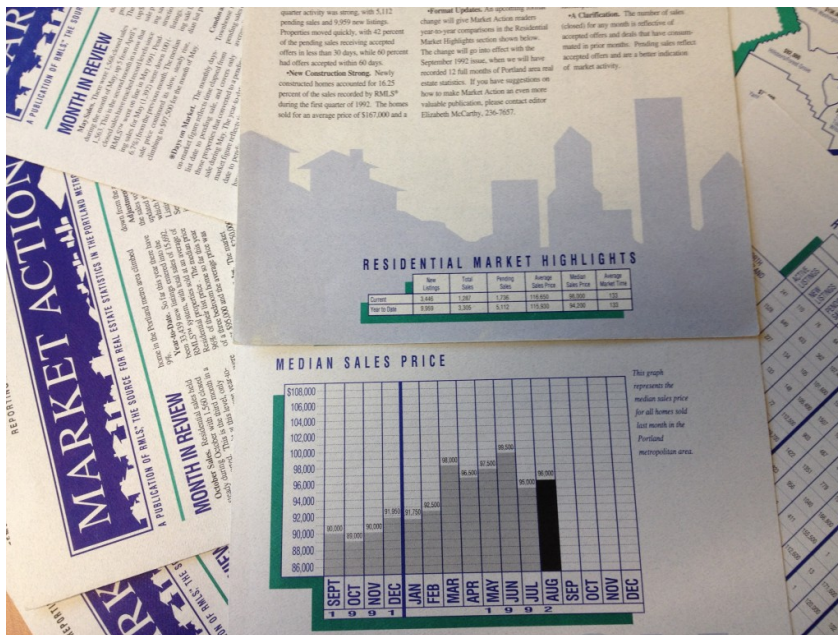# MLS Insight: Statistics Galore on RMLS*web*

This post is part of MLS Insight, a series about how things work at RMLS™.

In our early years, RMLS™ leadership had the goal of positioning RMLS™ as the primary source for information about the residential real estate market—so statistical information has always been a priority. Then and now, RMLS™ provides compiled data and directs media to working REALTORS® for interpretation and projections.

In other words, our expertise is the WHAT, and we leave the WHY to industry professionals who have access to the buyers and sellers whose activity underpins the data on sales, prices, and listings.

Market Action

The first issue of our monthly statistical newsletter, *Market Action*, was published as four printed pages in March 1992. Today *Market Action* is 69 pages long and covers all the market areas we serve. Next year, we will be expanding coverage to

include separate stats for new construction and existing homes. Watch for a survey question in our Annual Subscriber Satisfaction Survey to weigh in on the most important data to include, or leave a comment below.

Market Trends and Market Stats

To explore the other statistics reports that RMLS™ has to offer, head to the **Statistics** tab on the RMLS*web* menu bar.

RMLS*web* also features video tutorials on how to use both Market Trends and Market Stats. (You can find these and others on RMLS*web* by clicking on Training Tutorials under the Toolkit menu.)

Market Trends allows searching by geography (area number, city, ZIP code) and a few other criteria such as bedrooms, year built, lot size, etc. The resulting report produces not only a summary of data by month within the range you select, but also six graphs like the one below that are a click away from copying for your use in your own CMAs or newsletters.
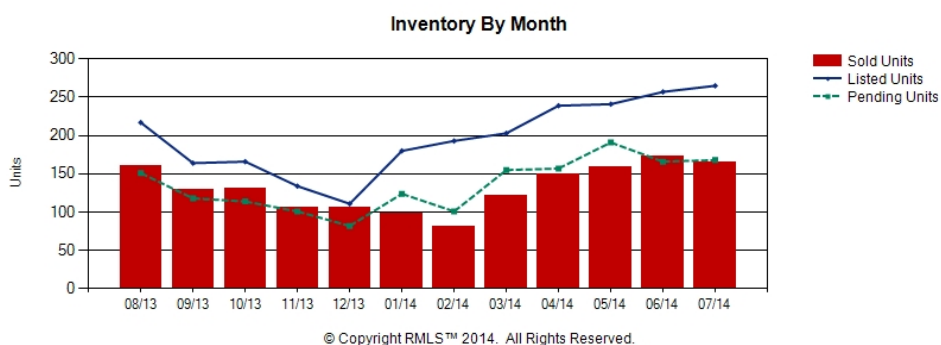
Market Stats provides several reports. The Comparables Report has several additional graphs which depict sales data by sold terms and number of bedrooms. (See below for the type of info

available in the Comparables Report.) The Dollar Value by Area and Inventory Reports are strictly data reports that give a very streamlined overview of market areas.
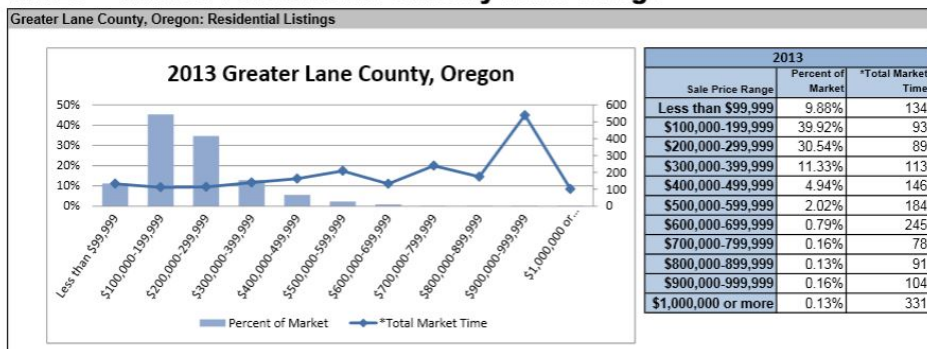
Bedrooms	Total Sold	Total Volume in 1000s		Sold Price		Sold Price Ratio		DOM		CDOM	
		Total LP	Total SP	Avg	Med	SP/LP%	SP/OLP%	Avg	Med	Avg	Med
1	4	$318	$309	$77,350	$65,950	97.45	97.76	82	40	82	40
2	99	$13,773	$13,332	$134,663	$123,000	96.80	92.94	85	43	114	45
3	587	$137,683	$136,418	$232,399	$218,000	99.08	97.21	69	39	84	47
4	231	$69,771	$69,144	$299,325	$265,000	99.10	96.29	64	43	98	56
5	32	$10,083	$9,998	$312,438	$305,500	99.16	96.65	102	43	137	72
6	2	$1,119	$1,070	$535,000	$535,000	95.62	95.62	22	22	22	22
Summary:	955	$232,746	$230,272	$241,122	$228,000	98.94	96.65	71	40	92	48

Home Sales Report

In addition to these dynamic reports which pull data according to criteria you select, RMLS™ also provides static reports under the **Statistics** menu. The Home Sales Report has information as early as 2001. Since July 2011, these reports have presented information for new construction—both separate from existing and combined.

Statistical Summaries

RMLS™ Market Percent and Time by Price Range
Greater Lane County, Oregon: Residential Listings

Sale Price Range	2013	
	Percent of Market	*Total Market Time
Less than $99,999	9.88%	134
$100,000-199,999	39.92%	93
$200,000-299,999	30.54%	89
$300,000-399,999	11.33%	113
$400,000-499,999	4.94%	146
$500,000-599,999	2.02%	184
$600,000-699,999	0.79%	245
$700,000-799,999	0.16%	78
$800,000-899,999	0.13%	91
$900,000-999,999	0.16%	104
$1,000,000 or more	0.13%	331

Finally, the Statistical Summaries compile years worth of *Market Action* historical data into a few pages and provide up to nine annual snapshots of various aspects of the residential real estate market in all our market areas. Access them under the **Statistics** menu on RMLS*web*.

As you can see, RMLS™ takes stats seriously! If you would like to learn more about how to use stats in your business, call RMLS™ Training at (503) 236-7657 to get more information.

Thanks for taking this brief tour highlighting some of the statistical information available from RMLS™. Next month we will talk about envisioning an MLS without area numbers. If you have any questions you would like to have answered about how things work at RMLS™, I encourage you to post a comment to this blog.

MLS Insight: A Brief History of RMLS™

This post is part of MLS Insight, a series about governance issues at RMLS™.

RMLS™ was created when representatives from four Boards of REALTORS® in the Portland metro area decided to form a service that was an alternative to a broker-owned multiple listing service in business since the 1970s. The Articles of Incorporation were filed on August 3, 1990, establishing RMLS™ as a 501C for-profit corporation.

Membership

The first RMLS™ listings went live in May 1991. Within a few short weeks, 3,433 area REALTORS® had subscribed to the fledgling MLS. This was 75% of the possible membership, and RMLS™ never looked back. Membership grew steadily to a high of almost 15,000 subscribers in 2007 and then fell in concert with the recession and REALTOR® membership to a low of just over 10,000 subscribers in January 2013. As the market has improved, subscriber numbers are rising again, and sit at about 11,000 midway through 2014.

Listings and Lockboxes

RMLS™ was computerized and offered a lockbox from the beginning. A staple of a 1990s MLS was "The Book" (*above*), a bi-weekly tome of active listings with a quarterly comparable book. As personal computing and connectivity became the norm, demand for the books waned, and they became optional in 1997. The last book printed was the 1999 4th Quarter Comparable Book.

The first lockbox was a mechanical system made by Multacc, which came with the following tip: *Carry a can of silicone spray with you in case your key gets stuck in a dirty lockbox.* This system was replaced in 1995 by a series of Supra electronic systems. After 18 years with Supra, RMLS™ switched to the SentriLock system in 2013.

Areas of Coverage

In the beginning, RMLS™ served only the five-county Portland metropolitan area in Oregon. The Douglas County Board of REALTORS® initiated discussions with RMLS™ early in 1998 to see if service could be extended to that area. Service to both Douglas and Coos Counties in Oregon was added later that year. The following year a merger with the Clark County, Washington MLS was finalized, bringing membership over the 7,000 mark. Service to Lane County followed in 2001. Curry County and the Mid-Columbia region in Oregon and Washington joined in 2005,

with the Columbia Basin and Baker and Union Counties following suit in 2007 and Wallowa County in 2008.

Harnessing the Power of the Internet

RMLS™ utilized a vended dial-up system from Interealty called Stellar as the main MLS system until 2002. Development on RMLS*web* began in 1998, and the first version of RMLS*web* was rolled out early in 1999 as a parallel, search-only, internet-accessible system. Originally developed by a vendor, the code for RMLS*web* was acquired in 2001 and development moved in-house. By the end of the following year, migration from the legacy system was complete and RMLS*web* became the sole system, supported and extended entirely by in-house programmers and IT personnel.

RMLS™ first sent listings to the internet in 1996. The first internet policy to govern internet display of listings was crafted in 1998, establishing the RMLS™ philosophy that the broker should determine the destination of their own listings and setting the stage for today's busy internet world of IDX, VOW, and syndication.

Communicating with Subscribers

RMLS™ had a goal of good communication with brokers and subscribers and outstanding customer service from the early days. The Training Department's origins date to 1994, while the first Help Desk calls were taken by RMLS™ staff in 1996. (Prior to that time, the system vendor handled Tech Support.) A Technology/Trade Fair has been held annually since 1994. Today, our technicians can chat online and webinars have replaced many classroom offerings.

RMLS™ implemented the communication technology of the day as it became cost-effective. Broadcast faxes to brokerages started in 1993, an early predecessor to the current weekly email "RMLS™ Weekly Report." In 1996, the REALTORS® Fax Service provided a way for subscribers to obtain RMLS™

information and documents 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Today, the Forms and Documents menu of RMLS*web* is the mature version of that idea.

It's difficult to encompass 23 years in a few words, but RMLS™ has changed greatly along with the real estate community and the world at large. MLS staff had one computer to conduct business in 1991, and were excited to have a 24-dot matix printer. Although a fledgling internet existed in 1991, most of us were unaware of it, and it took a largish room to house the computing power of a smartphone.

Next month we will talk about resources—how to find information you need to enhance your MLS experience online and from our staff. If you have any questions you would like to have answered about RMLS™ governance or operation, I encourage you to post a comment to this blog.

MLS Insight: The RMLS™ Service Advisory Committee

This post is part of MLS Insight, a series about governance issues at RMLS™.

In previous MLS Insight posts, I covered the general governance of RMLS™ including our shareholders, Board of Directors, and standing committees. The Service Advisory Committee (SAC) is a topic that deserves a closer look.

When RMLS™ began serving areas outside the Portland metro area where our shareholder REALTOR® associations were located, we wanted to find a way to make sure that those subscribers' voices could be heard. In 2000, our Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws were changed to establish the Service Advisory Committee. The Articles of Incorporation clearly define SAC's purpose as "identifying the concerns of those who subscribe to the corporation's service but who are not members of shareholders…"

Currently 16 REALTOR® associations appoint representatives to serve on SAC. The chairman of SAC automatically takes a seat on the RMLS™ Board of Directors, and SAC also appoints one additional director. SAC directors have full and identical rights and responsibilities as shareholder directors.

Our current Service Advisory Committee directors have both made many contributions to both RMLS™ and the broader real estate communities. Cory Neu served as the 2011 Chairman of the RMLS™ Board and a total of five years on the Executive Committee representing SAC from the Eugene Association of REALTORS®. Our current Treasurer, Lori Palermo, represents SAC from the Springfield Board of REALTORS® and has served on SAC since its inception in 2000. I asked them to provide their own insider views on the Service Advisory Committee for this post.

"I have had the pleasure of serving on the Service Advisory Committee since its inception. I especially appreciate the avenue that the committee provides for bringing questions, concerns, and issues of members across the state to the RMLS™ Board of Directors. Several suggestions and enhancements that have come from SAC have been implemented and are in use today." —Lori Palermo

"I've served in several capacities for my local and state associations, and having the opportunity to chair the RMLS™ Service Advisory Committee for the last 11 years has been the most rewarding in my real estate career. In that time, the SAC has brought many recommendations to the board and staff, from rules and regulations to RMLS*web* functionality. Those things directly effect our profession on a very real and direct level." —Cory Neu
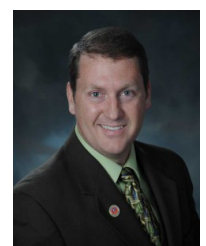
Next month we will give a brief history of RMLS™. If you have any questions you would like to have answered about RMLS™ governance or operation, I encourage you to post a comment to this blog.

MLS Insight: Outlining the RMLS™ Service Area

This post is part of MLS Insight, a series about governance issues at RMLS™.

Every so often, RMLS™ gets a request for data or service from Central Oregon or Klamath Falls, for example. We're not the primary multiple listing service (MLS) in all parts of Oregon—we are happy to list properties in those areas, but our data is not comprehensive enough to provide as an accurate resource for the area.

What areas then, does RMLS™ cover?

In our primary service areas, RMLS™ represents 17 Associations/Boards of REALTORS® and approximately 10,700 real estate professionals in over 2,300 offices.

We are the primary provider of multiple listing services in 20 of Oregon's 36 counties (Baker, Clackamas, Columbia, Coos, Curry, Douglas, Gilliam, Grant, Hood River, Lane, Morrow, Multnomah, Sherman, Umatilla, Union, Wallowa, Wasco, Wheeler, Washington, and Yamhill) and Clark, Klickitat, Pacific, and Skamania Counties in Washington.

In addition we provide supplementary MLS services in five more Oregon counties (Clatsop, Tillamook, Lincoln, Polk, and Marion). We are not the only MLS in those counties, but we have many subscribers and listings in those areas. In the remaining eleven Oregon counties, we provide tax data and have a small listing inventory.

RMLS™ was created when representatives from four Boards of REALTORS® in the Portland metro area decided to form a service that was an alternative to a broker-owned multiple listing service in business since the 1970s. The first RMLS™ listings went live in the spring of 1991.

From the original service area covering Clackamas, Multnomah, Washington, Yamhill, and Columbia Counties in Oregon, RMLS™ had successful expansion opportunities after adopting an internet-based system that could be responsive to a broad based subscriber group. The timeline below shows the inclusion of various REALTOR® associations in our service area.

We continue to discuss opportunities to serve more Oregon and Washington REALTORS®, wherever they may be located!

Next month we will talk about the RMLS™ Service Advisory Committee. If you have any questions you would like to have answered about RMLS™ governance or operation, I encourage you to post a comment to this blog.

MLS Insight: The RMLS*web* Development Process

Above: The RMLS™ development team discussing upcoming deploys to RMLS*web*.

This post is part of MLS Insight, a series about governance issues at RMLS™.

The RMLS*web* system that provides our subscribers with the tools they need to serve sellers and buyers is an in-house system. That means that RMLS™ employs development and programming staff, and does not have a vendor that controls the features available to our subscribers. We have been developing and refining the RMLS*web* system in-house since 2001.

Using a custom in-house system has both great benefits and some challenges. We are able to improve our system based on the input of our subscribers about their wants and needs for both data about listings and system features. Early on, we determined that we needed a way to prioritize competing enhancement requests, and I wanted to describe that general process for you.

We collect all comments and suggestions we receive from our subscribers. They are reviewed monthly, because sometimes the

requested functionality already exists and therefore presents a training opportunity. When a suggestion is made about new data to collect on our forms, it is delivered to the RMLS™ Forms Committee for their discussion and recommendation.

If a suggestion is small enough, and would benefit a majority of subscribers we may work on it right away. Bugs that are found are also worked on immediately. Each fall, enhancements requiring a significant amount of work are grouped generally into project buckets—mostly according to what part of the system is involved. Sometimes, as in last year's brower/tablet compatibility project, all parts of the system are involved. Subscriber interest is gauged with a brief description of the potential projects in the annual Subscriber Satisfaction Survey. (Subscribers are also asked to rate the projects completed since the last survey.)

At the end of the year the RMLS™ staff prepares a more detailed report about potential projects for development in the coming year. Usually six to ten projects are proposed. Each project summary includes a description of the business need or opportunity, lists specific examples that come from the enhancements requested by subscribers, and estimates the project duration and resources needed. The Technology Committee reviews the report and adds their comments and a grade to the rating obtained in the Subscriber Satisfaction Survey.

The final step of the process is prioritization by the RMLS™ Board of Directors. This occurs during their annual retreat in February, when there is plenty of time to discuss and deliberate about the options. The three top priorities that the board directed our development team to work on this year are:

- *Search and report improvements* to allow easier ways to manage saved searches, prospects, and search results. Examples include improving the MLS#/Address Search on the

desktop sidebar with a better parser and more prominent location; saved search integration with contact manager; the ability to hide the map in Advanced Search; search results modernization with a "detail" view mode like the one in Listing Load; and enhancing the search results with a map view.

• ***SentriLock API integration*** *to allow single sign-on to manage some of the functions of the lockbox system, including assigning a lockbox to a listing, retrieving information about who has accessed your lockboxes, as well as properties you have viewed.*

• ***RMLSweb usability*** *to improve the appearance, behavior, and performance of RMLSweb on tablets. This would take the browser compatibility project one step further with features like geolocation awareness in map search on mobile devices.*

If you are curious to see a history of software we have released, check out RMLS*web* Deployment History in Forms and Documents on RMLS*web*. To check on what is coming up, go to RMLS™ Future Enhancements.

Next month we will cover the RMLS™ service area. If you have any questions you would like to have answered about RMLS™ governance or operation, I encourage you to post a comment to this blog.

MLS Insight: RMLS™ Committees in Action

This post is part of MLS Insight, a series about governance issues at RMLS™.

The four standing committees that exist to ensure that RMLS™ has practitioner input into decisions, planning, and regulation are the Technology, Forms, Rules, and Hearings Committees. The RMLS™ Board of Directors can also create a task force to focus on a particular topic. Recent examples include the Lockbox System Task Force and the Office Exclusive Task Force, both disbanded as their job was completed. There is currently no active task force.

The Chairman of the RMLS™ Board selects the committee chairs, and the board confirms their appointment at the first meeting of the year. Our bylaws wisely require that all committee chairmen be on the RMLS™ Board of Directors, which results in direct input back and forth between the Board of Directors and the committees. The committee chair selects the committee members, who serve for one year.

The **Technology Committee** reviews software and services of potential use to RMLS™ subscribers and may recommend systemwide products to the board for approval. The most recent instances of products recommended by the Technology Committee are RatePlug and New Home Source. The Technology Committee also acts as a resource for evaluating improvements to the RMLS*web* system. A new role of the committee this year is the Technology Forum, which are invitational presentations about

technology offerings for the brokerage community. The 2014 Chairman of the Technology Committee is Dale Chumbley.

The **Forms Committee** reviews all suggestions about changes to RMLS™ Listing Input Sheets, working to make the listing data we collect both rich and relevant. The Forms Committee was on hiatus last year in order to allow our development department unbroken time to work on the browser and tablet compatibility project. A forms change requires changes to many parts of the system, including all reports, all searches, and Listing Load, so it is always a formidable task. The 2014 Chairman of the Forms Committee is Maureen Bonfiglio.

The **Rules Committee** has two main functions. It reviews all formal complaints which allege violations of the RMLS™ Rules and Regulations, and has the power to impose sanctions. There were six formal complaints filed in 2013, and the committee imposed fines totaling $650 in three of those cases. The Rules Committee also discusses potential changes to the Rules and Regulations and makes recommendations to the Board of Directors. The 2014 Chairman of the Rules and Regulations Committee is Rick Jenkins.

The **Hearings Committee** exists in case the recipient of a sanction by the Rules Committee requests a hearing. Hearings are conducted in substantial accordance with the procedures applicable to REALTOR® Professional Standards hearings. No hearings were requested in 2013. The 2014 Chairman of the Hearings Commitee is Mark Meek.

Next month we will cover the prioritization process for in-house development of the RMLSweb system decisions. If you have questions you would like to have answered about RMLS™ governance or operation, I encourage you to post a comment to this blog.

MLS Insight: How is RMLS™ Governed?

We sometimes get questions on how decisions get made at RMLS™ and how to get involved. If you are interested in knowing more about RMLS™ and how it operates, our new monthly column MLS Insight is for you. To get everyone on the same page, my first posts will explore the basics of RMLS™ ownership, governance, and history. Later we will also explore new ideas surfacing at the MLS industry level and let you know what the RMLS™ Board of Directors is talking about.

Who Owns RMLS™?

RMLS™ is incorporated in Oregon and is wholly owned by three REALTOR® associations: Portland Metro (PMAR), East Metro (EMAR), and Clark County (CCAR). The role of our shareholders is to appoint directors to serve on the RMLS™ Board of Directors and to approve any changes to the RMLS™ Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws.

Who Makes the Decisions?

The RMLS™ Board of Directors sets the high-level direction for RMLS™. For example, this includes approval of any new major vendors (like SentriLock), setting priorities for the development work on RMLS*web* (which we do in house), approving any major policy changes and approving all changes to the RMLS™ Rules and Regulations. The RMLS™ Board of Directors also hire the President and CEO of the corporation, who has the responsibility for making the many day-to-day decisions that keep the company on course.

Who are the RMLS™ Board of Directors?

RMLS™ Directors are appointed for three-year terms. Nine come

from PMAR, three from EMAR, and three from CCAR. In addition, two directors sit on the board representing the Service Advisory Committee (SAC), which provides a voice for all the REALTOR® associations that RMLS™ serves, but which are not shareholders in RMLS™.

Next month *we will cover the RMLS™ standing committees that ensure that we have practitioner input into decisions, planning, and regulation. If you have questions you would like to have answered about RMLS™ governance or operation, I encourage you to post a comment to this blog.*