

Golden Fine Arts Festival: a Factor in Golden's Rising Home Values

Over my 14 years of selling real estate in Denver and Jefferson County I have observed a definite migratory arc extending from Denver's Washington Park and

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By **JIM SMITH,**
Realtor®

Cherry Creek to Highlands, Berkeley, Applewood and ultimately Golden. Some people travel that arc slowly, moving first to northwest Denver, but others jump straight from Wash Park to Golden.

I'm sure there are other migratory patterns one could identify, but since my home and base of operations is in Golden, I have observed this pattern over any other. I suspect other agents have, too.

I first heard the expression "popping the top" (referring to adding a second floor to a bungalow) in Cherry Creek and Wash Park, but we're seeing it more and more in Golden now. Back in Cherry Creek and Wash Park, that process has been replaced by scraping and building townhomes. Meanwhile, Golden has joined other cities in passing an Auxiliary Dwelling Unit (ADU) ordinance, which allows a single-family home to have a separate living unit, such as above a garage, that can be rented out. I know of many Golden homeowners who have already taken advantage of that opportunity.

The Cherry Creek Arts Festival has, I believe, played a role in making that area of Denver a cultural center, attracting home buyers and increasing home values. I see the Golden Fine Arts Festival, which has its 26th edition this coming weekend, as doing the same for Golden. If you appreciate the fine arts — my personal favorite is sculpture — you probably are already planning to come to Golden this Saturday and/or Sunday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. It takes place, as in previous years, on that 4-block stretch of 11th Street adjoining the Clear Creek History Park. I try never to miss this signature event sponsored by the Golden Chamber of Commerce.

Golden's festival is one of the largest and most prestigious juried art shows in the country, featuring over 130 artists from 20 states in painting, sculpture, mixed media, photography, ceramics, fiber, glass and jewelry. Live bands will be performing each day, and right across Clear Creek is the Golden Farmers Market on Saturday until 1 p.m.

There will be numerous food vendors at the festival, and the full range of MillerCoors products, including its microbrews, will be available for washing down that food.

More information about the Golden Fine Arts Festival and other chamber events can be found online at www.GoldenChamber.org.

Golden has a large number of museums and art galleries for such a small town — again within walking distance of Clear Creek. The **Clear Creek History Park** lies between the festival and the creek. Across the creek via a foot bridge is the **Golden History Center**,

923 10th Street. Admission is only \$3! A block away in the other direction is the **Astor House Museum**, currently closed for renovation.

The **Foothills Art Center** is nearby on the corner of 15th Street and Washington Avenue, currently presenting a group exhibition of Fine Crafts, featuring outstanding American artists working in clay, fiber, glass, metal, and wood.

The Colorado School of Mines has a free **Geology Museum**, at 13th & Maple Streets. A favorite for many visitors is the representation of a uranium mine, complete with driller and crystal pocket.

At 1213 Washington Avenue is the **Rocky Mountain Quilt Museum**, which presents 10 quilt exhibits a year, each with a unique and different style, history and theme. It's dedicated to the preservation of quilts, and the continuation of the art of both traditional and contemporary quilt-making. Admission is \$6, with discounts for seniors, children and students.

At 710 10th Street is the American Mountaineering Center, which is home to the **Bradford Washburn American Mountaineering Museum**. It honors the achievements of mountaineers from America and around the world. Exhibits on climate, science, cultures and the humanities as they relate to mountains make your experience rich, exciting, and interactive. Admission is \$5.

Those are just the museums within walking distance of this weekend's arts festival. Two miles east on 10th Street is the **Colorado Railroad Museum** at 17155 W. 44th Avenue where you can "lose track of time." Its 15-acre site is jam-packed with narrow and standard gauge locomotives and railroad cars, plus more than 50,000 rare old photographs, papers and artifacts. The museum itself is a replica of an 1880-style masonry railroad depot. Personally, I'm drawn to the fantastic model railroad exhibit in the basement!

Up 19th Street at the top of Lookout Mountain is



Buffalo Bill's Gravesite and Museum, which features exhibits exploring Buffalo Bill's life and times, including Wild West show outfits and posters, Indian artifacts, and antique firearms. Admission is \$5, with discounts for seniors and children.

Golden has performing arts, too, including **Miners Alley Playhouse**, currently featuring a production of "Little Shop of Horrors." Find more information at www.MinersAlley.com.

All these attractions, anchored in a way by the annual Fine Arts Festival, have made Golden a cultural destination. That, in turn, has contributed, I'm sure, to the steady increase in home values in this special town we call home.

It helps, of course, that the City of Golden, has an efficient, honest and well-run government. It's noteworthy not only that home values did not decline during the "great recession" of 2008-2012, but that the city government did not have to cut back on its services. Indeed, it continued to give out small grants to citizens with good ideas or projects for improving their block or their neighborhood. I was impressed!

While Golden Real Estate is pleased to provide real estate brokerage services throughout both Denver and Jefferson County, we are proud to call Golden our home, and look forward to seeing you this coming weekend at our respected arts festival. And if you feel a calling to move here, we're ready to help your family travel that migratory arc toward Golden!

Price Reduced on Foothills Home Just West of Golden

This 4-bedroom, 3-bath home at **30829 Robinson Hill Road** is now only **\$485,000**. Located on a flat 2-acre lot just 20 minutes from downtown Golden, its many features include a high-end home theater and an oversized 3-car garage (hidden by that tree). Take the narrated video tour at www.RobinsonHillHome.info, then call your agent or me at 303-525-1851 for a private showing!




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Jim Smith
Broker/Owner




Golden Real Estate, Inc.
DIRECT: 303-525-1851
EMAIL: Jim@GoldenRealEstate.com
17695 South Golden Road, Golden 80401
WEBSITE: www.GoldenRealEstate.com

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