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THE OKLAHOMAN

THURSDAY, MARCH 7, 2024 | OKLAHOMAN.COM

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Cherokee Nation to vote on compact

Stitt signs off on tobacco tax deal

Molly Young
The Oklahoman
USA TODAY NETWORK

The Cherokee Nation tribal council will vote Monday whether to approve a new tobacco tax compact with the state of Oklahoma. Gov. Kevin Stitt already has signed off on the revenue-sharing deal.

The compact stands to become the seventh state-tribal agreement successfully negotiated by the governor's office since January, and it likely will be the biggest. The Cherokee Nation, based in Tahlequah, has more than 450,000 citizens and is the largest tribe in the United States.

The pending agreement marks a sharp turn from last spring, when Stitt – a Cherokee citizen himself – repeatedly criticized Cherokee leaders for working with state lawmakers to extend tobacco tax compacts without him.

The debate over the future of state-tribal tax compacts was one of the most heated issues at the Capitol last year. But the governor's recent deal-making has quieted some of his loudest critics, who had faulted him for

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The Cherokee Nation and the state of Oklahoma have reached a tentative agreement to renew a tobacco tax compact. DOUG HOKE/THE OKLAHOMAN



WEATHER OR NOT

Moore a top market for first-time homebuyers, Realtor.com says

Richard Mize
The Oklahoman
USA TODAY NETWORK

Neighborhoods in Moore are in a national spotlight again, and for once it's not because of a huge storm – although rebuilding from past disasters could have something to do with the new attention.

Realtor.com reports the Oklahoma City suburb is one of the top housing markets in the country for first-time homebuyers. Based on numerous criteria, and a cap of one city per metropolitan area “to allow for a greater diversity of options,” Realtor.com ranks Moore as the No. 8 market for first-timers in 2024.

“It says a lot for our community.



A home at 129 SE 1 in Moore has three bedrooms, three baths and 1,040 square feet. It is offered for \$150,000 by Metro Mark Realty.

We work hard to make it a good place to live. We're a great little community,” said Melissa Hunt,

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“It says a lot for our community. We work hard to make it a good place to live. We're a great little community.”

Melissa Hunt
Ward 2 Moore City Council, on Moore's ranking for first-time homebuyers

ABOVE: A sign marks a home for sale on Wednesday in Moore along Broadway. Realtor.com reports the Oklahoma City suburb is one of the top housing markets in the country for first-time homebuyers.

PHOTOS BY DOUG HOKE/THE OKLAHOMAN

Moore

Continued from Page 1A



Hunt

Ward 2 Moore City Council member.

“Little” is relative.

With a population of 62,793 at the 2020 census, Moore is the seventh-largest city in Oklahoma. And the growth in national chain stores along Interstate 35 the past two decades has made it one of the strongest retail markets in the metro area, according to OKC’s Price Edwards & Co..

Retail follows rooftops. In other words, stores locate where people live. Could the nature of those rooftops make Moore more inviting to first-time homebuyers?

Moore has good selling points for young homebuyers and former renters, said Monty Strickland, a Realtor and broker/partner at Realty Experts Inc. in Moore.



Strickland

“Moore and south Oklahoma City are great for people looking for their first home,” he said. “People looking for their first property can find a variety of sizes and price ranges, and it’s convenient to get to downtown, to Norman and even to the Tinker Air Force Base

area.”

“Moore/south Oklahoma City” usually come in the same breath because of the Moore school district, which falls across south OKC. The city of Moore is only about 23 square miles, Strickland said, and the school district is nearly 160 square miles.

Across the area, he said, homes are worth anywhere from less than \$100,000 to more than \$3 million. The key for attracting first-time buyers is on the lower end. And that’s where the storms and tornadoes come in.

Whenever a tornado strikes Moore – and by now, after 10 strikes in 25 years, including deadly record breakers in 1999 and 2013, it does seem to be a question of when, not if – some homeowners build back on their tornado-swept lots.

But builders and developers also come in, buy up swaths of lots and build for the booming post-storm market.

After the EF5 tornado of May 3, 1999, many builders started adding anchor bolts to better secure exterior walls to foundations, hurricane clips to better secure roofs to walls, heavy-gauge garage doors, and other “hidden extras” to improve wind resistance. After the 2013 tornado, the city of Moore enacted stricter building codes requiring extra measures to make homes safer.

After a disaster, rebuilding usually means speculative homes, although they are snatched up quickly, and that means starter homes. Plus, Strickland said, house sizes are limited by older, smaller lot sizes.

In Moore, “There are a lot of smaller homes,” Strickland said.

Realtor.com’s criteria for its top 10 markets for first-time homebuyers for 2024

Realtor.com ranked 2,738 cities and places with a population of more than 5,000 located within the 100 largest metro areas. The rankings were based on the following criteria:



A home at 720 SW 3 in Moore has three bedrooms, one bath and 1,210 square feet. It is offered for \$150,000 by Legacy Real Estate Group.

DOUG HOKE/THE OKLAHOMAN

- The share of 25- to 34-year-old homeowner households among all households.
- The availability of homes for sale, measured by active listings per 1,000 existing households in the past 12 months, to ensure that homebuyers have a good amount of choice in their search.
- A measure of affordability, estimated by the ratio of listing prices to gross household incomes of 25- to 34-year-olds in that city for the past 12 months.
- A measure of job opportunities, estimated by the forecast unemployment rate of the city’s surrounding metro area.
- The average commute time to work.
- A measure of the culture and liveliness of an area, estimated by the count of restaurants, cafes, bars, shopping establishments, and other lifestyle businesses such as theaters, comedy clubs, and arts classes as listed on Yelp in November 2023.
- Forecast metro-area home sales and home price growth in 2024, as new buyers may want to ensure they locate to a healthy market, which will support equity growth and an easy transition when they have outgrown their home.

Top 10 Markets for first-time homebuyers for 2024, according to Realtor.com

Realtor.com’s Top 10 Markets for First-Time Home Buyers for 2024 are:

- Irondequoit, New York
- Benton, Arkansas
- Winterset, Iowa
- Newington, Connecticut
- Council Bluffs, Iowa
- Cheektowaga, New York
- Grand Rapids, Michigan
- Moore, Oklahoma**
- Mattydale, New York
- Riviera Beach, Maryland

Senior Business Writer Richard Mize has covered housing, construction, commercial real estate and related topics for the newspaper and Oklahoman.com since 1999. Contact him at rmize@oklahoman.com. Sign up for his weekly newsletter, *Real Estate with Richard Mize*. You can support Richard’s work, and that of his colleagues, by purchasing a digital subscription to *The Oklahoman*. Right now, you can get 6 months of subscriber-only access for \$1.