and unnecessary or poorly staged shots, in general, more is better.

Almost everyone these days has a phone in their pocket, but not just any snapshot will do. The home should be clean and in tip-top shape when photos are taken. Professional real estate photographers offer real value to sellers, with an eye for capturing unique details and choosing just the right angle to highlight a home’s various spaces.

Be sure to point out any features that make your home unique to your agent before the photographer visits. Do you regularly enjoy the view of the sunrise over the trees while having your morning coffee? Let your agent know, so the photographer can possibly capture the moment. Do your kitchen cabinets offer unique features, such as a stand mixer lift? Does your home theater feature custom lighting? Let your photographer capture those potential selling points.

While digital photos are nothing new in the real estate arena, there are some recent innovations to be aware of. Drone photography is an affordable alternative to traditional aerial photography for showing off a home with substantial surrounding property and features.

A 3-D virtual reality-type tour practically drops potential buyers into your home. Multiple photos are taken throughout the home, including 360-degree shots in every room, and these are then stitched together into an immersive walk-through experience.

If you’ve already moved out of your home, consider staging it, both for online photography purposes and for showings and open houses. It’s hard for potential buyers to see your house as a home when they only see bare walls and floors. We’ve all seen those photos in which it’s hard to tell family room from dining room from bedroom. Don’t let your home be that home.

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