



Our Neighborhood News

November 2002

"The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched. They must be felt with the heart." -- Helen Keller

Home Buying Starts to Slow for the Season but Low Interest Rates Keep Homes Moving

Reprinted with permission Southland Regional Board of Realtors - REALTOR® REPORT

Residential housing sales kept humming during September throughout the San Fernando Valley even as seasonal forces and a lack of inventory only slightly tempered the strong single family home market, the Southland Regional Association of REALTORS® reported.

A total of 1,546 properties changes owners last month, up 1.2 percent from a year ago, but down 10.1 percent compared to this August. Of that total single-family homes accounted for 1,097 sales and condominiums 449. The single-family total was down 2.2 percent while condo activity rose 10.9 percent over totals reported 12 months ago.

"First-time buyers understand the math that has interest levels at their lowest point in nearly four decades offsetting rising prices, allowing them to capture more for their housing dollars," said Olga Moretti, president of the Southland Regional Association of REALTORS®. "Yes, prices are rising, but it's still true that first-time buyers can own a house using the same dollars they now throw away in rent."

Demand is so heavy in the most popular price ranges - virtually anything listed for under \$350,000 - that a lack of inventory remains the sole brake on sales.

A total of 3,713 properties were listed for sale throughout the San Fernando Valley at the end of September, down 17.6 percent from September 2001. It was up 120 listings or 3.3 percent from the August total, a trend typical for this time of year as activity moderates with the beginning of school and the approach of the holidays.

"Statistics suggest activity is slowing slightly," said Jim Link, the Association's executive vice president, "but that is not due for want of demand. Instead, REALTORS® report there are so many buyers competing for so few properties that listings simply cannot keep pace."

Activity remains exceptional in all price categories, but especially in the price ranges within reach of first-time buyers Link and Moretti noted.

Link said the slight increase over last month in inventory is concentrated in the upper price ranges where seasonal forces are more evident. Lower-priced homes still fly off the market within days or weeks of being listed with multiple buyers sometimes vying for the best properties.

The median price of the 1,097 single family homes that closed escrow during September was \$320,000, up 18.5 percent, and unchanged from August. That was \$5,000 below the record high set this July.

The condominium median of \$187,500 jumped 20.6 percent compared to 12 months ago, and was off less than 1 percent from the record high \$188,000 set this August.

Pending escrows - a measure of future sales activity - suggest the market will stay ahead of seasonal force to end the year on a high note. A total of 1,580 sales were pending at the end of August - up 24.9 percent from a year ago.

**Fun Attitude...
SERIOUS Results!**



Mark Stewart, CRS

Broker-Associate

Lisa Stewart, e-PRO

Realtor-Associate

(818) 222-9595

MarkandLisa@SoldMedal.com



Give us a wave when you see us in our neighborhood!