

The New York Times

A good rental history can help borrowers

First-time home buyers planning to purchase a house later this year may have a better chance of qualifying for a mortgage if they have had a history of paying their rent on time.

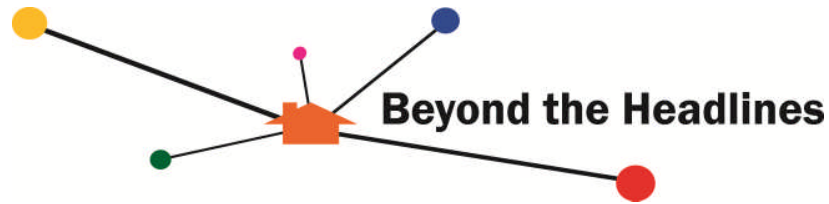
Making sense of the story

- Last year, credit-reporting agency Experian added a section to millions of credit reports showing on-time rent payments and raised the credit scores of many people. The company said that this year it would add in negative marks, including mentions of bounced checks or of tenants' leaving before a lease was up.
- Incorporating rental payments into credit scores could affect millions of people who have not established credit histories through credit cards, student loan repayments, and other credit sources.
- Almost half of consumers considered "high-risk" experienced an increase of 100 points or more after their positive rental history was added, according to Experian's rent bureau. Those with average or higher scores did not experience major movement.
- Although it is still too early to show the effects of the new credit report, which began in December, the changes are intended to allow lenders and consumers to have greater transparency, according to Corelogic.
- People who have lost their homes to foreclosure and are now leasing may be able to rebuild their credit histories by being responsible renters.
- However, consumer groups and advocates are skeptical, noting that reports are sometimes riddled with mistakes and some landlord-tenant disputes may be difficult to capture in a credit report. Rent may not have been paid, for example, because the furnace was left unrepaired for months.

Read the full story

<http://nyti.ms/xpybHp>

Jan. 12, 2012



In other news ...



Orange County Register

State targets property-tax payers

Beginning with the 2012 tax bill (the one due in April 2013), the state Franchise Tax Board will require property owners to break down their property taxes into deductible and non-deductible portions.

Read the full story:

<http://bit.ly/wTkHEG>



The Wall Street Journal

New bureau plans close look at nonbank mortgage lenders

The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau Wednesday disclosed key details about how its examiners will size up mortgage companies that aren't banks but still offer home loans to consumers.

Read the full story:

<http://on.wsj.com/wASDmX>



The Mercury News

Five reasons to get a new mortgage in 2012

Mortgage interest rates, near all-time lows, are likely to remain attractive throughout 2012. That means opportunities for new home buyers and for homeowners who want to refinance.

Read the full story:

<http://bit.ly/yYN3hj>



CNN Money

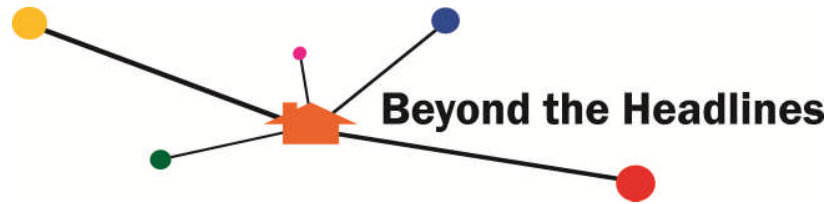
Turning foreclosures into rentals

Federal officials hope to launch a pilot program in early 2012 to convert government-owned foreclosures into rental properties.

Read the full story

<http://cnmmon.ie/w6eHGO>

Jan. 12, 2012



The Wall Street Journal

Survey: Mood improves on home prices

Consumer expectations for U.S. home prices perked up in December, according to a monthly survey from mortgage market firm Fannie Mae.

Read the full story

<http://on.wsj.com/x9N3cl>



The Wall Street Journal

Fed up with the depressed state of housing

With the economic rebound still mediocre at best, the Federal Reserve is charging into the housing debate.

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<http://on.wsj.com/A8Nix7>



San Diego Union-Tribune

More lenders added to California mortgage-aid program

The number of loan servicers taking part in a state mortgage-aid program continues to grow roughly one year after its launch. The Keep Your Home California program now has 55 participating mortgage servicers, up from 21 in June.

Read the full story

<http://bit.ly/xvF6sf>



CNN Money

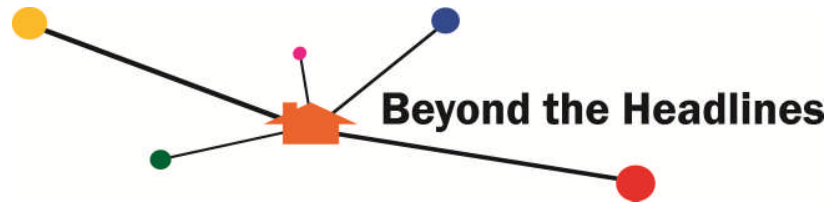
Foreclosures fall to lowest level since 2007

Foreclosure filings, including default notices and bank repossessions, were down 33 percent for the year to 2.7 million, according to RealtyTrac.

Read the full story

<http://cnnmon.ie/xenQqS>

Jan. 12, 2012



What you should know

- In coming weeks, federal policy makers could roll out pilot programs to further test the concept of renting out single-family homes.
- There are two different types of programs that officials are likely to consider. Under the first, the Federal Housing Administration could sell properties in bulk to investors who agree to rent them out.
- A more likely option for Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac would be to set up pools of properties in which third-party investors would take a stake. Investors could be responsible for handling maintenance and day-to-day operation of the rental pool, with Fannie and Freddie sharing in some of the returns.
- Read more about the pilot programs at <http://blogs.wsj.com/developments/2012/01/12/six-questions-on-foreclosure-to-rental-programs/>.

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