

# Go inside Houston homes listed at the city's average price, \$300,000

Houston homes priced at the city's average of nearly \$300,000 are anything but average.

More precisely, the average price for a local single-family house is \$294,500, up by 3.5 percent year-over-year, according to the Houston Association of Realtors. The median price also rose by 3.6 percent to \$234,653. Both of these house prices are the highest on record for October in Houston.

October's best-selling segment was the luxury market — homes priced at \$750,000 and above — which skyrocketed by 12 percent. The only segment that saw a decrease was homes priced at \$150,000 and below.

Here's a detailed breakdown of October sales by segment:

- \$1 - \$99,999: decreased 9.0 percent
- \$100,000 - \$149,999: decreased 5.3 percent
- \$150,000 - \$249,999: increased 3.9 percent
- \$250,000 - \$499,999: increased 11.6 percent



\$500,000 - \$749,999: increased 8.3 percent  
 \$750,000 and above: increased 12.0 percent  
 "With August and September home sales figures skewed by the effects of Hurricane Harvey, October seemed to mark a return to normalcy in terms of overall market activity," HAR chair Kenya Burrell-VanWormer said in a prepared statement. "However, we are prepared for slower sales as

we wrap up 2018, between the tight supply of homes and the fact that we typically see less activity around the holidays." As for leased homes, average rent for single-family homes declined to \$1,754. Townhomes and condominium rents rose to \$1,550.

# Houston police union files lawsuit to block Prop B

Courthouse officials were scrambling to find a judge Friday afternoon to hear a lawsuit by the Houston Police Officers Union against the city of Houston and the Houston Professional Fire Fighters Association, that seeks an immediate halt to implementation of a voter-approved ballot initiative that would give Houston firefighters "pay parity" to police officers of similar status.

The lawsuit, filed midday Friday in the 234th state district civil court, seeks to block "Proposition B," arguing it amounts to an unconstitutional amendment to Houston's charter, and was void from the start. After hearing initial argument by the police union lawyer to put on the

brakes, State District Judge Wesley Ward indicated to lawyers he planned to recuse himself and needed to find another judge in the building who could take over. Ward, a Republican who was voted out last month on the same ballot with Proposition B, reportedly told attorneys in chambers he had a conflict of interest because he planned to join a law firm where one of the attorneys on the case works. "We would have preferred to address these issues in court prior to Proposition B being voted on, but under state law, this is the earliest opportunity we have had to assert these claims," HPOU

President Joe Gamaldi said, in an emailed statement. "Regardless, we believe that it is critical to stop the implementation of Proposition B. Its sudden and drastic financial impact puts all essential city services at risk, including fire and police protection." The 25-page suit argues that the pay-parity charter amendment is unconstitutional because it "is preempted by and directly conflicts" with state law requiring that firefighters be paid to comparable private sector employment, as well as posing an "irreconcilable conflict" with state law because it ties firefighter compensation to those of other public sector employees, and further conflicts with state law because the two professions do not require "the same or similar skills, ability, and training."

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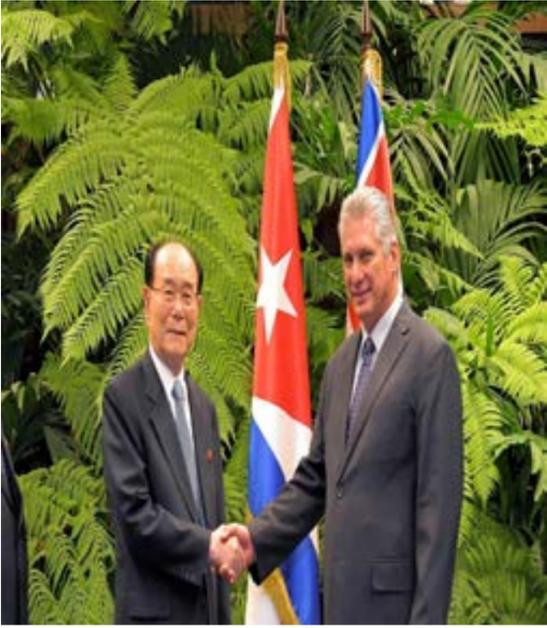
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# Editor's Choice



North Korea's President of the Supreme People's Assembly Kim Yong Nam meets with Cuba's President Miguel Diaz-Canel in Havana



An illuminated artwork is seen at Salisbury Cathedral as it celebrates the beginning of Advent following a candle-lit service and procession, "From Darkness to Light"



Demonstrators march during the Group 20 summit, in Buenos Aires, Argentina November 30, 2018. REUTERS/Agustin Marcarian



Boxing - Deontay Wilder & Tyson Fury Weigh-In - Los Angeles Convention Center, Los Angeles, United States - November 30, 2018 Tyson Fury and Deontay Wilder during head to head after the weigh in Action Images via Reuters/Andrew Couldridge



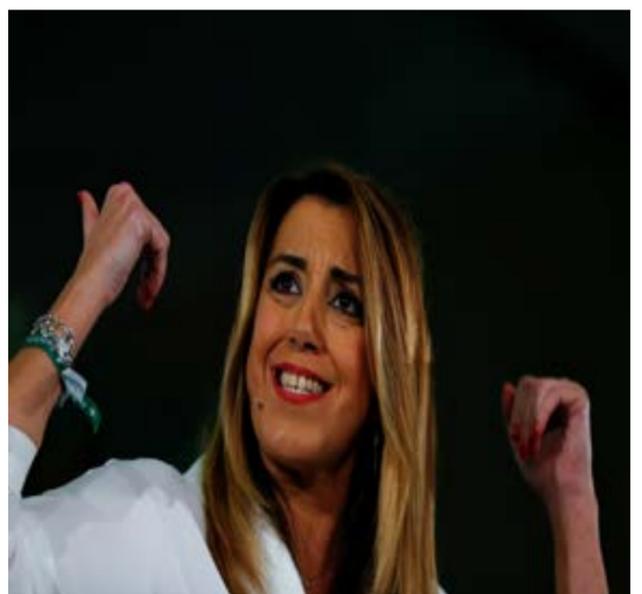
A migrant, part of a caravan of thousands from Central America trying to reach the United States, speaks with other migrants before being transferred by bus to a new shelter in Tijuana



Demonstrators shout slogans during the Group 20 summit, in Buenos Aires, Argentina November 30, 2018. REUTERS/Andres Martinez Casares TEMPLATE OUT



A woman takes a selfie with Shirlyne Wangari and Rebecca Zawadi before the Mr & Miss Albinism Kenya Beauty Pageant 2018 in Nairobi



Andalusian Regional President Susana Diaz gives a speech during the final campaign rally for the Andalusian regional elections in Sevilla

## Some Charities Are Running Out Of Space For Donations From Good Samaritans

# The Best Way To Donate To Victims Of The California Wildfires

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor



The wildfires in California have killed close to 80 people, and hundreds more are missing.

Even when you donate, there's a right way and a wrong way.

California is suffering the deadliest wildfire in state history, with more than 50 people dead and hundreds more missing. The wildfire, known as the Camp Fire, has scorched 135,000 acres in Northern California's Butte County, while a separate fire in the southern part of the state has burned Ventura and Los Angeles counties. President Donald Trump approved disaster aid for the state, where more than 7,000 structures have burned and another 15,000 are at risk. The fire was 35% contained as of Wednesday afternoon, according to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.

Americans are rushing to donate supplies, food and clothes to help victims. But organizations including the American Red Cross and the Humane Society say victims need cash more than anything else. "We all want to help the victims of the #CampFire, but please don't send supplies, as the evacuation centers say they have been inundated," Darrell Steinberg, mayor of Sacramento, tweeted. (Sacramento is 90 miles away from the fires.)

**Darrell Steinberg**  
@Mayor\_Steinberg  
We all want to help the victims of the #CampFire, but please don't send supplies, as the evacuation centers say they have been inundated. Those working on the front lines say giving to the @RedCross or @Habitat\_org is the best way to help. <https://www.sacbee.com/news/state/california/article221539745.html> ...



Volunteers at evacuation centers aiding

people fleeing California wildfires say they're inundated by well-meaning, but useless donations of clothing and other supplies. They suggest sending money or a gift.

Though Good Samaritans may feel the impulse to help people replace the possessions they lost in the fire, cash is actually the most useful type of assistance, charities said.

"After a disaster hits, the American Red Cross witnesses the incredible generosity of people from across the country who want to help in any way they can with donations of items like clothes, shoes, food and household items, but the reality is, cash donations are best," the Red Cross said in a statement.

Officials in California say the victims of the fires would benefit from gift cards to Walmart, WMT, -2.41% Target, TGT, -9.68% gas stations or grocery stores, as well as other stores in the affected areas, including the grocery store Raley's, Food Maxx, Grocery Outlet, Rite-Aid, RAD, -4.24% CVS, CVS, -3.24% Walgreens, Dollar General, DG, -4.63% Dollar Tree, DLTR, -2.49% and Big Lots, BIG, -5.34%

In Southern California, where the Woolsey Fire has ravaged communities, the Humane Society of Ventura County said it was stocked with supplies, but will need more money for items like pet food. Actress Sandra Bullock donated \$100,000 to HSVC, which is caring for cats, dogs, donkeys, pigs, horses, chickens, ducks and other pets displaced by the fire. (The organization will care for these animals until the owners can reunite with them, it said.)



Krystin Harvey, left, comforts her daughter Araya Cipollini at the remains of their home burned in the Camp Fire, Saturday, Nov. 10, 2018, in Paradise, Calif. (Photo/AP)

The Chico, Calif.-based North Valley Community Foundation, which is supporting evacuation centers near the Camp Fire, said there wasn't enough storage space for donations of clothing or blankets. "If you have any ability to contribute financially to our fire relief fund, this is the time," Alexa Benson-Valavanis, president and chief executive officer of NVCF, said in a statement.

Butte County is still accepting material donations, but officials would prefer new items, said Holli Drobny, a member of the county's public information office. The county also asks that donors separate clothes by gender and size so they can be distributed faster to people who need them, Drobny said. Still, cash and Visa V, -1.31% gift cards are most helpful, she said.

"Our community has definitely pulled through to provide for evacuees, but it was taking too much time to get more organized and see what's feasible for people to actually utilize," she said. (Courtesy <https://www.marketwatch.com>)

### Related

Generous but useless dona-

tions are flooding wildfire evacuation centers. Here's what to send.

November 12, 2018 11:01 AM - When evacuation centers aiding California residents fleeing the rapacious Camp Fire put out a call for donations, people responded. And responded, and responded, and responded.

Now center coordinators are asking donors to stop sending supplies, reported The Redding Record-Searchlight.

"We have buildings full of stuff," said Kathy Ingvaldsen at the Butte County Fairgrounds, according to the publication. "In four hours, we filled up a 5,000-square-foot building full of clothes. They're stacked up on tables five feet high."



Other well-meaning but misguided donors are inundating evacuation centers with used, unneeded or useless goods, reported The Redding Record-Searchlight.

"The impulse from people to help is incredible; it's very strong, but the best way to do so is by donating through the Habitat for Humanity fundraiser or through the Red Cross," said Chuck Smith, public information officer for Sutter County, which also has opened a shelter, reported The Marysville Appeal-Democrat.

"Cash donations and gift cards offer more flexibility," Smith said, according to the publication. "Gift cards to places like Target or Walmart can help someone buy clothes or other items they might have left out of their go-bags."

Gift cards for gas stations, supermarkets and pharmacies also can be useful for evacuees, said Stephanie Hayden, of Hope Center, which organizes donations in Oroville, California, reported The Redding Record-Searchlight.

Hayden said shelters do still need some specific items, such as new underclothes — particularly for women — backpacks, duffel bags and luggage, reported the publication.

The Camp Fire, which erupted Thursday in Butte County, has burned 113,000 acres, killed 29 people and destroyed 6,453 homes as of Monday morning, reported the California Department of Forestry and Fire protection.

The fire virtually wiped the foothill town of Paradise off the map, sending thousands of residents fleeing to evacuation centers. Relief workers call the all-but-inevitable avalanche of generous but useless donations following a fire, flood or hurricane "the second disaster," reported National Public Radio.

Meghan O'Hara with the American Red Cross recalls receiving a box of donated Frisbees from Germany as she oversaw relief efforts in earthquake-shattered Haiti in 2010, NPR reported.



"Wow. That \$60 or \$70 could have been sent to so many different organizations to help out in so many different ways, and now we have a box of Frisbees," O'Hara said, according to the station.

Writing on Medium, Karen Merzenich described volunteering at an evacuation center following the devastating 2017 fires in Napa and Santa Rosa, California.

"I spent a fulfilling day... boxing up literally thousands of surplus donations of deodorant and toothpaste," she wrote. "Around noon, I suggested to the organizers that they might want to start turning away donations. 'Did you know we've received at least 2,000 sticks of deodorant?' I asked. (Courtesy <https://www.sacbee.com>)

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# CDC Says Romaine Lettuce Likely Source Of E. Coli Outbreak

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

Health officials say chopped romaine lettuce from the Yuma, Arizona growing region is the likely source of the current E. coli outbreak that has now sickened people in 11 states, and they're warning consumers across the country to avoid eating lettuce that may have been contaminated.

According to the latest update from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, so far there have been 35 cases of illness, 22 of which led to hospitalizations. Three people have developed a severe complication -- a type of kidney failure called hemolytic uremic syndrome (HUS) which can be life-threatening. The outbreak involves a particularly dangerous strain of the bacteria known as Shiga toxin-producing E. coli O157:H7.

"Information collected to date indicates that chopped romaine lettuce from the Yuma, Arizona growing region could be contaminated with E. coli O157:H7 and could make people sick," the CDC said in a statement.

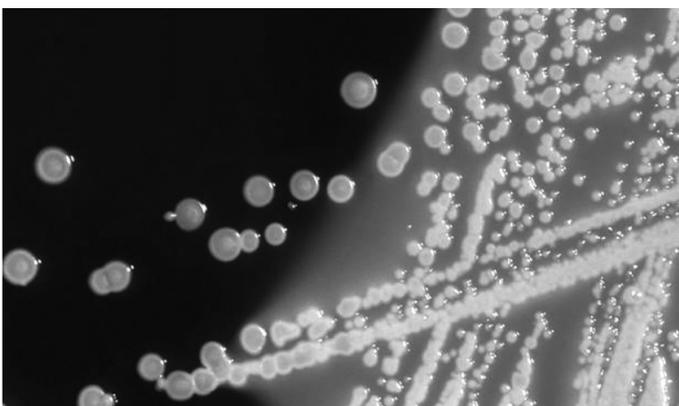
No common grower, supplier, or distributor has been identified yet. State and local public health investigators continue interviewing ill people to determine what they ate and how they might have been exposed. So far, cases of illness from this outbreak have been reported in Connecticut, Idaho, Illinois, Michigan, Missouri, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Washington.



**Bundled Romaine lettuce (left photo) and when chopped for bagged salads.**

**Romaine Lettuce Warning**

To keep yourself and your family safe, the CDC recommends avoiding any romaine lettuce products that could be contaminated. It issued a wide-ranging caution, not limited to any specific brand or retailer:



**Colonies of E. coli bacteria seen in a microscopic image. (Photo/ CDC Via Reuters)**

"Consumers anywhere in the United States who have store-bought chopped romaine lettuce at home, including salads and salad mixes containing chopped romaine lettuce, should not eat it and should throw it away, even if some of it was eaten and no one has gotten sick. If you do not know if the lettuce is romaine, do not eat it and throw it away."

In addition, before buying romaine lettuce at a grocery store or ordering it at a restaurant, check to see if it came from the Yuma, Arizona growing region. If you cannot confirm it isn't from Yuma, do not purchase it.

The CDC urged restaurants and retailers to ask their suppliers about the source of their chopped romaine lettuce, and not to sell any chopped romaine lettuce, including salads and salad mixes containing it, from the Yuma, Arizona growing region. Officials note this outbreak is not related to another recent multi-state outbreak also linked to leafy greens, which involved



**Romaine Lettuce**

**Symptoms of E. coli**

Symptoms of an E. coli infection include diarrhea, which can be bloody, severe stomach cramps and vomiting. It typically takes an average of three to four days to get sick after eating contaminated food, and the illness usually clears up within a week. However, sometimes it can linger longer and serious complications can develop.

Signs of hemolytic uremic syndrome (HUS) include fever, abdominal pain, pale skin tone, fatigue and irritability, unexplained bruises or bleeding from the nose and mouth, and decreased urination. These complications are more common in young children under 5, older adults, and people with weakened immune systems.

Anyone experiencing these symptoms should seek medical care immediately. (Courtesy <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/>)

**Related**

**Health Advisory From The Centers For Disease Control**

**Multistate Outbreak of E. coli O157:H7 Infections Linked to Chopped Romaine Lettuce**



**Highlights**

Information collected to date indicates that chopped romaine lettuce from the Yuma, Arizona growing region could be contaminated with E. coli O157:H7 and could make people sick.

At this time, no common grower, supplier, distributor, or brand has been identified.

**Advice to Consumers:**

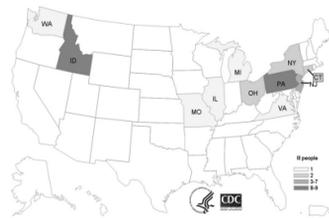
Consumers anywhere in the United States who have store-bought chopped romaine lettuce at home, including salads and salad mixes containing chopped romaine lettuce, should not eat it and should throw it away, even if some of it was eaten and no one has gotten sick. If you do not know if the lettuce is romaine, do not eat it and throw it

away. Before purchasing romaine lettuce at a grocery store or eating it at a restaurant, consumers should confirm with the store or restaurant that it is not chopped romaine lettuce from the Yuma, Arizona growing region. If you cannot confirm the source of the romaine lettuce, do not buy it or eat it.

**Advice to Restaurants and Retailers:**

Restaurants and retailers should not serve or sell any chopped romaine lettuce, including salads and salad mixes containing chopped romaine lettuce, from the Yuma, Arizona growing region.

Restaurants and retailers should ask their suppliers about the source of their chopped romaine lettuce.



**Table showing the number of ill people arranged by state of residence**

State	No. People
Connecticut	2
Idaho	8
Illinois	1
Michigan	1
Missouri	1
New Jersey	7
New York	2
Ohio	2
Pennsylvania	9
Virginia	1
Washington	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>

CDC, public health and regulatory officials in several states, and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration are investigating a multistate outbreak of Shiga toxin-producing Escherichia coli O157:H7 (E. coli O157:H7) infections.

Thirty-five people infected with the outbreak strain of E. coli O157:H7 have been reported from 11 states.

Twenty-two people have been hospitalized, including three people who have developed a type of kidney failure called hemolytic uremic syndrome.

No deaths have been reported.

This investigation is ongoing, and CDC will provide updates when more information is available. (Courtesy <https://www.cdc.gov/ecoli/2018>)

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