



HOMEOWNERSHIP:

- > The housing downturn hasn't affected the way Americans view homeownership. A recent *New York Times/CBS News Poll* found that nearly nine in 10 Americans say homeownership is an important part of the American dream. Another recent poll showed that even a majority of renters (67 percent) and those with underwater mortgages (65 percent) agreed homeownership is the best long-term investment.
- > With nine out of 10 REALTORS® planning to stay in the real estate business, according to NAR's 2011 Member Profile, REALTORS® aren't jumping ship; instead, they're becoming more proficient. According to the profile, 35 percent of REALTORS® now hold at least one of NAR's six certifications – that's an increase of 11 percent from a year ago.
- > For the past three decades, buyers could expect to spend approximately 25 percent of their monthly gross income on a mortgage. Today, the number has declined to 17 percent. And that message has been received: Nearly 70 percent of Americans say now is a good time to buy a home.

ECONOMY:

- > North Carolina's business climate continues to garner national praise. *Chief Executive Magazine* recently ranked N.C. the second best state to do business, second only to Texas. What's more – CNBC recently followed suit and ranked N.C.'s business environment third in the nation, trailing only Virginia and Texas.

- > How's this for a surprise? Amid a blitz of doom and gloom in the news, N.C. actually enjoyed economic growth in 2010. Specifically, the Tar Heel State registered a 3.4 percent increase last year in gross state product – making it one of only 14 states to experience economic growth of 3 percent or more between 2009 and 2010.
- > Despite the recession's effect on jobs, N.C. is faring far better than other states. During the past decade, N.C. has added the second largest number of financial jobs and the third largest number of public sector jobs in the nation. The same goes for personal finances – North Carolina ranks 10th for long-term economic growth over the past half-century.

FORECLOSURE:

- > More homeowners are staying current on their mortgage. In May 2010, 18.3 percent of mortgages were 30 days past due. This May, approximately 8 percent of mortgages were 30 days past due.
- > In N.C., the wave of foreclosures is steadily declining. In May, foreclosures on homes fell 38.3 percent from the same month a year ago and were down 3.4 percent from April.