

Tips and resources for people wishing to buy or sell their home.

Join the NC Homeowners Alliance and Stay Informed!

This publication is just one way that the NC Homeowners Alliance provides information for people in North Carolina who own a home or who are striving to achieve the American Dream of homeownership.

The Alliance also has a website

(www.nchomeownersalliance.org) that provides tips and resources for people wishing to buy or sell their home. There are also hot tips and items of interest for homeowners and a simple link where people can enter their contact information to officially join. Thousands of North Carolinians are already part of the Alliance's database, and they receive information on a regular basis via e-mail and direct mail.

You can also find the Alliance on Facebook, so go to the NC Homeowners Alliance page and

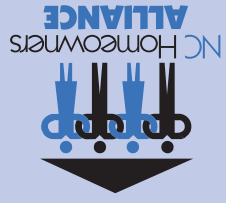
click "like." That will ensure that you receive ongoing information regarding issues that are important to homeowners. Are you worried that the mortgage interest deduction could be in jeopardy? Do you want to learn more about how to maintain your home – your most valuable investment? These are just some of the numerous issues that are addressed through our communications with our Alliance members.

The Alliance is brought to you by the NC Association of REALTORS® because REALTORS® are on the front-line every day to protect private property rights and housing affordability in North Carolina. That's why they want to provide the NC Homeowners Alliance as a resource for information that's timely and valuable to homeowners in our state. ■

Our Mission and Goals

The NC Homeowners Alliance is a non-partisan, nonprofit advocacy organization committed to representing homeowners and property owners in the state of North Carolina. Its mission is to advance and promote issues of concern to all North Carolina property owners.

The Alliance will work on behalf of property owners by means of education and advocacy. Through education, the Alliance will keep the state's citizens informed regarding issues that impact homeowners and homeownership in North Carolina. ■



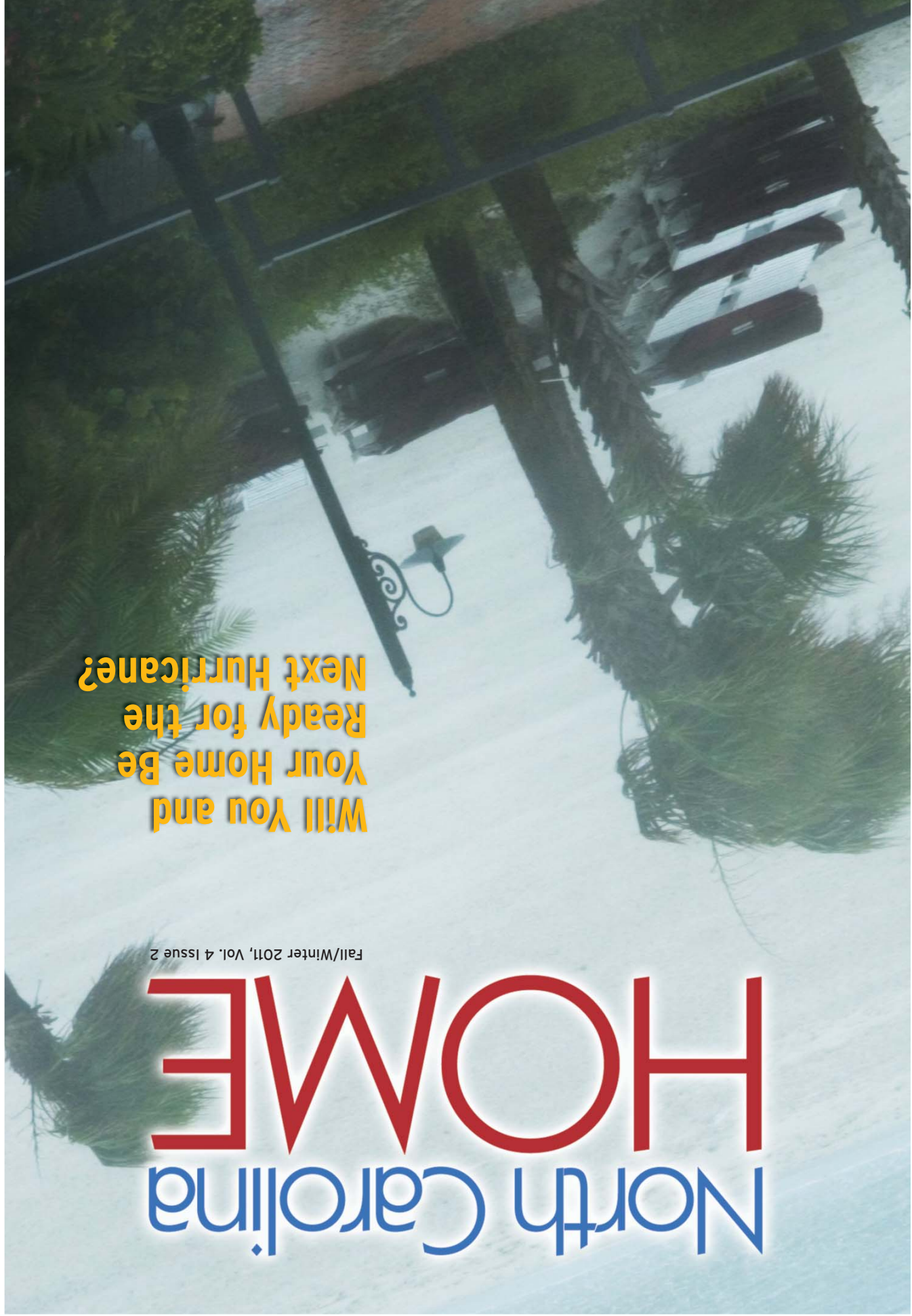
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Their address and your return address and/or logo can go in this space. To download additional copies, visit www.nchomeownersalliance.org.

North Carolina HOME

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Will You and Your Home Be Ready for the Next Hurricane?



Hurricanes in North Carolina are responsible for over \$1.1 billion in damage.

Prepare Before the Next Hurricane Strikes

North Carolina is no stranger to hurricanes, and the state is still feeling the effects of Hurricane Irene that hit the state in August. In fact, because of its location, the state is ranked fourth, after Florida, Texas and Louisiana, in the number of cyclones that produce hurricane force winds in a U.S. state. It's estimated that hurricanes in North Carolina history are responsible for over \$1.1 billion in damage and almost 1,000 total fatalities.

Consider the last three decades (the period from 1980 to the present) encompassed 110 tropical or subtropical cyclones that affected the state, according to the Hurricane Research Division of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Collectively, cyclones in North Carolina during the time period resulted in over \$10 billion in damage, primarily from hurricanes Fran and Floyd.

Tropical cyclones in North Carolina were responsible for 77 direct fatalities and at least 44 indirect casualties since 1980, and every year since then has included at least one tropical cyclone affecting the state. That's why it's critical for homeowners in North Carolina to be prepared before a hurricane hits their area. That's right. An advanced plan and a pre-emptive strategy will make a big difference in the event of a hurricane.

Start at the top
Your roof takes the brunt of a hurricane, which can pack winds in excess of 150 mph. These winds exert an uplift effect that can pull off roof shingles, tiles, or even the underlying roof deck. A well-maintained roof is better able to fend off high hurricane winds.

Begin by checking the roofing, either on the roof itself or from the ground with binoculars. If heights aren't your thing, you can hire a professional roofer for about \$175. Look for curled, loose, or missing shingles or roof tiles. Pay particular attention to the edges of the roof. These weak spots allow high winds to work loose other shingles – a domino effect that could really wreak havoc.

Next, check the attic. Look for points of light coming through the roof, which means gaps that can let in wind and water. Examine the rafters or trusses for protruding nail tips, which indicate that the plywood roof deck might not be properly secured against damage from hurricane winds.

Other ways to prepare:

- Check your emergency supplies and replace or restock as needed. Your disaster kit should contain items such as gallons of water and non-perishable, easy-to-prepare food.
- Create an evacuation plan with members of your household and practice it to prevent any confusion.
- Plan routes to your community's shelters (register family members with special needs as required).
- Make plans for your pets.

If a hurricane is predicted for your area:

- Bring items inside that can be picked up by the wind.
- Turn your refrigerator and freezer to the coldest settings and keep them closed as much as possible so food will last longer if the power goes out.
- Turn off any propane tanks and unplugging your small appliances.
- Fill your vehicle's gas tank.
- Close windows, doors and hurricane shutters. If you don't have hurricane shutters, close and board up your windows and doors with plywood.
- Listen to local authorities and evacuate if advised to do so. Be careful to avoid flooded roads and washed out bridges.

After a hurricane:

- Return home only when officials say it is safe.
- Keep away from loose or dangling power lines and report them to the power company.
- Stay out of any building that has water around it.
- Avoid drinking or preparing food with tap water until you're sure it's not contaminated.
- Keep your animals under your direct control.

Sources: www.houselogic.com, www.redcross.org and www.wikipedia.org

Home Base: News & Issue Briefs for Homeowners

Remodeling?

Review your remodeling contract carefully before work begins on your home. The essential purpose of a construction contract is to spell out the project's "scope of work." This is the document you and your contractor will consult throughout the job, so make sure it's as detailed as possible. The contract should state: contractor will secure all necessary permits and approvals; where and which walls will be moved; payment schedule; and work hours. Also, make sure the contract has specific start and finish dates.

U.S. Homes = International Appeal

Foreign buyers continue to view the U.S. as a desirable place to own property. According to the *2011 NAR Profile of International Home Buying Activity*, residential international sales in the U.S. from March 2010 to March 2011 accounted for \$82 billion, up from \$66 billion in 2010.

International buyers in the U.S. represented 70 countries, up from 53 in the previous survey. For the fourth year in a row, Canada was the top country of origin for foreign buyers, with 23 percent of sales. China was the second most popular country with 9 percent of sales. Mexico, the U.K., and India tied for third with seven percent.

Homeownership is attractive to foreign buyers for a variety of reasons. Homes in the states are generally less expensive than comparable foreign properties, and homes in this country are also viewed as secure investments with long-term appreciation potential and rental opportunities.

Keep Your Water Heater Healthy

To maintain the usefulness of your water heater longer, it's important to perform regular up-keep. Flush your water heater regularly to remove sediment, which hampers efficiency. To reduce heat loss, insulate exposed hot water pipes, and wrap older water heaters with an insulating blanket. Also, make sure to check the temperature control and set it at 120-140 degrees, or halfway between low and medium.

Mortgage Glossary Available

Abstract of Title? Adjustable-Rate Mortgage? Conversion Clauses? Indemnification? For people trying to decipher terms and phrases associated with their home mortgage, there is a helpful mortgage glossary available from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). To access the glossary, visit www.hud.gov and enter "mortgage glossary" in the "search" field.

Source: www.houselogic.com and www.hud.gov

Homeownership: It's Still Your Best Investment

Although the nation has suffered through an economic recession for almost five years now, Americans still consider homeownership a great investment. In a recent Pew Research Center survey conducted nationwide, 81 percent of those surveyed agree that buying a home is the best long-term investment that can be made.

About 24 percent of those who rent say they rent by choice, yet more than 80 percent say they would like to buy.

More evidence of the durability of Americans' belief in homeownership comes from a question in which respondents are asked to assess the importance of four long-term financial goals. Homeownership and "being able to live comfortably in retirement" are rated the highest; each is seen as being extremely or very important by 80 percent of respondents.

"A home is more than a financial investment. It's a place to raise a family, an anchor of community life, a haven for retirement, an emblem of the American dream" the Pew report states. "When survey respondents say it's the best long-term investment a person can make, it's likely they are making evaluations that go beyond dollars and cents." The report does state, however, for most Americans, their biggest investment are their homes and their stock holdings, with the latter typically in the form of a 401(k) plan or some other retirement account. And while stocks can produce a better return during some periods of time, the housing market has avoided the significant swings that the stock market tends to experience.

Source: <http://pewresearch.org>

Americans still consider homeownership a great investment.