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ISSUE #16

Vacant Land Guide News

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Trends in Land “Meet the Ruralpolitans”



Meet 40-year-old Shane Dawley and his 36-year-old wife, Rhonda. Because of the troubled economy, they decided it was time to flee the rat race and adopt a more self-reliant lifestyle. So they transplanted their family from suburban Atlanta and moved to a five-acre farm in central Wisconsin.

The Dawley's do not have any previous farming experience but they felt it was time for a change. So for the first time they are learning how to raise chickens, garden and hunt. "Our generation has never seen anything like this," says Mr. Dawley of the economic downturn. "Fear sometimes is a good thing and will push you to do things you ordinarily wouldn't."

While real estate in and around the big cities is still spiraling downward, the rural market is holding up better in many areas, thanks in part to the Dawley's.

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These city folks are sometimes dubbed "Ruralpolitans," as they are looking to land as their new safe investment, one they hope could prove to be more stable than their jobs and 401(k)s—and provide a more secure lifestyle.

Why are more and more people thinking of transitioning to a rural area? Here are couple of reasons:

1. Suburbanites, such as the Dawley family, who have decided to give up their jobs in the big city to escape the urban sprawl.
2. Those that wish to live far away from others by creating a self-sustained lifestyle as they fear a further weakening economy and possible future chaos.
3. Those that are intrigued by the idea of hobby farming – either for recreation or profit.
4. More and more young people are buying land for investment with the vague hope to one day live on it.

The Wall Street Journal states "While the 76 million-strong baby boomers eyeing retirement represent the largest "Ruralpolitans" segment, they're being joined by a growing contingent of 20-to-early-40-somethings freshly imprinted by this recession's pain."

Land offers a unique form of security in the midst of a troubled economy.

United broker Inez Freeman Pahlmann in West Plains, Mo., cites "a big, big trend toward the younger generation moving back to the rural" areas to be more self-sufficient, even if they sacrifice their income potential. Also, broker Tom VanHoose in Great Falls, Mont., says young clients in their late 20s and 30s have jumped from just a handful a few years ago to 15% of his business.

"Most of these kids say they've just saved and want to put their money someplace that won't go away," Mr. VanHoose says. "They see General Motors and AIG go down and they are asking, 'Gee, can my company go down?' There's a lot of angst and anxiety. They've seen their parents' stock investments lose 30% to 40% and think: 'If I buy this piece of property and all else fails, I've still got this piece of property.' "

History has shown that in times of economic downturns that some opt for an escapist lifestyle. As the so called "Great Recession" continues on with high unemployment coupled with much uncertainty, more and more individuals – young AND old – will continue to seek out rural land for their future.

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Let's not forget the retiring baby boomers who are craving more-remote properties to escape to. They will continue to buy land like never before. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Economic Research Service, the rural population age 55-85 will increase by 30% between 2010 and 2020.

But other factors, such as easy cost effective ways to access the Internet, are giving this current Ruralopolitan trend new longevity, particularly among younger generations. Also, new homes can be more affordably powered by solar or wind. So homes built in rural areas won't necessarily rely on the expensive local utility companies.

Also, two other variables that in the recent past have kept people from buying land (but now they are becoming non-issues): The price of gas and the distance to supplies and amenities.

Price of gas – most people who move to rural areas want to escape the problems of civilization.

Supplies – Wal-Mart is sensing this migration to rural destinations and is opening most of their new Supercenters in rural crossroad cities. This opens up pockets of rural areas originally thought too far from amenities and supplies. And with these new stores leads to increased land values in surrounding areas.

"Everybody is looking for the next opportunity for hope."

Owning land will bring that hope to many.

Adapted from Wall Street Journal Article "Green Acres Is the Place to Be - The Recession Is Inspiring More Young Families and Singles to Head Back to the Country"

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Russell Ward is the ONLY person in the country training real estate investors how to control or buy country land at half-price or less. He is a full-time vacant land investor who has been involved in more than 600 transactions totaling over \$9,000,000. He authored, Vacant Land Guide™ – How to Buy Vacant Land at Wholesale Prices. This Guide is the first and only of its type on the market today. He resides in Orange Park, FL a suburb of Jacksonville, FL.

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