



PREPARING A RURAL PROPERTY FOR A SHOWING

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By Hayden Outdoors

Hayden Outdoors real estate broker Pat Doyle speaks the language of rural properties fluently, mainly because he's spent most of his life on them. First growing up on the shores of a rural lake in Michigan where he and his three brothers would go straight from school to the wilds beyond, exploring until sundown. Then onto Northern Colorado when he took a position with Hayden Outdoors. He and his wife raised their two children in Middle Tennessee, a state he opened for Hayden Outdoors in 2020.

Pat is an ideal person to talk to about preparing your rural property for a showing because he's so familiar with what it takes to make one great, and avoid common obstacles in the process. As he puts it, those sunrises spent hunting, fishing, and exploring – and the sunsets spent doing the same – helped create his love affair with the great outdoors. Pat recently answered some questions about some great ways to prepare a rural property for showing.

Our Interview with Pat Doyle

How can a seller effectively highlight the unique benefits of living in a rural location to prospective buyers?

Pat likes to work in partnership with the seller, highlighting what he knows most buyers are looking for: privacy, open space, seclusion, peace and quiet, and non-restrictive HOAs. Sometimes these aspects of a rural property are obvious, and other times, they're less so.



Pat has a keen eye for what makes a property particularly unique in a rural setting.

What are the most important outdoor areas to focus on when preparing a rural property for a showing?

Pat continually goes back to one of his golden rules when it comes to preparing a rural property for showing: "You never get a second chance to make a first impression." To this end, he emphasizes the importance of making sure the entrance is in great shape. The entrance can be a driveway, a gate, an archway, or a fenceline. Regardless, it needs to be in good condition. "I love a gated property for this reason. It oozes privacy and premium. It doesn't always have to be a big, crazy entrance, but even a gate with a keypad or clicker can add an extra dose of quality and charm."

Once inside the entrance to the property, Pat

works with sellers to prepare the surrounding grounds. This means a nicely manicured, mowed, and trimmed entrance area, whether it's 100-feet wide or 400-feet wide. Driveways should be well graveled or paved. The main point is to make sure the property is in its absolute best light. "Oftentimes, a buyer gets hooked before we even get into the house."

How can I enhance the curb appeal of a rural property, especially with larger plots of land?

Pat points to three main features that can really enhance a rural property, and discusses certain ways to emphasize those features in attention-grabbing ways.

Water

"I love having a water feature in a pond, such as a fountain. It keeps the water looking fresh and inhibits algae growth. It not only looks better, but it also feels richer and more luxurious. If you walk by, you can even get a mist from it – sights, sounds, smells!"

If the pond is the right water quality and depth, Pat also recommends stocking it with fish if it isn't already. "Even if it's just suited for kids, it's a really nice touch to be able to tie in some fishing recreation."

Pasture

If the grasses are starting to grow before a needed cut, explain to potential buyers the cut,

rake, bale, and cadence of growing hay, and use it as an opportunity to talk about revenue opportunities on the land.

Trees

Generally there are plenty of trees on a large rural property. Make sure all branches are picked up and any trails are nicely maintained. If you're lucky enough to work with Pat, he's happy to come help you. "I love being on the land. Growing up, my dad would tell us to leave something better than you found it. I take that to heart when I prepare and sell a property."



How can you address any outbuildings or additional structures on the property?

When it comes to outbuildings on a property, Pat likes to prepare. He wants to know the sizes, features, materials, and end uses. "I want to become very knowledgeable on the outbuildings and what the current uses and potential uses are. Remember, some of these buyers are coming into this environment for the first time. I like to provide them solid guidance." When preparing these buildings for the seller, it's no different than getting the main house ready. Pay similar care and attention to repairing, cleaning, and staging.

What are some effective ways to showcase the natural features of the land during a showing?

As part of his rural property prep, Pat shows up to showings very prepared to educate buyers on the lay of the land. He likes to bring a large vinyl map that shows the entirety of the property and dovetail this with real-time GPS movement on his iPad as he moves clients through the area. This helps orient buyers and lets Pat familiarize them with the expansiveness of a large piece of property.

What are the best ways to prepare any residences on the property?

"We want everything to stand tall. We want to make sure we work with the seller to formulate a plan and hammer home those great first impressions." Pat offers a few things to keep in mind:

Cleanliness

Make sure the property is clean and every detail is taken care of. This especially includes cleaning windows to ensure nothing distracts from natural vistas and beauty. "Premium rural properties reside in amazingly beautiful settings. The goal is to make it feel as though you're bringing the outdoors in."

Views

Pat likes to walk through and make sure that there isn't anything obstructing beautiful views. "We want it to look fresh. Any money-shot views need to be clean and accessible from the outside, but also from the inside. We want to avoid a tractor sitting right in the middle of the view."

Closets

According to Pat, these can actually be a big deal. Spend time cleaning and organizing closets so they don't become a distraction for buyers walking through the house. In other words, declutter so a buyer can properly visualize the space.

How can I manage wildlife/animal encounters or rural pests during showings?

Horses and cattle should be out in pastures. If possible, consider having someone watch your dog, or at least put the dog outside while people are exploring the property. While it's rare, buyers can come in contact with wildlife during a showing. "If you're venturing out into the property, I would suggest going during low-activity times for animals, typically mid-day." If you're showing property known for bear activity, carry bear spray with you. It's a very rare occurrence, but better safe than sorry.

Should I provide any additional information or materials about local amenities or community features?

Amenities are an important aspect of a sale, even for those looking to get far, far away. People still need access to a grocery store,

medical care, and community. Pat likes to do his research and break amenities into two categories for rural properties:

1. Close: This doesn't always mean you'll have easy access to amenities, but Pat notes that including a list of possibilities within a 10- or 20-minute drive is helpful. Learn in which school system your property is located.
2. A Little Farther: Rural properties might have relatively easy access to small shops, local medical clinics, and a single restaurant, but not far down the road, they can maybe access larger infrastructure, such as a major hospital, big box stores, and chain restaurants. Pat recommends making a brochure of amenities for buyers.

What are some common misconceptions or concerns that buyers have about purchasing rural properties, and how can I address them during showings?

Most commonly, Pat notes access to utilities and high speed internet as things people can tend to overlook. "I like to make sure I've done my homework on utilities, specifically the internet. Most of the time these days, if there's power to the property, high speed internet fiber is probably already in place. If it's a remote location and the internet is not available, internet satellite options like Starlink have come a long way in the past few years."

It's also essential to understand water rights and availability on the property. The same goes for soils, making sure they're conducive to septic systems. And then of course, talk with your real estate professional about financing options available for rural properties.

How can a real estate professional help you navigate the process of buying and selling rural property?

"Knowledge is really key," says Pat. It's where the importance of a real estate professional helps with the entire process – understanding existing deeds, encroachments, boundary surveys, and zoning restrictions.

Pat sums it up this way when working with people to buy and sell rural property, "We are very familiar with their 'loves' of the property because we share those loves. We live and breathe rural, which means we can guide buyers in the particulars of what they need. Because this is our specialty, our enthusiasm for the land is contagious."