THE PHALANX TEAM

CENTRAL INDIANA · CENTRAL FLORIDA · GEORGIA

THE PHALANX REPORT

Strength in Formation.

November 3, 2026

Happy Tuesday!

Welcome to this week's Phalanx Report — mortgage, real estate, industry, and general news for buyers, sellers, investors, and referral partners. Today's newsletter is about a 16-minute read.

Stay informed. Move with strategy.

1. TODAY'S MORTGAGE RATES

Latest Freddie Mac weekly averages, released October 29, 2026, compared with the prior week. The next survey lands Thursday, November 5, the morning before the October jobs report.

LOAN TYPE	RATE	TREND
30-Year Fixed	**7.24%**	▼ from 7.32%
15-Year Fixed	**6.60%**	▼ from 6.68%

> *Rates are national averages for informational purposes only and are not a loan offer. Actual rates vary. Two weeks of declines in a row, and the lowest 30-year reading of October. Freddie Mac's 30-year fell eight basis points to 7.24% and the 15-year fell eight to 6.60%. A year ago the 30-year was 6.17% and the 15-year was 5.41%. Sam Khater, Freddie Mac's chief economist: "The average 30-year fixed-rate mortgage declined again this week, reaching its lowest level this month and modestly boosting purchasing power for prospective buyers." The daily surveys kept going after Freddie Mac printed. Mortgage News Daily's 30-year index closed Friday, October 30 at 7.27%, down 0.06 from the prior Friday and the lowest since September 23. Friday's other readings: 15-year 6.92%, FHA 6.90%, VA 6.91%, jumbo 7.55%, and the 7/6 ARM at 6.78%. Bankrate's national average sat at 7.27% as of Sunday, down 0.08 in a week, with the 15-year at 6.71%, FHA at 7.14%, and VA at 7.04%. The MBA's survey rate fell to 7.37% from 7.41%, its second straight decline. The 10-year Treasury ended Friday between 4.91% and 4.94% depending on who you ask — call it a seven-week low — and opened Monday near 4.92%. Here is the part that matters for anyone floating a rate: the Fed meeting on Wednesday did nothing to mortgage rates. Mortgage News Daily's Matthew Graham: "Today's Fed announcement had no impact on mortgage rate movement." Thursday's and Friday's improvement came from a tech-stock selloff that pushed money into bonds. That is the same engine that drove last week's rally, and it runs in reverse the moment the Nasdaq catches a bid. On a $350,000 loan, the move from the October 7 high of 7.61% to Friday's 7.27% is about $82 a month.*

View Freddie Mac Rate Data →

2. MARKET UPDATES

National home prices fell year over year for the first time in more than three years. Redfin's report for the four weeks ending October 25 put the median U.S. sale price at $389,601, down 0.1% from a year ago — the first annual decline since 2023. The asking-price median is still up 1.2% at $400,703, which tells you sellers have not caught up to buyers yet. Pending sales were 276,352, down 15.9% from a year ago and 1.8% from the prior week, the lowest in Redfin's records, and they fell in all 50 of the largest metros for the third straight week. New listings were down 4%. Active listings were up 2.2%. Months of supply hit 4.5 against 4.0 a year ago. Median days on market was 50. Price drops were on 21.5% of listings. Redfin's summary line: the surplus of inventory gives buyers "more negotiating power than they've had in over a decade." Two of our markets showed up by name. Atlanta posted one of the largest pending-sale declines in the country at 25.9%, with new listings down 26.5% — sellers and buyers both pulling out at the same time. And in a separate Redfin piece on where holiday-season buyers get the best deals, Tampa made the list of seven metros, with the best window in early November; Redfin's Tampa agent Todd Edwards: "Local buyers have a good shot at getting a deal in November," before the seasonal buyers arrive. Nationally, Redfin counts 63% more sellers than buyers, the widest gap in its records back to 2013. Compass's Mike Simonsen, using his own data, has the median sale price down 1.7% at about $392,000 and inventory slightly above 2019 levels: "There are some sellers in these markets who are going to be surprised at how abrupt this change is."

Redfin: U.S. Home-Sale Prices Just Fell for the First Time in 3 Years →

The lagging price indexes still show gains — and the Midwest is carrying them. The S&P Cotality Case-Shiller national index for August, released October 27, rose 2.1% from a year earlier, up from 1.9% in July; the 20-city index rose 2.7%. Chicago led at 6.7%, New York at 6.2%, Cleveland at 4.3%; Seattle, Las Vegas, and Denver were negative. With inflation at 3.4% that month, prices fell in real terms for the 15th consecutive month. S&P's Rebecca Kaufman: "Affordability, however, remains challenging." FHFA's index, also for August, was up 2.4%, and every census division was positive — led by the East North Central division, which includes Indiana, at 4.4%. NAR's third-quarter metro report, out October 29, found 78% of metros with year-over-year gains, down from 80% in the second quarter, and 21% with declines. The national single-family median was $432,900, up 1.7%. Regionally: Midwest $342,500, up 3.6%; South $374,900, up 1.0%; West $629,000, down 0.6%. Fort Wayne made NAR's top ten at 8.5%. Lawrence Yun: "Many markets in the Midwest offer exceptional value with more affordable homes," and on our other market, "homes in nearly all Florida markets are showing price gains." The typical monthly payment on an existing home with 20% down is $2,251, or 24.1% of income; a first-time buyer putting 10% down on a $368,000 starter home is at $2,208 and 36.3% of income. New construction is the soft spot. September new home sales were 676,000, down 0.6% for the month and 5.3% from a year ago, with 476,000 new homes for sale — 8.4 months of supply — and a median price of $400,400, down 3.9% from a year ago. Two things can be true: the indexes measure closings from the summer, and the contracts being written now are priced lower.

NAR: Home Prices Increased in 78% of Metro Areas in Q3 →

Indiana: contracts down 17%, listings up 33 straight weeks, and builder permits fell for the first time since May. No new monthly release from Indiana REALTORS® or MIBOR; October numbers post after November 6 and in mid-November. The Housing Hub's weekly tracker for the week of October 19 shows pending contracts 17% below the same week last year — 195 fewer homes — worse than the 15% decline the week before, against a 6% decline in the comparable week a year ago. Average daily available listings reached 7,693, up for 33 consecutive weeks. The sale-to-original-list ratio held at 94.9%, but the Hub notes recent weeks are "down 1%, extending a weeks-long slide," and the weekly sale price is running 3% below last year. The Hub's new Indiana Market Index, built from the three weeks ending October 11, shows where the cooling is sharpest: statewide pendings down 13%, Hamilton County down 13% with 29 days to contract, up seven; Johnson County down 16% with homes taking 13 days longer; Marion down 15%; Hendricks down 31%. Boone County is the exception, with new listings up 14% and homes selling 23% faster. The Hub's line on our office's county: "Hamilton County is more competitive than 90 percent of Indiana counties, but it is cooling compared to last year." Builders felt it too. BAGI reported 737 single-family permits across the nine-county Central Indiana region in September, down 14% from 857 a year ago and the first monthly decline since May, though year-to-date permits are still up 3% at 8,203. Hamilton County fell to 228 from 306; Johnson County rose to 94 from 78; Marion rose to 147 from 103. BAGI CEO Chris Hancock: "September's numbers remind us that housing activity doesn't move in a straight line." One more from the Hub worth your time: a study of rate forecasts since 2010 found that simply assuming rates stay flat beat the expert consensus three-fourths of the time, and that each one-point move in mortgage rates has been tied to roughly 5,100 fewer Indiana home sales a year. The Hub will build its 2027 forecast on rates staying near where they end 2026. Plan accordingly. The Indianapolis metro unemployment rate held at 3.4% in September, but the labor force is about 6,600 smaller than a year ago; the Hub says the rate would be 4.0% with last year's workforce.

Indiana REALTORS® Housing Hub →

Florida: Isaias losses at $652 million and a federal declaration, permits down 21%, and two more insurers cut rates. No new Florida Realtors statewide or Orlando release; October data comes later this month. Florida's Office of Insurance Regulation now puts Hurricane Isaias at more than 62,000 claims and $652 million in potential insured losses, up about 7,000 claims in a week, concentrated in the western Panhandle — for scale, Hurricane Michael was $5.6 billion across 385,146 claims. The White House approved a federal disaster declaration October 29 for the Panhandle counties; individual assistance is still under review. The insurance market keeps moving the right direction. Mangrove Property Insurance filed an average 5.6% statewide decrease on HO3 policies, and Security First cut condo-unit (HO6) premiums an average of 7.3% for more than 20,000 policyholders. Builders pulled back. HBW counted 6,184 new residential permits statewide in September, down 21.1% from August's 7,842, though August had jumped 28%. The Tampa region led the state with 1,898 permits worth $639.8 million; the Orlando region had 1,009 permits worth $385.3 million, with Brevard and Lake both down and Polk and Pasco up. HBW's caution: "a single month rarely tells the entire story." Orlando's September numbers still stand as the latest: 2,325 sales, down 6.2% from August; a $399,610 median; 12,464 homes in inventory; and 66 average days on market. ORRA President Chris Atwell: "A 7.3% rate changes the math for a lot of families, and September's sales reflect that." Realtor.com's quarterly Market Clock, released October 19, puts both Orlando and Tampa at "7 o'clock, Late Buyer" — buyer's markets by its definition. Pair that with Redfin naming Tampa a top holiday-season deal market and you have the pitch for every relocating client sitting

on the fence: the next eight weeks in Tampa are the best buying window of the year. Election Day and Amendment 3 are in General News.

Florida Realtors: Federal Disaster Declared for Isaias as Insured Losses Grow →

Georgia: Atlanta contracts down 26%, half of households priced out, and a Midtown lender cuts 73 jobs. Georgia MLS's October report is due mid-November; September's figures — 4,072 closings down 13.7%, pending sales down 24.8% for the ninth straight monthly decline, a $399,900 median — remain the latest, and Redfin's four-week read of Atlanta pending sales, down 25.9% with new listings down 26.5%, says October did not improve. The AJC reported Sunday that Silverton Mortgage, the Berkshire Hathaway-owned lender in Colony Square, will lay off 73 workers between December 31 and May as it consolidates into Taylor Morrison, and noted September sales in the 12-county metro fell almost 10% from a year ago. MBA's Edward Seiler, in the same piece: "Compared to a year ago, mortgage payments are up more than seven percent, outpacing earnings growth." The affordability math laid out by John Burns Research's Cara Lavender at an SRP Lending event October 21 is the clearest we have seen for Atlanta: about half of metro households can afford a home today, against roughly 70% historically; a $430,000 home at 7% needs about $129,000 in income, and the median household makes $102,000; first-time-buyer sales are down 31%; the median home takes 60 days to sell versus 49 historically, and 14% sell above list versus 23% historically. Lavender: "Demand isn't the problem in Atlanta; product and payment are." And: "Plan your business around rates staying higher." Realtor.com's Market Clock has Atlanta at "4 o'clock, Late Balanced (loosening)," one tick from a buyer's market. On the institutional-investor front, no Atlanta-specific reaction to Treasury's proposed 350-home rule surfaced this week; Bisnow's July estimate that institutions control about 30% of metro Atlanta's single-family rentals, roughly 72,000 homes, is why we keep watching it. The comment period runs 30 days after Federal Register publication; the ban takes effect January 7.

AJC: Atlanta Mortgage Lender to Lay Off Dozens of Workers →

Nationally, demand held for a second week, and HousingWire's analyst sees "a clear path back to sub-7%." The tracker for the week ending October 30: 52,050 weekly pending sales, roughly flat with the prior week's 52,490 and below last year's 55,214. Active inventory rose to 914,833 from 911,956, 6.78% above a year ago. New listings fell to 57,265 from 60,151, still above last year's 55,716. Price cuts are on 43% of listings against 42% a year ago. The mortgage spread held at 2.23% — against a historical norm of 1.60% to 1.80%, which is where any sub-7% rate would have to come from if the 10-year stays near 4.9%. Logan Mohtashami: "Housing demand stabilized over the last 2 weeks as mortgage rates eased," and "we can finally see a clear path back to sub-7% mortgage rates" if the 10-year breaks the pattern it has held since September 10. Purchase applications were up 4% for the week; the year-to-date count is 16 positive weeks, 23 negative, 5 flat. The agent-side read is worse than the data. Inman's Client Pipeline Tracker fell to minus 10 in October from plus 13 in January, the second-largest one-month drop on record; 45% of agents say their listing pipelines are lighter than a year ago, up from 32% in September. Inman's conclusion: clients "appear to be treating 7-plus-percent rates as a new normal." That is the environment. The agents who do well in it are the ones with a database and a reason to call.

HousingWire: A Path to Sub-7% Mortgage Rates Is Back on the Table →

3. INDUSTRY NEWS

The Fed held, two members wanted a hike, and the market still has December at about 72%. The FOMC voted 10–2 on Wednesday, October 28 to keep the fed funds range at 3.75%–4.00%. Governor Lisa Cook and Cleveland Fed President Beth Hammack dissented in favor of a quarter-point hike — hawkish dissents that were not widely expected. The statement upgraded the economy from "solid" to "expanding at a strong pace," said "Inflation remains elevated," and closed with a new sentence: "The Committee will deliver price stability." Chair Kevin Warsh at the press conference: "It's our responsibility to get inflation down." He called inflation "too high," said "politics played no role in the decision," refused to pre-commit on December — "I also don't believe in prejudging meetings" — and said energy prices "have moved higher again in recent weeks." On financial conditions: "I'm unwilling and unable to call overall financial conditions tight." The data on Thursday cut both ways. Third-quarter GDP came in at a 3.4% annual rate against a 3.2% consensus, up from 2.2% in the second quarter. September PCE inflation rose 0.5% for the month, the largest since March, to 3.6% from 3.4% a year over year; core PCE was 0.3% and 3.1%, in line. Friday's employment cost index rose 0.8%, as expected, with wages up 3.1% over 12 months. Translation: growth is strong, headline inflation is going the wrong way because of oil, and the Fed's own members are split on whether to hit it again. CME FedWatch odds of a December 9 hike ran in the low-to-mid 80s right after the meeting and sat near 72% Monday morning after oil fell. The 10-year went from 5.05% on Fed day to under 4.95% by Friday, and none of that was the Fed. It was Intel, Amazon, and Alphabet earnings and a Nasdaq at its lowest since July.

Federal Reserve: FOMC Statement, October 28, 2026 →

Applications rebounded 3.4%. The ARM share is the highest in more than a year. The MBA's survey for the week ending October 23: total applications up 3.4%, purchase applications up 4% for the week but still 18% below a year ago, refinances up 3% for the week and 61% below a year ago. The 30-year conforming rate fell to 7.37% from 7.41%, jumbo to 7.28% from 7.33%, FHA to 7.12%, the 15-year to 6.70%, and the 5/1 ARM to 6.41% from 6.46%. The adjustable share rose to 11.3% of applications, the highest in over a year. VA loans were 11.0% of applications, down from 11.5%; FHA rose to 16.6%. MBA's Joel Kan: "The decline in rates gave borrowers some relief, with applications rebounding slightly, particularly conventional applications." And the reality check: "Mortgage rates are still more than a percentage point higher than the same week last year," with refinances down more than 60% "as most borrowers have little to gain from refinancing." A point on the ARM share: at Friday's Mortgage News Daily readings, a 7/6 ARM at 6.78% against a 30-year at 7.27% is about $108 a month on $350,000, fixed for seven years. For a military client with a known PCS cycle, that is a real conversation, not a gimmick. Wednesday's survey covers the week the 10-year fell toward 4.9%.

HousingWire: MBA Applications Rebound 3.4% →

The lenders say it plainly: "the toughest mortgage market in more than 30 years." Rocket Companies reported $709 million in third-quarter net income on $43.6 billion in originations, against a $124 million loss a year ago, and still warned that the fourth quarter and 2027 will be worse than industry forecasts. CFO Brian Brown expects refinance volume to fall by almost half from the third quarter to "multi-decade lows." CEO Varun Krishna: "Rates went up. We took share. Profits grew. That's not a coincidence." And: "The reality is this may be the toughest mortgage market in more than 30 years." Pennymac's net income fell 84% from a year ago to $29 million, originations dropped 33%, and the company confirmed layoffs in fulfillment and a $29 billion servicing sale. CEO David Spector called it "one of the most constrained

origination environments our industry has seen since 2023." Fannie Mae earned $4.2 billion and Freddie Mac $3.2 billion, but both more than doubled their credit-loss provisions — Fannie to $1.1 billion from $485 million, Freddie to $800 million from $175 million — and Fannie's serious-delinquency rate ticked up to 0.62%. The number in Freddie's report that matters for us: first-time buyers were 51% of its purchase loans. The entry-level buyer is still the one who is actually buying.

National Mortgage News: Rocket Warns 2027 Mortgage Market Will Be Worse Than Expected →

Three items to know: the $711 million settlement fund, a zero-down FHA option that skips Florida, and a listing platform launching against Compass. First, the commission-settlement fund from the NAR and brokerage cases held more than $711 million as of September 30, earning $17 million in interest this year, with 2.7 million claims processed — and, per HousingWire and Inman, "it is unclear when eligible home seller class members may receive payouts." If a past seller asks, the honest answer is: the money is there, the date is not. Second, Zillow Home Loans announced October 28 it will cover the full 3.5% FHA down payment with a zero-interest second loan, no monthly payment, forgiven after five years of on-time payments and occupancy, due in full if the buyer sells or refinances before then. Minimum 640 FICO, primary residence, no income cap, no first-time-buyer requirement. It is available in 43 states including Indiana and Georgia — and not in Florida. Read the second lien carefully: a buyer who PCSes in year three owes it back. Third, Keller Williams, AGNT (eXp's parent), HomeServices of America, and Real REMAX Group — REAL Broker's parent — launched "Open Real Estate," a platform where members enter a listing once, within one business day of signing, and share it to local MLSs and portals; it is not a national MLS and targets a first-quarter 2027 launch. The founders' letter: "Homes are increasingly marketed privately, outside public listing systems." It lands as six MLSs sue Compass over private listings and Compass executives move to quash NAR subpoenas in the Clear Cooperation case. Our position has not changed: a listing that the whole market can see gets the whole market's best offer.

HousingWire: Commission Settlement Fund Holds $711M; Payout Timing Unclear →

4. GENERAL NEWS

The week ahead: Election Day Tuesday, the Treasury refunding Wednesday, the jobs report Friday. Monday: ISM manufacturing (consensus 54.7) and construction spending at 10 a.m. ET, the Fed's loan-officer survey at 2. Tuesday: Election Day — 35 Senate seats, all 435 House seats, 36 governorships, and Florida's Amendment 3 — plus September JOLTS at 10. Wednesday: the Treasury's quarterly refunding announcement at 8:30, where any change to auction sizes moves the 10-year directly; ADP at 8:15; ISM services (consensus 54.7) at 10; the MBA application survey in the morning; Zillow earnings after the close. Thursday: jobless claims and Challenger job cuts at 8:30, Fed speakers Hammack and Barkin, Freddie Mac at noon, Compass earnings at 5. Friday: the October jobs report at 8:30 — consensus about 55,000 jobs after September's 29,000, unemployment at 4.2% — then Michigan sentiment at 10 and a run of Fed speakers including Williams, Logan, and Musalem. NAR NXT opens in New Orleans Friday. Oil is the wild card going the other way for once: WTI settled Friday at $104.12 and Brent at $117.64, up 15% and 14% for October, then fell 4% to 6% Monday morning on reports Iran's supreme leader approved Qatar-mediated talks with the U.S. — WTI traded under $100 for the first time in weeks. Iran's foreign minister said "no conclusion had been reached," and Axios reports both sides are preparing for possible escalation

after Tuesday's election. Lower oil is the one thing that could take a December hike off the table. Higher oil is the one thing that puts it back on.

Newsquawk: Week in Focus, November 2–6, 2026 →

Amendment 3 votes today. The final poll has it at 44%, and the early ballots say no. St. Pete Polls' final survey, fielded October 25–27 and reported by Florida Politics on October 28, has Florida's homestead amendment at 44% yes, with the early and mail ballots already cast breaking against it. That is down from 50% in the UNF poll two weeks ago and 53% to 55% in the September polls. It needs 60%. Governor DeSantis, who wanted a bigger cut, said in September: "I don't know if it's going to pass with 60%." The amendment would raise the non-school homestead exemption to $150,000 in 2027 and $250,000 in 2028, indexed to inflation after that, and cut the assessment cap on non-homestead property — rentals and commercial — from 10% to 5%. Florida Realtors has put $18 million behind it; President Chuck Bonfiglio Jr.: "Affordability is on the forefront for every Floridian, and they need meaningful relief." The sheriffs, fire chiefs, League of Cities, and Florida TaxWatch oppose it over local budget impacts. In the governor's race, the same final poll has Byron Donalds 48%, David Jolly 46%, inside the margin; the RealClearPolling average has Donalds up 5.6. We are not telling anyone how to vote. If it passes, a relocating buyer needs Florida primary residence established by December 31, 2026 to get the full exemption in 2027; later arrivals start at the smaller exemption and phase up over five years. Confirm with the county property appraiser. If it fails, nothing changes, and the Save Our Homes 3% cap on homesteaded assessments stays exactly as it is either way. We will have the result in next week's issue.

Florida Politics: Amendment 3 Needs 60% to Pass. It Is at 44% →

Isaias: the federal declaration is in, the deadlines have not moved, and the tropics are still empty. The disaster declaration covers Panhandle counties south and west of Leon County; individual assistance and hazard mitigation funding are still under review. Rep. Jimmy Patronis: "This is a critical step toward getting families the resources they need." Florida Realtors' Disaster Relief Fund takes applications through April 9, 2027 from Realtors, their employees, and local association staff with damage to a primary home or office. FloridaCommerce's zero-interest Emergency Bridge Loan Program — up to $100,000 for small businesses including sole proprietors — closes November 25 or when the $10 million runs out; apply at floridajobs.org/DisasterRecovery/EBL or 833-832-4494. The state insurance consumer helpline is 877-693-5236. The National Hurricane Center's Sunday evening outlook lists no disturbances in the Atlantic, Caribbean, or Gulf and no formation expected in the next seven days. Season ends November 30.

National Hurricane Center: Atlantic Tropical Weather Outlook →

Indiana: storm relief runs through November 11. The Colts are 2–6. The REALTORS® Relief Foundation grants through MIBOR and Indiana REALTORS® — up to $1,000 per household toward mortgage, rent, or hotel costs tied to a primary residence damaged in the August storms — are open through November 11 while the $500,000 allocation lasts. FEMA's application window closed October 25; anyone who applied can still upload documents and appeal at DisasterAssistance.gov. On the field, there is no way to dress it up. The Jaguars beat the Colts 42–7 in the rain in Jacksonville on Sunday and led 28–0 at the half. Trevor Lawrence went 10-of-14 for 210 yards and three touchdowns, Bhayshul Tuten added a 39-yard scoring run, and Rayuan Lane returned a Daniel Jones interception 92 yards with 10 seconds left in the second quarter. Jones finished 19-of-28 for 144 yards, one touchdown to Josh Downs, and two interceptions, and was benched for Anthony Richardson in the fourth quarter. Jonathan Taylor had eight carries for 23 yards

and lost a fumble on a trick play. The Colts are 2–6, 1–4 on the road, and host the Cowboys on Sunday, November 8.

MIBOR 2026 Storm Relief →

5. WEEKLY REALTOR TIP

Stop asking for the price cut. Ask for the buydown — and show the seller why it costs them less. Every data point this week says the leverage is with the buyer: 63% more sellers than buyers, price drops on 21.5% of listings, 43% of active listings with a cut, 8.4 months of new-home supply, and Tampa, Orlando, and (nearly) Atlanta all on the buyer's side of Realtor.com's clock. The instinct is to go in low. The smarter play for a financed buyer is to go in at a number the seller can live with and ask for a seller-paid 2-1 buydown instead. Run the math on a $350,000 loan at Friday's Freddie Mac rate of 7.24%. The full payment is about $2,385 a month in principal and interest. A 2-1 buydown drops the buyer's rate to 5.24% in year one — a payment of about $1,931, saving $455 a month — and 6.24% in year two, about $2,153, saving $233 a month. The seller funds the difference up front: roughly $8,250, or 2.4% of the price. Compare that to a 3% price cut, $10,500, which saves the buyer $72 a month, forever, but less in the first two years than the buydown saves in year one alone. The seller pays less, the buyer gets more cash flow in the two years when a move costs the most, and the seller's comps — and the neighbors' — hold. It also keeps the appraisal honest, because the concession rides inside the loan limits rather than resetting the sale price. Three rules. First, confirm the loan program allows it and the concession fits the cap: 4% on VA (and VA concessions have their own rules on what counts), 6% on FHA, and 3% to 9% on conventional depending on down payment. Second, write it into the offer as a specific dollar amount toward "buyer's prepaid interest and closing costs," not "a buydown," so the lender can apply it however benefits the buyer most at closing — including a permanent buydown if the lender's pricing makes that the better deal. Third, qualify the buyer at the note rate, because the lender will. If the buyer cannot afford year three, the buydown is a trap, not a tool. The IAR study above says forecasters have been wrong about rates every year since 2022, and that the flat assumption beats them. Build the offer for the rate we have. If rates fall, the buyer refinances and the seller's money was still cheaper than the price cut. Script for your buyer: "Instead of fighting over $10,000 on price that saves you $72 a month, let's ask the seller for $8,000 that saves you $455 a month this year. Sellers say yes to that more often — and you get the house." Script for the listing agent: "My buyer will come to your number if your seller funds a temporary buydown. It's less than the price cut you'd otherwise see, and your comp stays intact."

Redfin: Holiday Season Is the Best Time for Homebuyers to Score a Deal in These 7 Metros →

6. THE PHALANX TAKE

Prices just blinked. Rates eased. The buyer finally has both. For the first time since 2023, the national sale price is below where it was a year ago, and it happened in the same week the 30-year fixed hit its lowest level since late September. That combination — softer prices and a lower rate at the same time — is what every buyer who stepped back in September said they were waiting for. It is here now, and it is not going to announce itself. Indiana contracts are down 17%, Atlanta's are down 26%, Orlando's September sales fell 6%, and agents nationally report the second-largest pipeline drop on record. That is

the sound of a market where the person who shows up gets to negotiate. On a $350,000 loan the rate move since October 7 is worth $82 a month; a seller-funded buydown is worth $455. Price cuts are on 43% of listings. New construction is sitting at 8.4 months of supply with a median price down 3.9% from a year ago. Sellers in our three markets have two choices, and they are the same two as last week: price to the 43%, or be the listing that becomes next month's price cut. Washington gave us a Fed that held, two members who wanted to hike, and a chair who will not say what December holds — but the mortgage market has stopped waiting on the Fed and started trading on oil and tech stocks. That makes Tuesday's election, Wednesday's Treasury refunding, and Friday's jobs report the three events that set the rate for the rest of the year. For buyers who can write this week: the number is the best since September 23, the seller is more motivated than at any point this fall, and the two-week window before Thanksgiving is when the serious ones get it done. For sellers: the buyer who shows up in November is real. Treat them that way. Dates to keep: November 3 for Election Day and Amendment 3, November 4 for the Treasury refunding and MBA, November 5 for Freddie Mac, November 6 for the jobs report and NAR NXT, November 8 for the Colts and Cowboys, November 11 for REALTORS® Relief, November 25 for Florida bridge loans and the next GDP estimate, December 9 for the Fed, December 31 for Florida residency, and January 7 for the investor ban.

Rates set the cost. Inventory sets the leverage. Strategy has to be local.

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