



THE ROSS REPORT

Greetings!

Greetings!

Welcome to "The Ross Report", a monthly newsletter designed to provide you with tips and updates so that you can "Live Well" during your retirement years.

Please feel free to forward this FREE newsletter to any of your friends and relatives who you believe might find the information within helpful.

And if for some reason, you would no longer like to receive this newsletter, it's really easy to take your name off the list at the bottom.

Enjoy reading!

Don

Quote of the week:

"You might not be able to outthink, outmarket, or outspend your competition, but you can outwork them."



Donald L. Ross

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In This Issue

Opening Thoughts

Certifications

Good News

Holiday Open House

Planning Tips

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Opening Thoughts

1 Out Of 4 Mortgages Are Underwater.



What does this mean for the housing market?

Last week, both the Wall Street Journal and CNN reported that 25% of all mortgages in the United States are underwater. This means that the balance of the mortgage is larger than the home is worth.

<http://tinyurl.com/ygg6fw6>

Obviously, this does not bode well for our banking system, which is already teetering on the edge thanks to the sub-prime crisis.

- 522 banks are on the "problem bank" list right now - <http://tinyurl.com/ylnqjmc>.

What we need to fix this is for housing values to grow again. But is that something we can count on?

In order for housing values to start growing again, we need buyers. That means we need people working and the economy growing. Unfortunately, the prospects for that happening anytime soon are not good...

- Fed sees slow recovery and continued high unemployment - <http://tinyurl.com/y8wggc7>

So what can we expect?

My suspicion is that the housing market will end up reacting the same way every bubble does after it bursts - slow growth for many years to come.

I suspect that gone are the days of double digit housing value growth and taking that equity growth out to fuel consumer spending. In fact, looking back, it would have made a lot of sense to take that home equity out while we had it and set it aside into a safe, liquid investment.

We'd sure be better off today if we had.

Certifications



DON ROSS IS NOW A NATIONAL ETHICS BUREAU MEMBER



I'm pleased to announce that I have successfully passed the Ethics Check System and am now an approved member of The National Ethics Bureau.

What does this mean to you? I've been "checked out"

If you click on the NEB link, you can learn more about how I became an approved member.

<http://www.ethicscheck.com/>

National Ethics Bureau's annual seven-year background checks for membership-disqualifying criminal, civil, and business violations and has agreed to maintain NEB membership standards.

The following important regulatory agencies to the financial services industry have been checked:

- The Securities Exchange Commission (SEC)
- The Ohio Department of Insurance
- Financial Industry Regulatory Authority (FINRA)

DON ROSS

Good News

Everywhere you look, you see nothing but doom and gloom in the headlines. So let's see if we can find any good news out there...

Here's a few bits that I found reported on Yahoo Finance over the past week:



- Research firm IDC forecasts PC shipments to climb 9% to nearly 310 million units in 2010 from this year, and an additional 13% in 2011 from 2010.
- Ciena will buy the optical networking and ethernet equipment businesses of Nortel Networks for \$769 million.
- Novartis will officially open the first next-generation flu vaccine plant in the U.S. but it will be years before it makes its first vaccine.
- Coca-Cola plans to more than double its bottling plants in China over the next decade, aiming to triple sales in its third-largest market by sales volume.
- Hewlett-Packard's quarterly net earnings jumped 14% to \$2.4 billion.
- Medtronic, the biggest maker of heart-rhythm devices, reported quarterly profit rose 59% to \$868 million.
- Sales of new homes jumped 6.2% to a 430,000 annual pace in October, the highest since September last year.

All the headlines above represent good news in the economy. Don't you ever wonder why the media can't spend more time focusing on the good news that happens?

HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE



Thank you to all of our friends who attended our Holiday open house last Friday. We enjoyed celebrating the season with our friends and clients.

The true magic of the season is in the spirit of giving. Thank you to all of you who brought in a non-perishable food item. We donated all the food to The Mid-Ohio Foodbank.

We had a total of 158 pounds of canned food! Not too bad!
Thanks for contributing to a great cause!

Planning Tips



Maximizing Your Social Security Benefits

Good article in Yahoo Finance ...

Yahoo Finance had a nice article last week on how to get the most out of Social Security. If you want to read the full article, [click here](#).

For those of you who would prefer a synopsis, read on...

If You Are Single

The general rule of thumb for single people is to wait until full retirement age to take Social Security.

"It usually makes sense to wait until full retirement age to start claiming benefits, unless you expect to die early or need the money sooner. This is especially true for women, who are more likely to reach the "break-even age," when the total value of full benefits equals what you would have received by claiming reduced benefits earlier."

If You Are Married

The general rule of thumb is for the top income earner of the family (usually the man) to wait until 70 to begin taking Social Security if at all possible.

"Married men should delay. Married couples can maximize total benefits by coordinating their start dates. The top goal is to increase the benefit for the surviving spouse, who gets 100% of the higher-earning spouse's benefit when he dies. If the higher-earning husband delays until 70, his survivor will get an extra 32% plus cost-of-living adjustments."

"For many couples, a husband should claim at 70 while the lower-earning wife should start collecting at 62, according to a study by Boston College's Center for Retirement Research. Because the husband is likely to die earlier, the study says, he will increase the value of the survivor benefit by delaying. As for the wife, even though her benefit will be reduced by 25%, the authors figured that her reduced benefit is only temporary. After her husband dies, she will step up to the higher survivor benefit. In the meantime, the household is bringing in extra income."

Trick #1: Voluntary Suspension of Benefits

"Let's say you're at full retirement age. You'd like to delay collecting benefits until 70. If your wife is

62 or older, she could collect benefits based on her own work record, but she'd get more money with a spousal benefit. One problem: She can't apply for the spousal benefit until you file for your own benefit."

"Here's what you do. You file for your own benefit, and your wife applies for the spousal benefit (which will be less than 50% of your benefit if she applies before her full retirement age). You immediately request a voluntary suspension for your own benefits. Your wife would then get spousal checks, and you can earn a bigger benefit when you reapply later."

Trick #2: The Pay-Back

"If you claimed your benefits early, perhaps at age 62, you may decide that taking a permanent cut was a mistake. Believe it or not, you can repay the benefits, free of interest, and reapply for a bigger benefit later. Your wife must return any accumulated spousal benefits as well."

The neat thing about this approach is that you can often create a very nice increase in your lifetime income with a not-too-large sum of money.

If you would like to talk to me about anything discussed above, please feel free to call our office at (614) 545-0277. Linda will be happy to schedule either a phone call or in-office visit!

About Don Ross

Don Ross is an experienced financial advisor, assisting clients with retirement and estate planning needs since 1987. An Upper Arlington, Ohio native, Don is a devoted father and active member of his church and community. He recently retired from the military after many years of service as a pilot in the Ohio National Guard.

You can reach Mr. Ross at his office in Upper Arlington at **(614) 545-0277** or by e-mail at don@rosswealthadvisors.com. We have recently added an 877 line which can be used nationwide, **877-545-0278**. We also have added an office in Circleville, OH. The new address is 130 W. Franklin St., Circleville, OH 43113.

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