

Cantwell & Goldman, P.A.

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Central Florida Law Reporter

Buying a Home – A Team Effort

The last edition of the Central Florida Law Reporter discussed the economic advantage of home ownership compared to renting, and the steps a potential buyer should take before shopping for a home. Once the shopping process begins, a potential buyer should consider the following steps when searching for their future residence:



Choose Representation – Once you are prepared to look for a house, choose the team of people to represent you during the buying process. Seek out recommendations from friends and family for a realtor to represent your interests as a buyer. Understand that from this point forward, the process is a team approach. The realtor representing you should work on finding you the house of your dreams for the lowest price possible, while working with your attorney and lender to ensure the closing goes smoothly.

Needs and Wants – Sit down your realtor and discuss your family's needs and wants. Make a list of the minimum requirements for a house including the number of bedrooms and bathrooms, size, yard and garage. Make another list of amenities that you would like your house to contain, such as closet sizes, cabinet space, flooring

type and other desired building materials.

Location, Location, Location – Once you determine the minimum requirements for a potential home, then consider various locations. Take into account school zones, flood zones, evacuation routes, proximity to highways, shopping, municipal property tax rates, utility rates and other amenities. Remember that the surrounding area may change over time, which will impact the value of your home.

Insurance – Once you decide on preferred locations, request quotes from various insurance brokers for the general price of insurance in each location. The cost of insurance in a specific location surprises potential buyers and may cause you to rethink certain locations or your overall home ownership budget.



The next edition of the Central Florida Law Reporter will discuss the final events that buyers encounter during the process of purchasing a home, from the offer to the closing, and post closing follow ups.

Seasonal Changes: A Legal Checklist for Hurricane Season

Many homeowners on the Space Coast have become complacent after several slow hurricane seasons. Even with another slow season predicted by the National Hurricane Center, residents should make sure they have an emergency plan in place for responding to storms and evacuations. While many checklists include cherished personal items, food, water, and other necessities, Cantwell and Goldman, P.A. wants to remind our readers to organize the following documents for safe storage and/or easy transportation:

- Bank Account Information and Checkbooks
- Investment, Pension and Retirement Account Information
- Insurance Policies
- Vehicle Titles and Registrations
- Property Deeds
- Title Insurance Policies
- Trusts, Wills and Estate Planning Documents
- Tax Documents
- Corporate or Other Legal Entity Documents



If you are unsure of the location of the legal documents listed above you should start working to obtain them today, rather than during the rush of an evacuation or after a storm.

Consumer Watch: The Latest Fraud

Recently, the FBI and European agencies partially dismantled a global network of computers and infected servers. They identified Evgeniy Bogachev as the mastermind who stole over \$100 million from businesses, banks, and individuals throughout the United States and Europe. Bogachev remains wanted for his role in infecting computers with Gameover Zeus (GOZ), a type of malware which also installed Cryptolocker. Cryptolocker is ransomware, which holds a computer and all of the information saved on its drive hostage until a specified amount of money is paid online.

This attack, named as one of the most sophisticated ever seen by the FBI, still involves a human element. The viruses infect a computer after someone opens a phishing email or clicks a link, or attachment. This highlights the importance of not opening an email or attachment, unless you are expecting it. Even if an email appears to be an official communication from a bank, government agency or close friend, do not open any link or attachment unless you confirm its authenticity.

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