

# HOUSTON CHRONICLE

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Health care is the land of career opportunity over the next few years, with eight of the 10 most in-demand jobs. **BUSINESS**

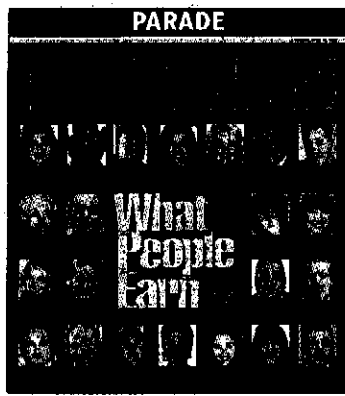
## Houston's hot jobs

### THE LOCAL TOP 5

The five most in-demand jobs in the Houston area for the next five years, and their average hourly wages.

- 1 Medical assistants **\$9.66\***
- 2 Medical records technicians **\$13.95**
- 3 Physician assistant **\$36.95**
- 4 Physical therapist assistant **\$20.35**
- 5 Physical therapy aide **\$9.13**

\*2005 wage data, most recent available.  
Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics



In **PARADE's** annual salary roundup, peek into the pockets of people across the country and see how your paycheck measures up.

**ZEST**



## Your guide to iFest

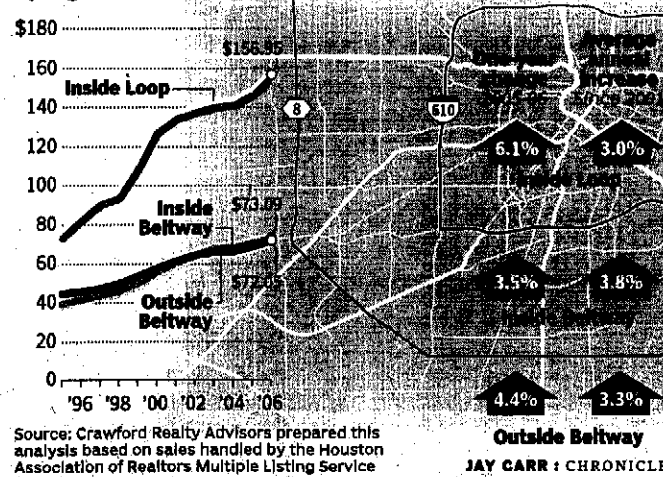
Find out everything you need to know about the Houston International Festival, which this year spotlights China.



# 2006 A STRONG YEAR FOR AREA HOME PRICES

### PRICE TRENDS BY REGION

Median price per square foot for homes sales by region in the Houston area, 1995-2006:



■ Industry hopes '07 can keep pace despite national slump, sales drop here in March

By **NANCY SARNOFF**  
HOUSTON CHRONICLE

Houston-area home prices continued their steady climb last year as the rising tide of the energy industry helped lift sales and property values.

The overall median price per square foot for a home in the area rose 4.3 percent in 2006 to \$73.05 at a time when many once-hot markets were in decline.

Despite last year's good news, uncertainty hangs over the Houston housing market.

Prices lost steam in the second half of the year, and last month's home sales were down for the first time since January 2004.

Reasons for the shift include a national housing slowdown that tempered the market.

## VIOLENCE ALONG THE BORDER

# Cartel hiring teens in Texas as hitmen

CONSUMER

REAL ESTATE LAW

# Several types of deeds used to convey property titles in Texas

A deed is the written document that is used to convey title to real property (land) from one person to another. Generally speaking, the seller of an interest in land will execute and convey a deed to the buyer of the interest in that land. The following is a brief description of some of the different deeds that have been used to convey title in Texas.



BRETT SLOBIN

In other words, if a claim to the title of the land is made by a third party, the seller and the seller's heirs and successors may be liable to the buyer for such claims. Therefore, if the buyer's title is defective because of actions by a third party that owned the land before the seller, the seller may be liable to the buyer.

**General warranty deed**

The general warranty deed provides a warranty to the buyer that the seller had title to the land and that no other third parties have title to the land.

Upon execution of the general warranty deed, the buyer will have title to the land. This is the important warranty of title. In the general warranty deed, the seller has the obligation to the buyer to defend the title to the land from adverse claims that arose during and before the seller's period of ownership, and to indemnify the buyer for any loss the buyer may sustain.

Consequently, sellers would prefer to not execute a general warranty deed to a buyer, and the buyer would prefer receiving a general warranty deed.

**Special warranty deed**

Unlike the general warranty deed, the seller using a special warranty deed provides a warranty to the buyer from the seller against title defects that arise only after the seller acquired title to the land.

For example, if the title to

the land transferred from the seller to the buyer is defective because a third party forged a prior owner's signature on a deed, then the seller would not be liable because the seller did not personally cause the title defect. Therefore, a seller will prefer executing a special warranty deed rather than a general warranty deed when conveying title.

**Deed without warranties**

The deed without warranties is a deed that specifically disclaims any warranties of title. Although the use of the deed without warranties enables the seller to not provide any indemnification to the buyer if there is a title defect, the deed without warranties does purport to convey title to the property.

**Quitclaim deed**

A quitclaim deed conveys only the seller's right, title and interest in the land. In other words, the seller is only conveying that which it has, but the

seller does not purport to convey title to the land. Therefore, if on the date of the execution of the quitclaim deed, the seller does not own the land, then the quitclaim deed will convey nothing to the buyer. Consequently, it is recommended that the buyer does not accept a conveyance of land by a quitclaim deed, barring unusual circumstances.

Sellers and buyers alike should understand that there are significant differences between each of the aforementioned deeds.

A poorly drafted deed could mean the difference between the buyer's receipt of an actual conveyance of title to the land or a conveyance of nothing at all.

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**RIVER OAKS  
 CUSTOM BUILT  
 NEW LISTING!  
 OPEN 3:30-5:30  
 2514 BRENTWOOD**

Widely known as Houston's finest builder in the first half of the twentieth century, Russell Brown created this captivating Colonial house as a wedding gift for his daughter in 1931, so you can imagine the superb quality of construction! The splendid entrance hall, with its circular stair and Palladian window, has the kind of millwork only the most skilled designers and artisans could fashion together, and the entire house is obviously a labor of love! Wide-paneled arched openings with fluted columns to the spacious living and dining rooms, with their elaborate wainscoting and triple-hung windows. Three very large bedrooms, two and one-half baths, elevator off paneled breakfast room and bar. Sunny quarters with bath over the attached two car garage are accessed from either the side kitchen entrance or the second floor, and can be used as a fourth bedroom. A paneled family room was added in 1946 with a peaked, beamed ceiling, a fireplace with a surround of Delft tiles and flanked by window seats/wood storage, bookshelves and high windows overlooking a huge brick terrace and garden. The country kitchen with beamed ceiling and brick fireplace has double windows opening to the delightful screened porch for easy serving for outdoor dining, original pine floor, and two Jenn-Aire stoves. Part of the basement could be converted to a wine cellar. Five fireplaces - woodburning in the living room, family room, and kitchen and mock in the dining room and master bedroom. Exceptionally lovely molding, uniquely beautiful six-paneled doors, glowing random width floors (recently refinished), just restored original hardware (many doors have brass key covers!), and high ceilings throughout. Four-year-old roof, new landscaping planned so that there is something blooming in the yard year around, and sprinkler system with ten zones. More than enough room for a pool by the patio on the east and for plenty of extra parking spaces on the 17,688-foot lot, as well as another garage, if needed, on the west. The 49-foot attic goes the length of the main house, and would make a wonderful third-floor playroom or more bedrooms, should one wish. Whether for a family supper on the screened porch, a candlelit dinner for sixteen in the dining room, a cookout with round tables for fifty on the patio, or a cocktail party for two hundred, this home lends itself to all kinds of entertaining. Even though almost every room is quite oversized, the ambience is cozy as well as refined, and just simply being able to live here is cause enough for a daily celebration!



**WEST UNIVERSITY  
 EXCEPTIONAL  
 NEW LISTING!!  
 OPEN 1:00-4:00  
 6345 WESTCHESTER**

Kurt Eichler at his best! You are prepared to like this house from the moment you step on the front porch, and by the time you've experienced all three floors of the wonderful things about it, you end up loving it! It has the fine-tuned details and the subtle flair that have made his well-deserved, long-term reputation for exceptional quality of architecture and fabrication. Timeless in design, it could have been finished yesterday and it's priced at a fraction of his best construction. His homes have historically brought the highest premium prices, and it's obvious to even the newest novice in

REALTOR VIEW

## Fair housing not an option — it's the law

April is Fair Housing Month, and this year marks the 39th anniversary of the Fair Housing Act. This landmark legislation ensures Americans have equal



is as much of a violation as refusing to rent to a black female. There is more

she has that right. If you believe your fair-housing rights have been violated, you can file a complaint with HUD at 800-669-9777.