

SCOTTSDALE
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Scottsdale REALTOR Mernitz handles ‘hoarding homes’



SUBMITTED PHOTO
Craig Mernitz



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Craig Mernitz, a real estate agent with RE/MAX Fine Properties in north Scottsdale, helps families and estate administrators find the resources to rehab distressed properties such as “hoarding houses.”

Mr. Mernitz finds these homes and then finds buyers for them especially in Scottsdale where they are in demand, according to a press release. These homes help satisfy the housing demand and can positively impact neighborhood home values.

The Scottsdale sales agent “sees the potential of a home trashed from decades of hoarding,” he

satisfies an estate and its heirs in the event of the death of the owner, and assures former owners who are living elsewhere that the house is being cared for.

“With the Valley’s residential housing inventory at record lows, hoarding houses, especially those located in highly-desirable areas like Scottsdale, are popular with investors who can pay cash, quickly close escrow, then ‘fix and flip’ the property,” said Mr. Mernitz in a prepared statement.

“Because they’re typically listed at the lower end of the pricing scale, investors can realize a 15-25% profit.”

He also said some young families and individuals who have the cash and see the property’s potential will even renovate such homes, live in them a few years then sell at a profit as well. He estimates the cost to rehab a hoarding home is \$50,000-\$100,000.

Hoarding houses in Scottsdale “can and do sell for higher prices than in other parts of the Valley,” said Mr. Mernitz who recently completed work on a home in central Scottsdale that was appraised at \$425,000.

“The house was on the market for only two days and received 15 offers. It ultimately sold for \$40,000 above the asking price because of its desirability. By the time the new owners are done, the home will probably be worth \$1 million,” he said.

There are hundreds of hoarding cases in Scottsdale and 50,000 cases across Maricopa County according to the Arizona Hoarding Task Force, with most cases involving seniors ages 55-92, noted Mr. Mernitz, an accredited seniors real estate specialist and Maricopa County Seniors Advocate for the last 20 years.

He works with families, estate administrators, elder law attorneys and licensed fiduciaries who look out for the well-being of the elderly, especially in emergency situations like extreme hoarding if it becomes unsafe for them to remain in their homes.

Of the many real estate transactions he handled this year, Mr. Mernitz says more than 50% included decades-long hoarding homes.

“Because it can take months and even years for hoarders to clean out their homes, whether they hire a professional crew or do it by themselves with family members, most real estate agents don’t want to spend the time seeing it through to the sale of the property. You’re not just dealing with clutter,” he said.

“You also have rats, bugs and mice that are attracted to the clutter and cause structural damage. I’m willing to deal with the issue. I can also refer them to other professionals who can assist with health and human services support. It’s intriguing work.”

Mr. Mernitz added about when a homeowner moves out of a hoarding situation and into assisted living or some other living arrangement, he’ll visit with them after the home sells and assures that the property is being well- cared for.

Keywords

[Scottsdale](#), [RE/MAX](#), [Craig Mernitz](#),