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U.S. home sales off, hurt by Harvey and low supply



A U.S. flag flies over a heavily damaged house following Hurricane Irma in Little Torch Key

U.S. home sales fell 1.7 percent in August, pulled down by the effects of Hurricane Harvey and a worsening shortage of available properties. The National Association of Realtors said this past

market's benefit to the housing industry. "Given that job growth has been steady and demand is still strong, there remains fundamental support for the housing market," said Jennifer

Lee, a senior economist at BMO Capital Markets. But, she added, the shortage of available homes will hamper sales. Over the past 12 months, sales have risen only 0.2 percent. Houston-area home sales

have plunged, largely because of the damage from Harvey - a decrease that could linger through 2018, the real estate group said. The median U.S. sales price has increased 5.6 percent from a year ago to \$253,500. Sales listings have tumbled 6.5 percent over the

past 12 months to 1.88 million. The supply of homes for sale should continue to decline through February because the winter and fall are generally slower for home sales.

The decline in housing supply is having "ripple effects throughout the economy," said Robert Frick, an economist with Navy Federal Credit Union.

Higher housing costs mean that "many people who want a new higher-paying job are finding that moving to a new city is too expensive," Frick said.

Because of declining supply, sales of homes that cost under \$250,000 have fallen over the past year. But in a sign of the widening wealth gap, sales of homes that cost more than \$500,000 have shot up by double digits. Homes are also selling quickly because of the lack of options for buyers. The average number of days on the market was 30 in August, down from 36 a year ago. Sales surged in the Northeast and increased modestly in the Midwest. But they plunged in the South and West.

World News

Trump pressures U.S. senators to back Republican healthcare bill

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - U.S. President Donald Trump on Saturday blasted Senator John McCain for dealing a possibly fatal blow to the latest Republican attempt to dismantle Obamacare. According to a new independent analysis, the bill awaiting a Senate vote could lead to 21 million fewer Americans having health insurance. McCain, an Arizona Republican who is being treated for brain cancer and cast a crucial "no" vote to defeat a similar bill in July, said on Friday that he could not "in good conscience" vote for the proposal authored by Republican Senators Bill Cassidy and Lindsey Graham. "He campaigned on Repeal & Replace. Let Arizona down!" Trump wrote about McCain on Twitter early Saturday morning. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell has said he will schedule a vote on the Graham-Cassidy bill by Sept. 30, the last day when it could pass in the chamber with a simple majority of 51 votes instead of the 60 typically required. The bill would take federal money spent on the Medicaid program for the poor and disabled, as well as subsidies to help individuals buy private insurance, and deliver it to the states in block grants.



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As Europe opts to publicly support genetically modified crops, Russia, who banned GMO's in 2016, has been ramping up its production and export of organic food. Russian President Vladimir Putin announced plans back in 2015 to make Russia the largest supplier of healthy, ecologically clean and high-quality food which Western producers "have long lost." An EU court ruled last week that Italy could not ban the cultivation of an EU-approved genetically modified crop. RT reports: "Recently the organic food market has definitely expanded in Russia. The organically produced food industry held a market valuation of \$178 million in 2015, an increase from 2010's \$116 million total," economist Iryna Kobuta at the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia told RT. "Euromonitor has also noticed increased spending on pre-packaged organic food and drink in Russia. 2015 saw consumers purchase close to \$12 million worth of packaged eco-foods. Russia exports organic buckwheat, millet, alfalfa, flax, and wildy grown products – including wild berries, mushrooms, cedar nuts, and herbs – to a variety of countries. Russia also exports organic wheat to the EU," she added. While Russia already has a significant share of the European market at around \$2 billion, or 11.8 percent of Russia's overall agricultural exports, there are obstacles in increasing that share, admits Kobuta.



Russian President Vladimir Putin announced plans back in 2015 to make Russia the largest supplier of healthy, ecologically clean and high-quality food "The main obstacles to increasing exports of agri-food goods to the EU market are non-conformity with EU food safety requirements, small tariff import quotas applied by EU for agricultural goods, infrastructural and regulatory issues. With regards to the export of organic products, in Russia there is no official certification system or certifying agency," the economist said.

Russia Set To Become Leading Global Organic Food Exporter



Due to lack of proper regulation in Russia, local producers keen to operate in organic food have to obtain official certification from third parties like the United States or the EU, to label their products as officially certified bio or organic, and be able to export them outside Russia, Kobuta said. The draft law "On the Production of Organic Agricultural Products and Amendments to Legislative Acts of the Russian Federation" has not yet been adopted. However, the situation has improved after Russia adopted the national standard for organic products, she added. (Courtesy yournewswire.com)

Related
Europe sees future in GMO As Russia looks to become leading organic food exporter

"Euromonitor has noticed increased spending on pre-packaged organic food and drink in Russia. 2015 saw consumers



purchase close to \$12 million worth of packaged eco-foods. Russia exports organic buckwheat, millet, alfalfa, flax, and wildy grown products – including wild berries, mushrooms, cedar nuts, and herbs – to a variety of countries. Russia also exports organic wheat to the EU," she added. While Russia already has a significant share of the European market at around \$2 billion, or 11.8 percent of Russia's overall agricultural exports, there are obstacles in increasing that share, admits Kobuta. "The main obstacles to increasing exports of agri-food goods to the EU market are non-conformity with EU food safety requirements, small tariff import quotas applied by EU for agricultural goods, infrastructural and regulatory issues. With regards to the export of organic products, in Russia there is no official certification system or certifying agency," the economist said. Due to lack of proper regulation in Russia, local producers keen to operate in organic food have to obtain official certification from third parties like the United States or the EU, to label their products as officially certified bio or organic, and be able to export them outside Russia, Kobuta said. The draft law "On the Production of Organic Agricultural Products and Amendments to Legislative Acts of the Russian

Federation" has not yet been adopted. However, the situation has improved after Russia adopted the national standard for organic products, she added. Last week, an EU court ruled Italy cannot ban the cultivation of an EU-approved genetically modified crop, thus publicly supporting GMO. At the same time, Russia has been ramping up production and export of organic food. GMO has been banned in Russia since 2016. "Recently the organic food market has definitely expanded in Russia. The organically produced food industry held a market valuation of \$178 million in 2015, an increase from 2010's \$116 million total," economist Iryna Kobuta at the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia told RT. (Courtesy https://www.rt.com/business)

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Non- GMO Soybean Market Forecast To 2022 Detailed In New Research Report

The Global Non- GMO Soybeans Market Research Report 2017 renders deep perception of the key regional market status of the Non- GMO Soybeans Industry on

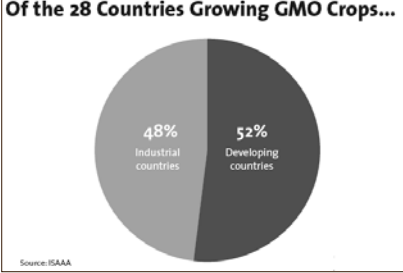
a global level that primarily aims the core regions which comprises of continents like Europe, North America, and Asia and the key countries such as United States, Germany, China and Japan.



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The study, besides estimating the Non-Gmo Soybeans market potential till 2022, analyzes on who can be the market leaders and what partnerships would help them to capture the market share. The report gives an overview about the dynamics of the market, by discussing various aspects such as drivers, restraints, Porter's 5 forces, value chain, customer acceptance and investment scenario.



The Global Non- Gmo Soybeans Industry report can be obtained by contacting https://www.qyresearchgroups.com.

休斯敦中国人活动中心（华助中心）、美南报业集团、
中国驻休斯敦总领馆关于
评选表彰休斯敦中国人社区抗洪救灾先进典型的公告

2017年8月至9月，大休斯敦地区遭遇数百年不遇的“哈维”飓风侵袭，当地民众受灾严重。在抗洪救灾过程中，休斯敦中国人社区涌现出一批先进典型个人和团体，为救助受困民众和开展灾后重建作出了贡献。为表彰先进，弘扬正气，休斯敦中国人活动中心（华助中心）、美南报业集团、中国驻休斯敦总领馆联合举办评选表彰休斯敦中国人社区抗洪救灾先进。典型活动现就有关事项公告如下：

一、评选范围、名额和条件：

- （一）评选范围：在大休斯敦地区直接投入2017年8月至9月“哈维”飓风抗洪救灾抢险及灾后重建的华侨华人个人和团体。
- （二）评选名额：在推荐、自荐基础上，经三家主办单位评议，评选出抗洪救灾先进典型个人和团体总共20名（每个团体作为一个评选名额）进行表彰。
- （三）评选条件：

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以团体名义参加评选的，原则上团体成员不再以个人名义参加评选。

二、推荐评选程序

坚持自荐与推荐相结合，坚持公开、公平、公正的原则进行。

- （一）符合条件的个人、团体，可自荐参加评选。
 - （二）大休斯敦地区各华侨华人团体、企业、机构和个人，均可推荐符合条件的其他个人，团体参加评选。
 - （三）自荐或推荐，均须填写“评选表彰休斯敦中国人社区抗洪救灾先进典型自荐/推荐表”（含事迹材料约字300-500）。表格可在休斯敦中国人活动中心（华助中心）网站下载：HTTP://chineseciviccenter.org/。
 - （四）自荐/推荐表填毕后，请以电子邮件方式，提交至休斯敦中国人活动中心（华助中心）或美南报业集团任何一个报名邮箱即可：
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4，报名截止日期10月5日（星期四）。报名截止后，三家主办单位将对自荐/推荐材料进行审核，并开展必要的核实，征求意见工作，在此基础上确定入选对象。

三、表彰办法：

评选出的先进典型个人及团体，将受邀出席中国驻休斯敦总领馆10月中旬举行的表彰座谈会，由总领馆颁发奖杯。评选出的先进典型个人及团体，还将受邀出席休斯敦国际区举办的“哈维飓风国际区救灾募资音乐会”由国际区予以表彰。

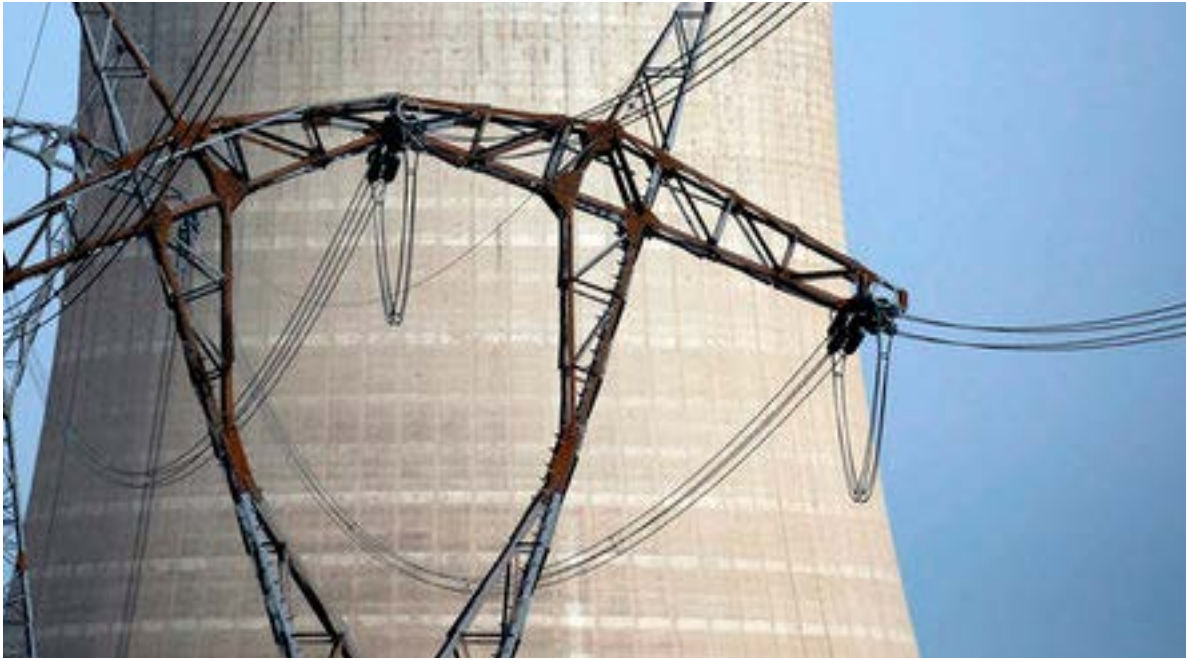
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A Snapshot Of The World



Members of the association his-torical recreation Frente del Nalon participate in the recreation of the battle “La Loma del Pando\



High-tension electrical power lines are seen near the Golfech nuclear plant on the border of the Garonne River between Agen and Toulouse, France



Dogs and their handlers line up to register for the Surf City Surf Dog contest in Huntington Beach



Atlanta, GA, USA; Brooks Koepka blasts out of the sand onto the 5th green during the third round of the Tour Championship golf tournament at East Lake Golf Club



Melania Trump attends the opening ceremony of the Invictus Games in Toronto, Canada



A dog named JoJo the Corgi with his owner Michael Uy are seen before compet-ing in the Surf City Surf Dog contest in Huntington Beach



Rock fans attend the Rock in Rio Music Festival in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil September 23



Frank M. Young, a tireless arbiter of American musical theater and the founder of Houston's Theatre Under The Stars, died last Wednesday in Palm Springs, Calif. He was 77. He has no immediate survivors. Memorial service arrangements are pending.

Considered by some to be one of the most influential theater leaders in the country, Frank Young was a buoyant showman and a relentless champion of the musical theater art form. In 1968, Young founded TUTS as an open-to-the-public musical theater company that performed under the night sky at the then-new Miller Outdoor Theatre. He led the company to become one of the city's largest performing arts groups. While in Houston Young also founded the National Alliance for Musical Theatre in 1986, a New York-based company that advocates and provides services for the development of musical theater and includes 160 member organizations. After leaving Houston, Young became the first executive director of the 5th Avenue Musical Theatre Company in Seattle. Born on May 22, 1940, in Pasadena, Texas, Young graduated from Pasadena High School and went on to attend the University of Houston, the University of Texas and UCLA. Young had a stint at Houston Grand Opera,

where he worked as a production manager as well as occasionally singing and conducting for the company. He established TUTS with a performance of the musical "Bells Are Ringing." TUTS' first-ever show. Young would go on to producing more than 300 productions.



In 1972, he brought some performances indoors to Houston's Music Hall, as well as founding the Humphreys School of Musical Theatre, a branch of TUTS which offers students profes-

Frank M. Young, Founder Of Theatre Under The Stars, Dies At 77

sional musical theater training. In 2002, Young realized his dream in bringing performances into a state-of-the-art facility, the Hobby Center for the Performing Arts. He has won numerous awards, including the 2006 Lifetime Achievement Award from the American Federation of Musicians. He has commendations from President George H.W. Bush, Governor Ann Richards and five Houston mayors. Young was involved with TUTS until 2006. Three years ago, he moved to Palm Springs, where he co-owned and managed a resort hotel named Colt's Lodge. (Courtesy chron.com)

Related



About Theater Under The Stars

Theatre Under The Stars (TUTS) is Houston's acclaimed nonprofit musical theatre company whose mission is to enrich life through the experience of quality musical theatre and to positively impact lives beyond the stage through innovative education and community engagement programs. TUTS performs annually in Sarofim Hall and Zilkha Hall at the Hobby Center and at Miller Outdoor Theatre. TUTS was the first theatrical organization in Houston to perform free to the public when it was founded in 1968 at Miller Outdoor Theatre in Hermann Park and is the only Houston arts organization that has performed there free to the public every year since the theatre opened. Theatre Under the Stars (TUTS) is a year-round, professional, non-profit musical theatre



production company. It is located in Houston, Texas, performing mostly at the Hobby Center for the Performing Arts. Theatre Under The Stars' season generally includes both self-produced shows as well as national touring productions. While best known for their main stage shows at the Hobby Center in Downtown Houston, and their annual free summer shows at the Miller Outdoor Theatre, it also offers educational programming through their training branch (The Humphreys School of Musical Theatre / HSMT), education programs for children with special needs through The River, and a wide array of community outreach projects. Founded by Frank M. Young in 1968, TUTS is currently under the direction of Interim Managing Director, Joel Szulc; Chief Development Officer, Carol Ostlind Thornburg; Director of Marketing & Brand Strategy, Jeff Cleveland; Director of Business Development and Community Relations, Melissa Edwards; and Artistic Advisor, Sheldon Epps. TUTS has offered free public performances in the Miller Outdoor Theatre in Hermann Park each year since 1968 (deriving its name from these outdoor performances), giving 48 free large-scale musicals there through July 2010. To date, TUTS has produced more than 300 musicals including many local, national and world premieres such as Kopit and Yeston's Phantom, Disney's Beauty and the Beast, and Irving Berlin's White Christmas. TUTS has also produced international tours including Debbie Reynolds in The Unsinkable Molly Brown, Juliet Prowse in Mame, Robert Goulet in Man of La Mancha, as well as local re-inventions of classics Cabaret and Les Miser-

ables. The Humphreys School of Musical Theatre (HSMT) provides instruction and stage experience for more than 1,700 students annually, offering year-round programs through both open-enrollment and audition-based classes. In 2016, Dave Clemmons became the newly appointed Dean of School for HSMT. TUTS operates an apprentice conservatory training program for high school students who may not be exposed to musical theatre at their schools. Housed in the Hobby Center for the Performing Arts, TUTS also annually presents the Tommy Tune Awards, honoring the best and brightest in Houston's high school musical theatre programs.



In addition to on-site educational programming at the Hobby Center, TUTS also brings musical theatre education into the community through local hospitals, schools and community centers throughout the greater Houston area. Theatre Under The Stars merged with The River Performing and Visual Arts Center in 2010, creating a barrier free arts education model for non-profit musical theatre performing arts organizations. With the merger, TUTS Education now provides extended on-site programming as well as off-site programming for children in schools, hospitals and other community-based sites. (Courtesy Wikipedia)

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7 tips to avoid scams when you rebuild from Harvey

By Texas Association of REALTORS®



Vera Hsiung cleans off her husband, Elliot Wu's, neck and face as they clean out their home which was flooded with water for twelve days in the aftermath of tropical storm Harvey in west Houston

Ensure you're working with legitimate professionals, whether rebuilding your own home or sharing these tips with clients.

Be suspicious of builders who contact you first. A person knocking on your door may say he's a contractor, but how do you know? Ask for identification, and look up the phone number of the business the person claims to represent and call that place.

Don't provide personal information. Unless you've initiated contact with a company, don't respond to texts, phone calls, or other requests for your personal information.

Avoid contractors who offer to waive deductibles or handle your insurance claims. They could be submitting false information to your insurance company or violating other laws.

Talk to your neighbors. If your property needs repair, it's likely that your neighbors' properties incurred damage, too. Ask what companies they're using and what they're paying.

Get it in writing. Get written estimates from at least two contractors that include a description of the work, required materials, start and end dates, price, payment schedule, and the company name and contact

information.

Don't pay up front. Contractors usually request a downpayment to start work; however, your final payment shouldn't be made until the job is finished.

Trust your instincts. If something seems "off" about a person or company, take your business elsewhere.

There are still Texans in need, and you can help them by donating to the Texas REALTORS' Relief Fund—100% of the money goes to help those affected by Harvey.

State Senator Garcia and Council Member Gallegos Joined Houston Security Officers and Janitors to Release Report on Allegations of Wage Theft by City Contractors at Tax-Payer

Houston: Earlier today, janitors and security officers were joined by State Senator Sylvia Garcia and Houston City Council Member Robert Gallegos for a round table discussion about a report on alleged wage theft by City contractors. "Today we are releasing a report titled 'Protecting Our Paychecks' about wage theft and how it hurts the workers of our city," said Elsa Caballero, President of SEIU Texas and moderator of the round table discussion. "We uncovered 35 cases of potential wage theft in just the last 6 months, so clearly there is a crisis. And these cases are before our city was devastated by Hurricane Harvey." "While it's too soon for any in-depth research on wage issues related to the Hurricane," continued President Caballero, "we know problems exist from stories shared by our members and security officers and janitors protecting city facilities."

Unable to hold back her tears, Ms. Lee Poole, a security officer employed by Norred and Associates at Bush Intercontinental Airport, told the story of how she has been waiting for months for a resolution on the Inspector General's investigations into her claims of wage theft.

"I believe my employer has been underpaying me for years. I was already living paycheck to paycheck before the Hurricane, but after Harvey hit I lost everything--my car and apartment were completely flooded and I had to evacuate by boat." Norred and Associates provides contracted private security services at Houston Airports under a contract with the City of Houston, which also covers security services at municipal buildings such as courthouses and city hall.

Sasha Legette, Houston Business Liaison

with the Workers Defense Project, defined wage theft as "essentially any case in which a worker is not paid wages for which they are legally entitled" but clarified that it occurs in many forms – from misclassification of workers to workplace policies requiring workers to perform work 'off-the-clock' and therefore unpaid.

Laura Perez-Boston, campaign director of Texas Organizing Project explained that, while the amorphous nature of wage theft can make it challenging to develop effective legislative solutions, a coalition was formed in 2012 that was able to pass a local ordinance with the aim of prohibiting the City of Houston from doing business with companies with records of wage theft.

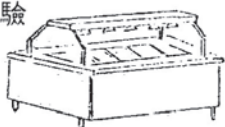
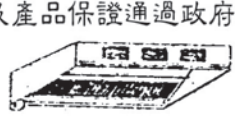
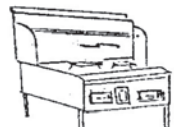
Houston City Council Member Robert Gallegos expressed support for the workers and assured them that "we really take into consideration the histories of wage theft when making decisions about renewing contracts."

Nevertheless, the half a dozen workers present claimed that their employers--who hold city contracts--are engaging in wage theft right now by allegedly forcing workers to attend unpaid briefings before shifts, failing to pay overtime, and underpaying workers.

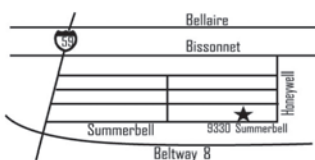
Angel Flores, who has been a janitor for 14 years, shared that he is not always paid for the overtime he works. "During the Hurricane, I worked 7 days, 24 hours straight. And then another 4 days of 12 hour shifts, and I don't think I'll be getting paid overtime for this either" Senator Garcia responded with "Shame, shame, shame on this company."

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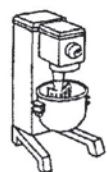
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