

PRESS & GUIDE

For sale

Dearborn, Heights to be a part of large real estate open house

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By Sean Delaney, Press & Guide Newspapers

DEARBORN HEIGHTS/DEARBORN - More than 150 homes currently for sale in Dearborn and Dearborn Heights could be off the market by summer thanks to a massive open house scheduled to take place on April 27 in Wayne, Macomb, Oakland and Livingston counties.

"The Big Open House" is the largest event of its kind in Michigan's history, according to Dana Holben, chief executive officer for the Dearborn Area Board of Realtors. It is expected to draw thousands of potential homebuyers to the Metro Detroit area, including Dearborn and Dearborn Heights.

Holben, who resides in Dearborn Heights, is currently coordinating activities for the April event in both cities, and believes "The Big Open House" could be just what the struggling housing market needs to get back on track.

"We have a very high inventory of homes for sale on the market right now," Holben said. "I think the interest is there — we just need to get people to look at what's out there. That's what an open house is designed to do."

Similar events held last year in Bloomfield Township and Troy saw more than 400 potential homebuyers visiting more than 200 open houses, according to the Dearborn Chamber of Commerce and the Dearborn Area Board of Realtors.

Those events served to draw in potential homebuyers by highlighting the unique activities and opportunities each community had to offer — an idea "The Big Open House" will expand on, Holben said.

"When people buy a house, they aren't just buying a home — they're buying everything that goes with it," she said.

That includes things like schools, recreational activities, senior living, employment opportunities and neighborhood values. Fortunately, the cities of Dearborn and Dearborn Heights have plenty to offer potential homebuyers, Holben said.

"We're in a prime location — everything you need is right here," she said.

"The Big Open House" will showcase the best each community has to offer, according to Dearborn Heights City Councilwoman Marge Horvath.

"It's not just about highlighting homes — it's about showing people what we have to offer," said Horvath, who also serves as vice president of the Dearborn Heights Chamber of Commerce.

The Dearborn and Dearborn Heights Chambers of Commerce have expressed interest in becoming involved with the event, Holben said, as have their respective mayors.

"A lot of people are getting very excited about this event," Holben said. "It represents an amazing opportunity — not only for Realtors, but for potential homebuyers and businesses, as well."

On April 27, potential homebuyers will be given a "community passport," Holben said. For every participating business a patron visits, he or she will receive a stamp. After collecting four stamps, the individual will be entered into a drawing to win a prize.

"It's just one of the ways we're trying to draw people in," Holben said. "We believe that once they see the amazing things Dearborn and Dearborn Heights have to offer, they won't want to leave."

All homes that will potentially be on the market in time for the April 27 event will be featured on www.TheBigOpenHouse.com, an exclusive Web site designed to promote "The Big Open House." The site could go live Tuesday, Holben said.

If the event is successful, "The Big Open House" could become an annual event in Dearborn and Dearborn Heights.

"That's the great thing about an open house — the door is always open," Holben said.

"The Big Open House" is sponsored by the Metropolitan Consolidated Association of Realtors (MCAR), the Western Wayne Oakland County Association of Realtors (WWOCAR), the Detroit Media Partnership, Chase Bank and Land Owners Title Company.

For more on this story, see future editions of the Press & Guide.