

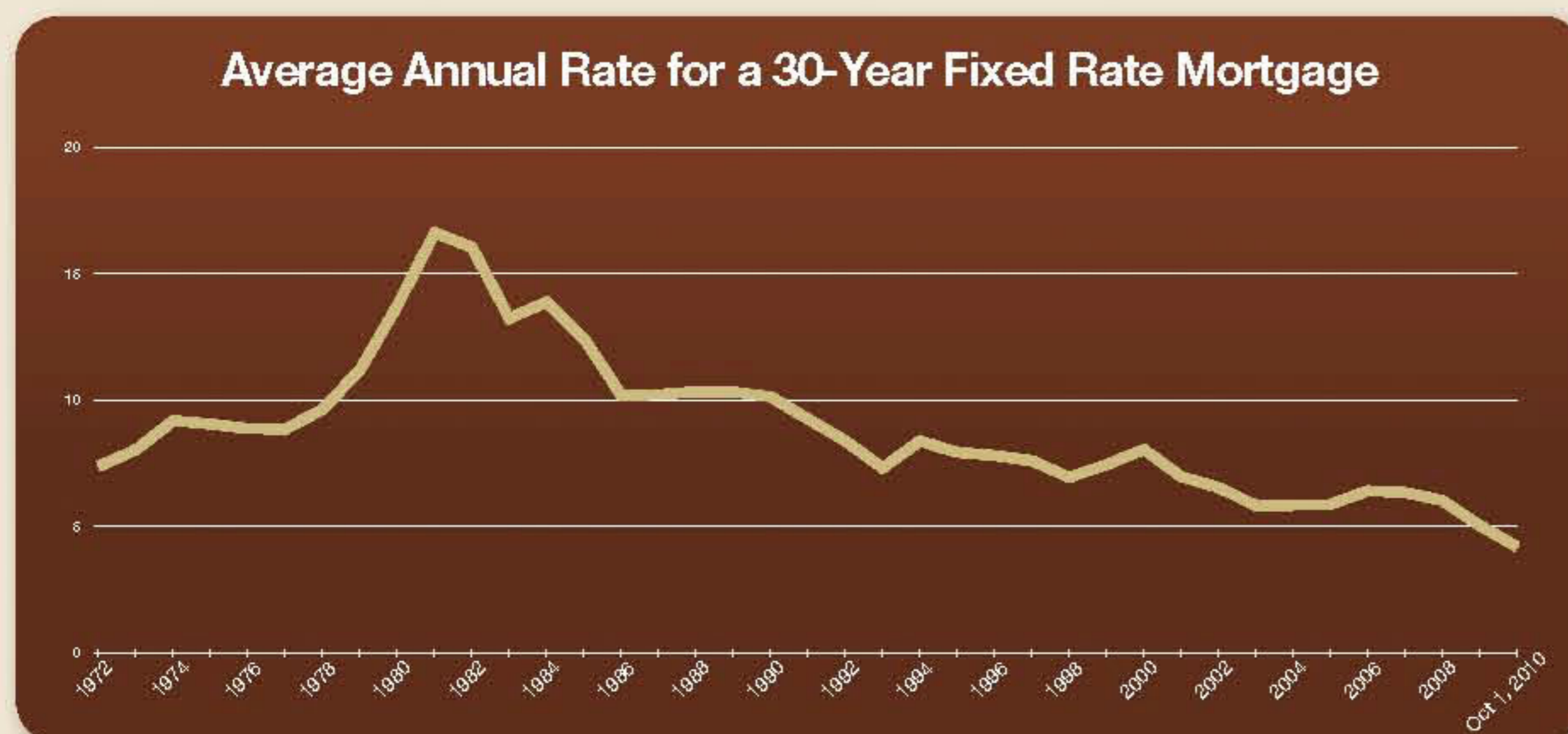
*It's important to remember that all real estate markets are essentially local. The economic environment and employment situation can vary distinctly from area to area and impact the balance of housing supply and demand. Ask your real estate professional for an update on the state of the market where you live.*

# Market Spotlight: 2011 Offers Golden Opportunity

Forecasts for this year suggest the housing sector will continue to stabilize, and the rare and fortunate combination of bargain prices and cheaper financing spells opportunity for buyers in many parts of the country.

## History in the Making

It's difficult to believe the average mortgage rate near the end of 2010 was less than half the 30-year average of **9.0%**. Many Americans have now grown accustomed to low interest rates, but the Freddie Mac Survey that began tracking rates in 1971 registered a new and dramatic low of **4.19%** in October of 2010.<sup>1</sup> Historically low rates make it possible for more people to purchase a home or refinance a mortgage and enjoy reasonable payments for years to come.



Sources: 1) Freddie Mac Primary Mortgage Market Survey, October 2010 (for prime borrowers with 20% down payment)  
2) Businessweek, September 30, 2010  
3) Harvard University, The State of the Nation's Housing 2010

## Houses Are on Sale

Buyers throughout the U.S. are finding attractive home prices, and some are able to take advantage of significant markdowns on distressed properties. The extent of the discount varies widely by region, but according to the most recent data, foreclosures sold for **26% less** than similar homes in the second quarter of 2010. Properties in default, many of which became short sales, had their prices reduced by an average of **13%**.<sup>2</sup>

## Is Ownership within Reach?

Rock-bottom interest rates and lower prices together mean it is more affordable to buy a home today than at any other time in the last 40 years. In 2010, the mortgage payment required to purchase the median priced home in the U.S. fell below 20% of the median household income for the first time since 1971.<sup>3</sup>