



Spring 2014
HomeLifeStyle

McLean
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Van Metre Wins Marketing Awards

Van Metre Homes won eight Silver Awards at the 2014 National Sales and Marketing Awards, hosted by the National Sales and Marketing Council.

Van Metre Homes were honored as Rookie of the Year, Sales Person of the Year, Sales Manager of the Year, Best Direct Mail Program, Best Print Campaign, Best Overall Advertising Campaign, Best Computer Sales Tool, and Best Design Center.

Individuals recognized for outstanding achievement included Omayra Dehring for Rookie of the Year, Ernie Kyger for Sales Person of the Year, and Danny Faulkner for Sales Manager of the Year. Van Metre Homes won for Best Direct Mail Program with their Fashion Week. Their Fresh Campaign won two awards for Best Print Campaign and for Best Overall Advertising Campaign. Van Metre Homes' Hologram won for Best Computer Sales Tool and the Van Metre Design

Studio won for Best Design Center.

Van Metre Companies has constructed more than 16,000 houses and several thousand apartments, as well as office buildings and shopping centers in Northern Virginia. Van Metre communities include their own master-planned developments, as well as neighborhoods in smaller subdivisions and third-party planned communities.

The Van Metre portfolio of new homes includes condominiums, townhomes and

single-family homes designed for first-time and move-up buyers throughout the Northern Virginia suburbs.

Van Metre's exclusive Design Studio, located in Stone Ridge, Va., allows homebuyers to choose their interior finishes and options. Through the Van Metre in-house architecture team, buyers can modify architecture based on a community's design plan and surrounding environments. They are also able to offer customization with Van Metre's Dream Home Portfolio — offering homebuyers an easy path to personal home customization.

Tips to Get Your Home Ready for Spring

With warmer weather just around the corner, it's time to focus on your home.

"Routine home maintenance ensures a healthy home and avoids costly repairs down the road," said Tom Dodd, a consultant at Fred, a home repair division of Case Design/Remodeling, Inc. "Small issues now can become huge headaches later if left untreated." To avoid this, experts recommend that homeowners give their homes a yearly spring maintenance

check-up.

"Some items you can check on your own," said Dan Halpern, another Fred consultant. "Others require an expert to do a complete review."

Have your air conditioning system serviced. "Remember that dirty filters make your air conditioner work harder, increasing energy costs and possibly damaging your equipment," said Dodd. "Check the filters monthly and replace as needed, or at least every three months."

Install a programmable thermostat. "According to Energy Star, a programmable thermostat ... will quickly pay for itself in savings on heating and cooling bills," said Dodd.

Add caulking around windows and doors. "If the gap around a door or window is wider than a nickel, caulk should be reapplied," said Halpern. "Check window-glazing putty, too, which seals glass into the window frame. Also consider adding weather stripping around doors, making sure that you can't see any daylight from inside your home."

Dodd said, "Perform a visual inspection of your roof from the ground. Repairs can be as small as a few shingles to a more extensive damaged area. This is a great place to call in an expert if you think repairs may be needed. It's also a good time to check and repair breaks in the flashing seals around vent stacks and chimneys."

Look for loose or leaky gutters. "Improper drainage can lead to water in the basement or crawl space. Make sure downspouts drain away from the foundation and are clear and free of debris," said Halpern.

Experts also say that spring is the time to put away firewood. It should be stored at least 18 inches off the ground and at least two feet from the home.

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— MARILYN CAMPBELL

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Empty-Nesters Re-invent the Family Home

Built-ins, cleverly articulated interior increase usable space without need to add-on.

BY JOHN BYRD

Sometimes life's second act requires a bold set change. How else are others to know that the featured players have moved on, embracing new beginnings?

Reinvention is after all the quintessential triumph of creativity, and can be a very personal process when the thing reinvented is your home itself.

"Of course, large-scale life changes don't necessarily demand a whole house makeover," recently retired teacher Cindy Borer said. But in the past year, her only son moved out to start a new career and her husband is now traveling less, so the timing was right for discoveries.

BUT TO START AT THE TOP: last spring the Borers had celebrated 20 years residency in their two-story, four-bedroom Colonial-style house in Burke, and were taking stock of what they wanted from the years ahead.

At just over 800 square feet, the home's primary living area had been serviceable enough; even so, the formal dining room and adjacent den on opposite sides of the front facing foyer were hardly ever used and the rear family room was dark and cramped.



By borrowing a mere nine square feet from the dining room, the designers found space for a small mudroom with bench immediately to the right of a side kitchen door.

Evaluating options, Borer considered enlarging a few rear rooms. She also wondered if some of the home's interior walls could be modified in way that would allow for more natural light. What to do?

It was at this juncture that Craig Durosko, founder of Sun Design Remodeling, was called-in to discuss possible space improvement scenarios.

Durosko pointed out that the couple

didn't so much lack square footage as a sensible space plan tailored to how they actually use their home. The existing "center-

SEE EMPTY-NESTERS, PAGE 4

Kitchen Confidential

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

When Allie Mann of Arlington, a designer and senior interior specialist at Case Design/Remodeling, Inc. was tasked with giving the first

From light-filled to dramatic, local designers create dream kitchens.

floor of a McLean, Va., home a face lift, she had to think free-flowing and airy.

"[The] client wanted to focus on making the kitchen feel open and connected to rest of home," said Mann. "[They] needed to have plenty of space to cook and entertain plus lots of storage."

Mann said the homeowner was making a cross-country move and settling in Virginia, so adhering to a strict timeline and budget were critical.

However, near the end of the project, the homeowner wanted to make a change.

"At nearly 85 percent job completion, client decided they wanted to completely remove the wall between the kitchen and family room. In the original design, we partially removed the wall," said Mann. "This meant a shift and redirection of scope, additional



PHOTO COURTESY NICELY DONE KITCHENS

A vertical, glass subway tile backsplash adds a dramatic flair to this kitchen by Nicely Done Kitchens.

engineering [because] the remaining portion of the wall housed a three-story fireplace, relocation of cabinets had already been installed and modifications to countertops. And still deliver a project close to on

time."

The finished kitchen is a light-filled space with cabinets by Crystal Cabinetry, honed Vermont Marble countertops and appliances

SEE KITCHEN, PAGE 4

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Empty-Nesters Re-invent the Family Home

FROM PAGE 3

hall” configuration defined rooms were consistent with tradition, yet were functionally underutilized most of the time. This accounted for daily traffic patterns that didn’t work as well as they might, and a nagging sense that the entire first floor was space-restricted.

On a second subject: the mid-house floor-to-ceiling bearing wall dividing the front and rear sections of the house could be completely deleted by installing concealed vertical supports at strategic intervals, Durokso said. Such a move would dramatically increase natural light, creating the floor space needed for an alternative layout more appropriate for both daily use and entertainment.

“On the first visit Craig pretty much solved our space plan problem,” Borer said. “From this point on, I was mainly to think about the interior design details.”

So Borer’s meeting with Jon Benson, the makeover’s lead designer, proved a revelation from the start.

A veteran home remodeling specialist as well as a nationally recognized furniture designer, Benson’s input shaped a floor plan focused on personal requirements in which custom built-ins eliminate unneeded walls while sharply improving both room function and interior design integrity.

To create a more functional relationship between the kitchen and the dining room, for instance, the designer replaced an interior pantry with a 27.5-square-foot food preparation surface and dining counter that serves both rooms equally.

By borrowing a mere nine square feet from the dining room, Benson also found space for a small mudroom with bench immediately to the right of the side entrance to the kitchen.

Re-situating the front hall closet to the right of the front door not only widened the front foyer but also created dramatic front-to-back sight lines that make the entire house seem much larger.

Measured in square feet, the changes are small. Yet such revisions liberate the first level circulation plan, re-organizing the home’s primary living area into rooms that are both interactive and articulated.

To visually differentiate the front-facing library from the family room, the designer converted existing overhead beams into an elegant tray ceiling supported by Craftsman-style piers.

A floor-to-ceiling bookcase—also a Benson original—provides an elegant yet useful wall for the new reading room. The new family room fireplace hearth was custom-designed to accommodate the plasma TV that now hangs above it.

Additional interior design decisions emerged from Borer’s collaboration with



PHOTOS BY BRYAN BURRIS PHOTOGRAPHY

To differentiate the front-facing library from the family room visually, Sun Design converted existing overhead beams into an elegant tray ceiling supported by Craftsman-style piers.



The new transitional-style interior employs decorative elements to create distinctive use-zones in an open floor plan.

Sun Design’s Jessica Page.

“Jessica helped me discover the design style I’d been looking for,” Borer said. “She opened up a lot of resources. Ideas that I liked were added to a project scrapbook which we both referenced regularly to keep the decision process on track.”

As space plan modifications proceeded, Borer’s research revealed a strong personal attraction to transitional-style interior design, a contemporary concept that seeks to reconcile traditional architecture with the spatial freedom of an open floor plan.

On this score, Benson’s original floorplan sketch anticipated the use of loveseats as



Transitional interior design style seeks to reconcile traditional architecture with the spatial freedom of an open floor plan.

space dividers between the family room and the den. Meanwhile, Borer’s preference for soft white and grey duotones inspired an interior paint scheme that combines sharp white and khaki.

In the kitchen, Giallo Sioriato granite surfaces are set off by a vividly original glass tile and stone backsplash which lends an invigorating streak of color to the broader visual panorama.

“Its very comfortable balance of traditional and open really works well for us,” Borer said. “I found the whole process really enlightening.”

Kitchen Confidential

FROM PAGE 3

by Sub-Zero, Wolf, KitchenAid and Miele.

NICELY DONE KITCHENS in Springfield, Va., created a kitchen with drama for a Centreville, Va., family. “White semi-custom cabinetry and a contrasting dark island creates a dramatic look,” said Stephanie Brick, designer. Brick cited the focus on the vertical, subway tile back splash.

The rest of the back splash in the kitchen is horizontal, which is the standard for subway tile, said Brick.

The kitchen also includes ample, easily accessible storage space.

“The paneled refrigerator helps conceal the appliances and helps them to blend in with the cabinetry to give the aesthetic more continuity,” said Brick. The kitchen includes easily accessible storage space and ogeedged granite counter tops.

OPENING UP and adding light were priorities when Guy Hopkins Semmes, partner and founder of Potomac-based design-build firm Hopkins and Porter and Lea Allen, one of the firm’s senior architects, remodeled the kitchen of a Bethesda, Md., home.

“The kitchen was small, but we were able to add a lot more space, by making few minor changes,” said Semmes. “Before there was an enclosed porch next to the kitchen. We opened the wall between the kitchen and the adjacent enclosed porch.”

Semmes and Allen made another major elimination: appliances. “We got rid of the



COURTESY OF CASE DESIGN/REMODELING INC

Arlington, Va., designer Allie Mann of Case Design/Remodeling, Inc. created a free-flowing and elegant feel in this McLean, Va. kitchen.

refrigerator and moved it downstairs,” said Semmes. “All of the other appliances are located under the counter and open up like drawers.”

Semmes also found a creative way to make the space more light-filled. “We took out a stairway wall to the second floor and replaced it with a triangular opening so light from stairwell came down into the kitchen.”

The kitchen now has maple cabinetry and white Silestone countertops. “It was done on a budget. It’s amazing what you can do when you work with what you’ve got.”



PHOTO COURTESY OF HOPKINS AND PORTER

Guy Semmes and Lea Allen of Potomac-based design-build firm Hopkins and Porter removed walls to create space and add light to the kitchen of this Bethesda, Md. home.

Garden Club of Virginia Celebrates 81st Tour



This Alexandria garden will appear on the 81st Historic Garden Week tour.

House and garden tours will take place across Virginia during the 81st Historic Garden Week. Garden week runs from Saturday, April 26-Saturday, May 3.

Tour proceeds fund the restoration and preservation of Virginia’s historic gardens. Each spring visitors are welcomed to more than 250 of Virginia’s most beautiful gardens, homes and historic landmarks during “America’s Largest Open House.” This eight-day statewide event provides visitors an opportunity to see gardens at the peak of Virginia’s springtime color, as well as beautiful houses sparkling with over 2,000 flower arrangements created by Garden Club of Virginia members.

Statewide tour passes are available for \$175. The Alexandria tour takes place Saturday, April 26, tickets are \$35. The Vienna tour takes place Tuesday, April 29 and tickets are \$25. There is a 240-page guidebook with detailed descriptions of properties on each tour. The \$10 charge covers the shipping and handling cost of the book. Free copies of the guide are available at Virginia businesses, visitor centers, and some AAAs. Visit www.vagardenweek.org.

David Watkins of Merrifield Garden Center says cold season annuals like these yellow pansies can add bright color to a garden now.



PHOTO COPYRIGHT CAROLINE WILLIAMS

Getting Your Garden Ready for Spring

Local experts tell you what you should do now, in spite of the cold weather.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

on the environment. It reduces bad bug populations and is safe over all.”

It doesn’t feel like spring. Last week’s snow made it seem like warm weather might never arrive, so planting a garden might be the last thing on your mind. However, local gardening experts say this is the ideal time to start preparing your landscape to yield colorful spring foliage.

Bill Mann, of Behnke Nurseries in Potomac, Md., said spring garden preparation plans differ from year to year. “It depends on the landscape beds you have and whether or not you’re planning to put in a vegetable garden,” he said.

“This is the time to inspect shrubs for damage that might have been broken during the snow load,” said David Watkins of Merrifield Garden Center, which has locations in Fair Oaks, Merrifield and Gainesville, Va., “Don’t go overboard, however: “You don’t want to prune plants before they bloom. A good rule of thumb is to prune a flowering plant right after it blooms.”

Instead, spend some time tidying up. “Right now is the time to fertilize your shrubs, remove old mulch, put down new mulch and just clean up,” said Watkins. “Everybody is sick of winter, especially this winter. This is the time to clean up old leaves. Because the winter has been so cold, there are going to be some plants that won’t have made it.”

“In March, a lot has to do with inspecting the yard for winter damage,” said Mann. “This is a great time of the year to look for insect damage and deer damage.”

Mann expects extensive deer damage this year. “Deer didn’t have much to eat except for plants like azaleas and rhododendrons.”

Insect damage is less obvious and more difficult to identify. “This is the time to do damage-control by using safe or organic-based products like neem oil,” said Mann. “When sprayed on plants, it smothers insect eggs or some insects in the larva stage. It also kills stinkbugs. If you can see them, you can control them. You can use a higher concentration this time of year and it is a lot safer and easier

WHILE EAGER GARDENERS may be excited to start planting spring flowers in their newly cleaned plots, Watkins offers a caveat: “It is a little early for most annual flowers in pots on patios, but you can plant annuals like pansies, which are cold season annuals,” he said. “They don’t like heat, so in June they start to whither. Then you can put other flowers in like petunias and geraniums.”

Watkins recommends planting hearty, ornamental shrubs in patio flowerpots and surrounding them with flowering plants to ensure year-found foliage. “A nice thing to do in pots is plant a woody ornamental,” he said. “It is nice to have plants in the pots that stay year round. I put a Japanese maple in a pot on my deck. In another pot I put ilex verticillata [winterberry] and I had red berries all winter long. In the spring, I’ll put petunias in the soil around it, and around the edge I’ll plant a flowering plant that will trail down over the pot from April to October. Then the rest of the year I’ll get red berries.”

Sowing grass seeds is also an ideal project to begin now. “The seeds won’t germinate until it gets to be 52 degrees,” Watkins continued. “So even if we get another snow storm, it helps work the seeds into the soil.”

Randee Wilson of Nature By Design in Alexandria encourages the use of indigenous plants. “Look for sources for native plants — they help sustain our local wildlife. If we didn’t have local plants, butterflies would be gone.”

Native plants also require less maintenance. “Some native plants are cardinal flower, which is bright red; bee balm, also bright red; blue cardinal; iron weed, which has purple flowers, and native wisteria vine,” said Wilson.

If a new patio is in your plans this spring, Watkins says to get started now. “We’ve been putting down putting patios all year long,” he said. “A good garden center is going to get backed up when the weather is warmer. The sooner you start getting your job in the line, the better.”

Local REAL ESTATE

PHOTOS BY CRAIG STERBUTZEL/THE CONNECTION

January, 2014 Top Sales in Great Falls, McLean, Vienna, Oakton, Reston and Herndon



1 8419 Brookewood Court, McLean — \$2,198,800



2 1418 Harvest Crossing Drive, McLean — \$1,850,000

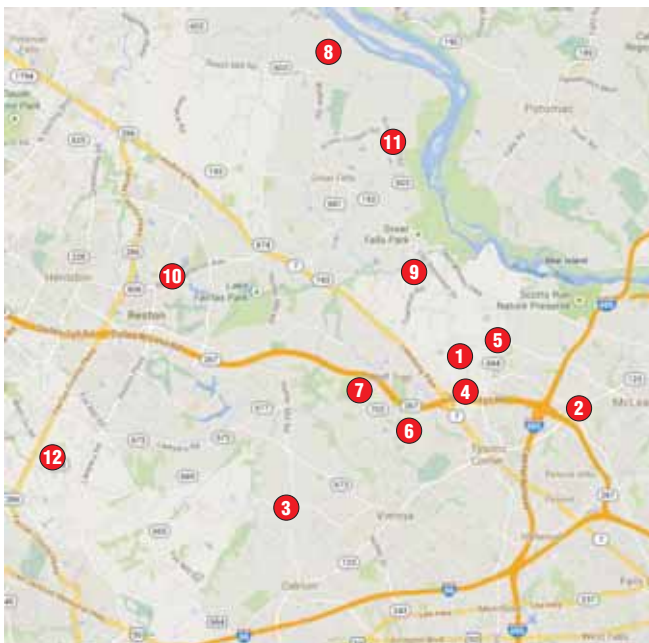


© GOOGLE STREET VIEW

8 9909 Windy Hollow Road, Great Falls — \$1,322,000



4 8500 Stony Point Court, McLean — \$1,660,000



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Address	BR	FB	HB	Postal	City	Sold Price	Type	Lot AC	PostalCode	Subdivision	Date Sold
1 8419 BROOKEWOOD CT	5	6	2	MCLEAN		\$2,198,800	Detached	0.70	22102	WOODLEA MILL	01/31/14
2 1418 HARVEST CROSSING DR	4	5	1	MCLEAN		\$1,850,000	Townhouse	0.07	22101	EVANS FARM	01/08/14
3 10406 OAKTON HILLS CT NE	5	5	2	OAKTON		\$1,700,000	Detached	1.72	22124	OAKTON HILLS ESTATES	01/08/14
4 8500 STONY POINT CT	6	5	1	MCLEAN		\$1,660,000	Detached	0.71	22102	STONY POINT	01/31/14
5 8103 RIDINGS CT	4	4	1	MCLEAN		\$1,500,000	Detached	0.84	22102	THE GREAT HAMPTONS	01/06/14
6 1681 DREWLAINE DR #5	5	4	1	VIENNA		\$1,355,764	Detached	0.35	22182	WOLF TRAP DOWNS SEC. 2	01/30/14
7 1652 WHITE PINE DR	6	4	1	VIENNA		\$1,350,000	Detached	0.83	22182	SYMPHONY MEADOWS	01/06/14
8 9909 WINDY HOLLOW RD	6	4	1	GREAT FALLS		\$1,322,000	Detached	1.72	22066	FALCON RIDGE	01/24/14
9 9115 WHITE CHIMNEY LN	4	3	1	GREAT FALLS		\$975,000	Detached	0.92	22066	LEIGH MILL COMMONS	01/16/14
10 1608 NORTH VILLAGE RD	3	2	1	RESTON		\$970,000	Detached	0.98	20194	RESTON	01/09/14
11 9212 MARIA AVE	3	2	1	GREAT FALLS		\$889,000	Detached	1.00	22066	GREAT FALLS ESTATES	01/29/14
12 2989 FRANKLIN OAKS DR	5	4	0	HERNDON		\$827,575	Detached	0.31	20171	FRANKLIN OAKS	01/08/14

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Extreme Temps Call for Back-to-Basics

What mid-winter maintenance can reveal about your home's needs.

BY JOHN BYRD

While common sense suggests that home improvements should be put off to warmer weather, a sustained period of colder temperatures often reveals systemic problems that will need correction sooner or later.

As temperatures dropped precipitously several weeks ago, all Reston homeowner Craig Mattice knew was that his original mansard roof was plagued with ice dams and his 10-year-old, 600-square-foot addition was so cold the pipes were freezing. Moreover, no amount of thermostat adjustment improved the situation much.

"After living in the house for over 25 years the chill was a surprise," Mattice said. "It wasn't just that the winter has been colder than usual ... it was beginning to look like a larger problem, particularly in the new wing, which was five degrees colder than other rooms." To determine the cause of ice-clogged gutters, Mattice turned to remodeler David Foster who had completed a number of home improvements for his son.

"The damming was literally the tip of the iceberg," said Foster, principal of Foster Remodeling Solutions. "When I inspected the attic it was clear that the envelope was not adequately sealed, insulated or ventilated, which is why the upstairs had been too hot last summer."

Add to this the fact that prior to 1980 local building code required less thermally-resistant insulation (R-19) than the current R-38 standard and the outlines of a common problem with older production homes begins to emerge.

"It's not unusual to find that the existing insulation just isn't the best application for some of our coldest days" Foster said. "Different parts of a house can call for different insulation strategies."

Since the goal for the Mattice attic was to dramatically increase R-value, Foster rearranged the old insulation, adding soffit baffles to improve ventilation. The larger technical solution, however, was to blow-in R-25 fiberglass, which raised the attic's thermal resistance to R-44.



PHOTO COURTESY OF FOSTER REMODELING SOLUTIONS

A sustained period of cold weather can reveal problems with your home's basic systems that will need to be addressed in any season.

"One of the benefits of fiberglass is that it wraps everything ... creating an air-tight insular envelope," Foster says. "This makes all aspects of the home's heating and cooling more efficient."

The more recently completed family wing was another matter. Turns out the Mattice's artfully-designed addition was built over an unheated crawl space, and the

HVAC duct wasn't even connected in the kitchen.

"An appropriate insulation strategy starts with a kind of forensics," Foster said. "Where is a wall, ceiling or roof exposed to outside conditions? Is it difficult to regulate temperatures in different parts of the house? These are some basic questions we start with."

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by Suzanne

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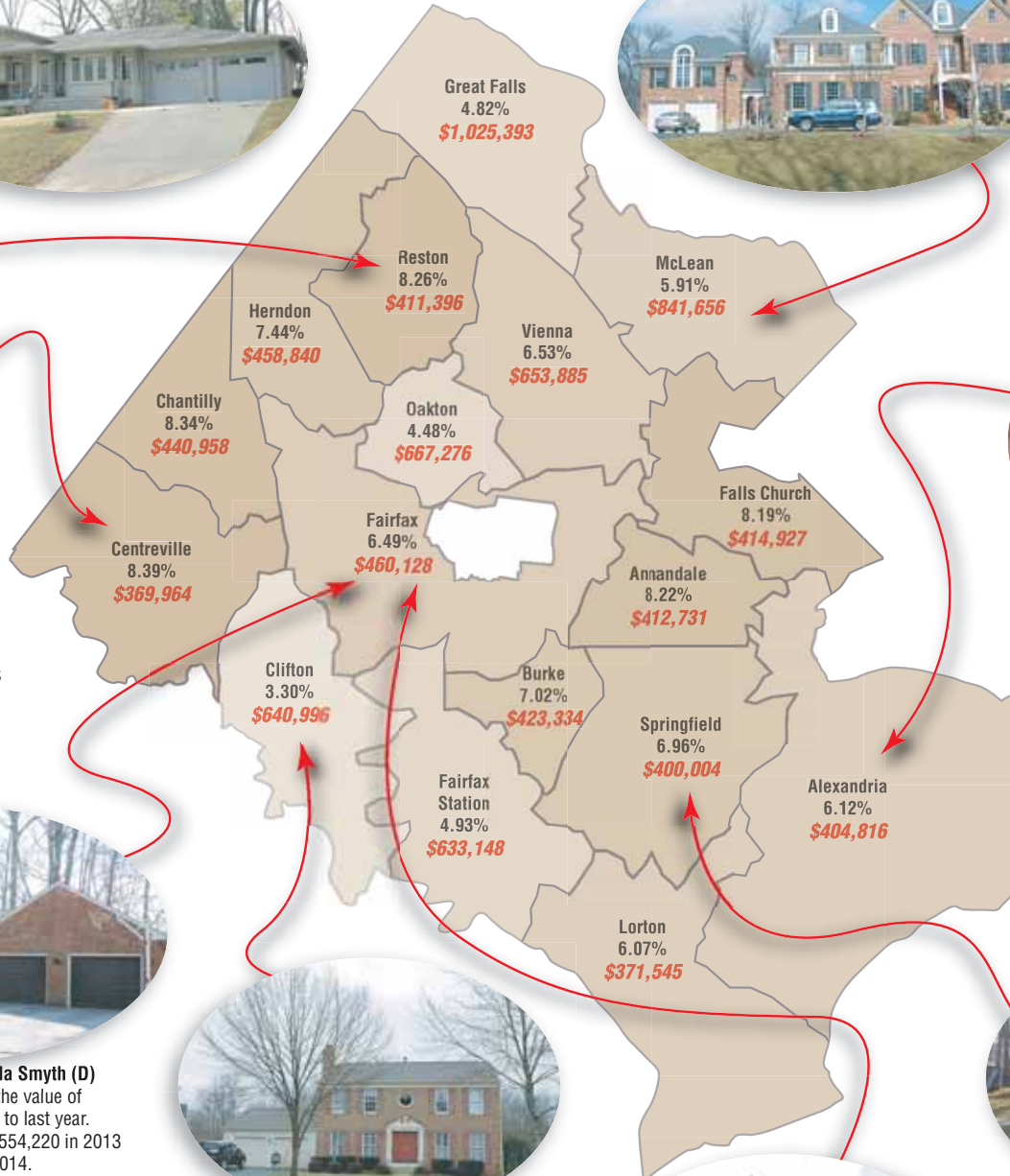
Fairfax County REAL ESTATE

2014 Assessments by Area

Hunter Mill Supervisor **Cathy Hudgins (D)** saw her assessment go up 10.80% from \$575,910 in 2013 to \$638,100 in 2014.



Dranesville District Supervisor **John Foust (D)** saw a 6.16% drop in his property value when compared to 2013. The county valued Foust's house at \$3,109,050 last year and \$2,917,660 this year.



Sully Supervisor **Michael Frey (R)** saw a 11.96% increase in the value of his home over the last year. Frey's home was assessed at \$225,820 in 2013 and \$252,830 in 2014.



Lee Supervisor **Jeff McKay (D)** saw no change in his home assessment. This year, his home was worth \$710,220, same as last year.

Mount Vernon Supervisor **Gerry Hyland** has no property listed.



Providence Supervisor **Linda Smyth (D)** saw a 7.22% increase in the value of her house when compared to last year. Smyth's home was valued at \$554,220 in 2013 and \$594,220 in 2014.



Springfield Supervisor **Patrick Herrity (R)** saw a 3.56% gain in his property value when compared to 2013. Last year, his home was worth \$553,770 and this year it is valued at \$573,460.



Braddock Supervisor **John Cook (R)** saw a 13.37% increase in the value of his home over the last year. Cook's home was assessed at \$586,220 in 2013 and \$634,760 in 2014.



Fairfax County Chairman **Sharon Bulova (D)** saw her home value go down 2.62% from \$617,750 in 2013 to \$601,550 in 2014.



2014 County Average (Percent Change)
 Single Family Detached **\$598,711 (5.82%)**
 Townhouse **\$370,849 (8.39%)**
 Condos **\$247,943 (10.51%)**

ZIP CODE AREA	2013 MEAN	2014 MEAN	PERCENT CHANGE
Alexandria/Mount Vernon	381,426	404,816	6.12
Annandale	381,386	412,731	8.22
Burke	395,580	423,334	7.02
Centreville	341,337	369,964	8.39
Chantilly	407,026	440,958	8.34
Clifton	620,491	640,996	3.30
Fairfax	432,104	460,128	6.49
Fairfax Station	603,429	633,148	4.93
Falls Church	383,502	414,927	8.19
Great Falls	978,233	1,025,393	4.82
Herndon	427,060	458,840	7.44
Lorton	350,288	371,545	6.07
McLean	794,688	841,656	5.91
Oakton	638,692	667,276	4.48
Reston	379,741	411,096	8.26
Springfield	373,964	400,004	6.96
Vienna	613,796	653,885	6.53

for single family, townhouses and condominiums

The average assessed value of a single family home in Fairfax County for 2014 is \$598,711, up 5.82%

SOURCE: FAIRFAX COUNTY