











Hello NEIGHBOR!

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It's Jewell Michael, your local Realtor®. In my continued effort to provide relevant, useful information to the residents of Barrow County, I wanted to share this market update with you.

 Competitive Market	 Median Sell Price of Homes  \$355K	 Average Days on Market  20	 Homes Sold in March Barrow County  69
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Interest Rates: Borrowing costs for home loans stayed fairly steady yesterday. The bond market had a slightly positive day, which helped keep things stable. Overall, the market is still reacting quickly to new economic news, so things can shift from day to day.

Economic Update: Stocks moved higher after news of a possible extension to the ceasefire between the U.S. and Iran, which helped calm investors. At the same time, recent economic reports were mixed. Economic growth was weaker than first expected, while inflation is still running higher than ideal. This combination keeps uncertainty in the market.

Mortgages: Mortgage markets were a bit more stable yesterday with slightly better conditions, but activity remains limited. Lenders and investors are watching upcoming economic reports closely, especially jobs and inflation data, because those reports tend to have a big impact on where mortgage pricing goes next.



I'm offering all recipients of this letter a 100% FREE Comparative Market Analysis to show you what you could possibly get for your property.



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How The Market Is Adapting To Higher Rates

Higher Rates Are Shaping Behavior, Not Stopping It

Mortgage rates have been one of the biggest forces shaping housing activity over the past few years. When rates climbed, demand slowed. When they eased, buyers came back. It was a pretty clear pattern tied closely to affordability. But that pattern is not playing out the same way today.

Even with rates still sitting in the mid-6% range, the housing market is holding up better than many expected. Pending home sales are slightly higher than last year, which tells us more homes are actually getting under contract instead of lingering on the market.

At the same time, inventory is not rising very quickly. That tells us supply is staying relatively balanced rather than building in a way that signals a slowdown. We are also seeing a slight improvement in price reductions compared to last year, which suggests sellers are becoming more responsive to buyer demand earlier in the process. Put together, this points to a market that is still active and adjusting, not one that is losing momentum.

When rates first spiked, the reaction was much more abrupt. Buyers pulled back quickly, sellers delayed listing decisions, and overall activity slowed in a noticeable way. It felt more like a pause across many markets.

That is not the case anymore. Instead of stalling, the market is adjusting in real time. Buyers are still making decisions, and sellers are more willing to adjust pricing earlier rather than waiting for extended time on market to force a change. That shift alone helps keep transactions moving.

The simplest way to think about today's housing market is this: it is not frozen, it is adjusting. Mortgage rates still influence affordability, but outcomes are increasingly driven by how quickly buyers and sellers adapt to current conditions.



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The Real Reason People Are Still Moving Right Now

Why Life Changes Continue To Outweigh Market Timing

Here is what is driving attention and stronger offers right now:

A lot of buyers are still sitting on the sidelines waiting for the "perfect" market. Lower rates, lower prices, less competition, less stress. You've probably heard all of it from clients lately. But here's the reality many buyers are starting to realize. Life rarely waits for perfect timing.

According to the National Association of Realtors, 1 in 5 buyers last year said they felt they had to purchase a home due to major life events, regardless of market conditions. And those big life events happen more than you may think. NAR says roughly 22.5 million people experience major life changes in a typical two-year span.

The growing family still needs another bedroom. The empty nest still feels a little too quiet. A new job still requires a move. Divorce, marriage, retirement, aging parents, kids on the way, or simply wanting a different lifestyle all continue to happen regardless of what mortgage rates are doing that week. That's why buyers are still making moves in today's market. Not because conditions are flawless, but because life changes are often stronger motivators than market headlines.

And while affordability challenges still exist, today's market may offer more opportunity than many buyers realize. Inventory has continued to improve in many areas, giving buyers more choices, more negotiating power, and a little more breathing room compared to the frenzy of the past few years. That does not mean every transaction is easy, but it does create opportunities for buyers who thought moving was completely out of reach.

This is also where having the right lending partner matters. Creative financing strategies, payment scenarios, and affordability conversations can help clients better understand what may still be possible today instead of assuming they have to wait indefinitely.



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Income Needed To Purchase A Home Declined *Affordability Improves For The Seventh Straight Month*

The income needed to afford a typical U.S. home has fallen to about \$116,780, roughly 2% lower than a year ago. This marks seven straight months of year-over-year affordability gains. The figure previously peaked near \$122,000 in mid-2025 and has been gradually easing since.

Two main factors are working in your buyers' favor. Household incomes are up about 4% year over year, which increases purchasing power. At the same time, borrowing costs are lower than last year's highs, which has helped reduce monthly payment pressure.

Even with these gains, affordability is still tight. A typical U.S. household would need to spend about 40% of its income to afford a median-priced home. That is an improvement from roughly 42% a year ago, but still well above the 30% level most buyers consider manageable.

The improvement is also showing up in housing inventory. About one-third of current listings are now considered affordable to a median-income household. For context, before rates increased in 2022, more than half of listings were considered affordable. We are not back to that level yet, but the trend is gradually moving in the right direction.

The key takeaway for your conversations is this: affordability is not static. It moves with rates, prices, and income trends, which means opportunities can open more quickly than many buyers expect. Some clients who felt priced out not long ago may now be closer to qualifying than they realize, especially if they have been waiting for better conditions.



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