



Charlie Kirk’s killing puts Utah governor’s ‘disagree better’ to test

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The home for sale at 2 Oriole Drive in Poughkeepsie on Sept. 12. PATRICK OEHLER/POUGHKEEPSIE JOURNAL

Mid-Hudson fall real estate outlook

Vandana Saras
Middletown Times Herald-Record | USA TODAY NETWORK

The outlook on the mid-Hudson real estate market for the fall season is looking optimistic, according to market data analysis and four real estate and mortgage professionals. It is still a seller’s market.

“For the first time since the pandemic, the Hudson Valley has seen two consecutive quarters in which the quantity of new listings and the total inventory of homes for sale both increased,” Pattern for Progress reported in a Hudson Valley market analysis. This has followed six straight years of price increases and inventory declines.

The report showed that in Sullivan County, the median home prices maintained the recent yearly rise, having doubled since 2019. In Orange, Dutchess and Ulster counties, the upward price momentum has flattened since last year.

Here’s what the experts said about the contributing factors that determine health and activity in the real estate market — inventory, demand, sale prices and

interest rates — and changes since the COVID-19 pandemic.

The trifecta that affects housing inventory

Joseph Distelburger, a developer and partner at Keller Williams Realty in the Hudson Valley, cited the factors that make it a seller’s market. He said inventory is still weak due to three contributing reasons.

“Real estate is so expensive everywhere, wherever they move, they’re just trading one house for another,” said Distelburger.

Secondly, the interest rates people have are better than what they can get now, which dissuades them from jumping into the market.

The third factor is lack of new housing.

“The ability to get new homes approved is virtually impossible,” said Distelburger, “but the process is so convoluted it takes three to five years to get a subdivision approved and the cost of building is so high.”

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FALL FOLIAGE TRACKER

When will leaves change, peak in NY?

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New York Connect Team | USA TODAY NETWORK

As children return to school and temperatures dip across the state, many New Yorkers are already looking ahead to the real highlight of autumn — vibrant fall foliage. But when will the leaves start to change in New York this year? While it’s still early for peak color, meteorologists and long-range forecasters are already weighing in on how soon — and how spectacular — fall colors will be across the Empire State in 2025.

Fall officially begins Monday, Sept. 22, with the autumn equinox. But signs of the season are already here:

- Cooler evenings
- Shorter daylight

- A noticeable dip in temperatures, especially in upstate regions

In Rochester, New York, for example, August 2025 averaged 68.7°F — about 2 degrees cooler than normal, according to the National Weather Service in Buffalo. In Buffalo, recent highs have ranged from the mid-60s to upper 70s, setting the stage for seasonal transition.

How colorful will the leaves be this fall?

According to AccuWeather’s 2025 fall foliage forecast, leaf peepers in eastern New York — including the Adirondacks, Catskills and Hudson Valley — are in for

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Saugerties super on leave during wrestling coach investigation

Nickie Hayes
Poughkeepsie Journal | USA TODAY NETWORK

Saugerties Central School District’s superintendent has been placed on paid administrative leave while an investigation continues into the behavior of a former school employee.

In July, 32-year-old Reid Kappler, a former wrestling coach and custodian in the district, was charged with 18 counts of third-degree rape committed between 2023 and 2024 during his employment.

The Saugerties Board of Education voted at its July 22 meeting to engage an external independent investigator to review the district’s actions in the case.

The board has since voted to place Superintendent Daniel Erceg on paid administrative leave, to ensure a “fair, transparent and impartial internal investigation,” into the allegations, according to a Sept. 10 statement by Jeffrey Riozzi, the board’s president.

Deputy superintendent Gwendolyn Roraback will serve as acting superintendent.

Accusations against former Saugerties wrestling coach

The Ulster County District Attorney’s Office said Kappler allegedly engaged in sexual conduct with two teens who were between 15 and 16 years old.

Ulster County Special Victims Bureau Chief Jenna Hastings said Kappler “took advantage of two children who looked up to him as their coach.”

“He abused the trust of the community by engaging in sexual crimes with two students,” Hastings said. “This behavior undermines the trust of the community and is never tolerated.”

Kappler was living in Connecticut at the time of his arrest. He is scheduled to appear in court Oct. 16.

The Ulster County District Attorney’s Office said the case arose from the same investigation in which Sydney Mills, a Saugerties part-time police officer, was accused of engaging in oral sexual conduct and vaginal sexual conduct with a teen between 14 and 15 years old.

Saugerties board engages external investigator

In July, the Saugerties board called on a former senior criminal investigator from outside the district to conduct an independent review.

According to the board, the review aims to:

- Determine whether steps taken to investigate complaints of inappropriate behavior were comprehensive and aligned to district policy, regulation and law.
- Determine whether the actions taken at the conclusion of the investigation were properly implemented, documentation was preserved, and communication was transparent with all stakeholders.
- Conduct a comprehensive review of the policies and procedures to be implemented when an allegation of misconduct is received.
- Develop a final written investigation report inclusive of all interviews, document review, summary of findings and recommendations, a public executive summary and guidance on a plan to address deficiencies.

“Once the Board has reviewed the findings and recommendations, decisions about next steps can be made,” Riozzi said in the Sept. 10 statement. “Until then, it would be premature to speculate.”

Riozzi said the board recognizes the announcement will raise questions “that we are not able to answer at present,” and asked for “the community’s continued patience and understanding.”

“It is essential that we respect privacy laws and avoid speculation, especially about Board actions,” Riozzi said. “Our goal is to complete the investigation in a careful and thorough manner that leads to a fair and appropriate outcome for our students, staff, and community, and all Board decisions are made with that intent.”

