

Press Release: RMLS™ Awards Scholarships to PSU Students

For Immediate Release: May 25, 2010

RMLS™ Awards Scholarships to PSU Students

Four Portland State University students receive the RMLS™ Scholarship

PORTLAND, Ore. – RMLS™ (Regional Multiple Listing Service), the largest Realtor®-owned multiple listing service in the Northwest, has donated four \$1,000 scholarships to students in Portland State University's Center for Real Estate program.

“We are pleased to be a part of PSU's program because we understand the importance of attracting motivated and skillful individuals into the real estate industry,” said Kurt von Wasmuth, President and CEO of RMLS™.

The award reception, which was held last Friday, May 21 in PSU's Urban Center, was comprised of students, teachers and those working in the Portland real estate community, to honor those receiving scholarships. The recipients of the RMLS™ scholarship were: Raihana Ansary, Eric Hayes, Emily Picha and Nicholas Wright.

With an array of food and beverages, the reception was an intimate gathering and gave students the chance to speak with a representative of the company that sponsored their scholarship. These motivated young students spoke of the various projects they were working on and enlightened the crowd about their desire to pursue goals in the real estate industry.

“Each of the RMLS™ Scholarship recipients is a

student in Portland State's Graduate Certificate program in Real Estate Development, which is a 25-credit program focused in training in real estate finance, real estate development, and real estate economics," said Director of the Center for Real Estate, Dr. Gerard C.S. Mildner.

As stated on PSU's Center for Real Estate program's Web site, The Center strives to "provide the real estate industry with talented and well-prepared graduates seeking careers in real estate."

The reception demonstrated the success of Portland State's program in helping to mold students into future leaders of the real estate world.

About RMLS™

RMLS™ produces and provides multiple listing and related services to facilitate cooperation between its more than 12,000 REALTOR® subscribers. It is the primary source for real estate information and the premier Multiple Listing Service in the Pacific Northwest. For more information, visit www.rmlsbenefits.com.

###

94.6% of Homes Sold for Below \$500k in Portland in November

RMLS Portland home sales by price range, November 2009

The original deadline for the homebuyer tax credit was

November 30 and it appears that this may have had an effect on home sales in November. Homes that sold for \$250,000 or below (likely the price range for many first-time buyers) made up 55.3% of all sales in Portland this November, which is up 10.3% compared to November 2008.

Below is a breakdown of sales by price range:



November 2009 RMLS Market Action Recap

Sales up, but in comparison to a dismal month last November

The big highlight this month for many areas is a large jump in closed sales compared to last November. Curry County posted a 141.7% increase and Portland and Clark County set records for percentage increases in same-month sales at 72.4% and 70.5%, respectively.



While these stats are obviously a good sign for market activity, continue to keep in mind that last year we were at the height of the economic crisis and we hit some of the lowest points in sales totals in recent years. So, yes, sales are way up compared to last year, but remember that we're comparing it to unusually low sales totals.

Has the winter slowdown arrived?

Closed sales had been on the rise in many key areas month-to-month through October, but it appears that the winter slowdown

has arrived. Compared to this October, pending and closed sales were down in most areas, including Columbia Basin, Douglas County, Lane County, the Mid-Columbia region, Portland and Clark County.

Inventory up

Inventory ticked up in every area except Curry County and Union County, however, most areas are well below last year's inventory levels thanks to fewer listings entering the market and higher sales totals. For example, Portland's inventory stands at 7.1 months – 53% less than last November's 15 months of inventory.

RMLS Market Action Recap – October 2009

Same-month sales up nearly across the board in Oregon & Southern Washington

Sales activity continued to outpace levels from the same month last year in the latest RMLS™ Market Action report. Inventory was also down in several areas, including Lane County, Portland and Clark County.

Sales Activity:

Both pending and closed sales increased in 9 out of 10 of the regions that we cover when compared to the same month in 2008. The Portland metro area saw its largest increase in closed sales since January 2005, which was also the highest total of closed sales since August 2007. Clark County set a record for pending sales, with an increase of 56.9% compared to last October. Here's a recap of each region's same-month sales activity:



It will be interesting to see if this trend of increased sales activity will continue this fall and winter season. The percentage increases were not surprising this month, given the recent strength in sales and considering that last year we saw sales begin to drop in October, kicking off a stretch of slow sales activity that would extend into the first quarter of 2009.

Inventory:

Housing inventory levels dropped in several key areas, including Lane County (6.2 months), Portland (6.5 months, lowest since August 2007) and Clark County (6.4 months, lowest since September 2006). This is somewhat counterintuitive, as inventory levels have often increased as we head into the slower fall and winter seasons. But, considering the following factors, it's no surprise:

- Low interest rates
- New listings continue to drop in most areas, reducing the supply of homes available
- The perceived tax credit deadline (which has since been extended)
- Lower home prices

What do you think?

Realtors – what do you think? Where do you see the market heading? Have you heard increased interest from buyers and sellers since the tax credit extension/expansion? Comment below!

Portland Metro Sales by Price Range – September 2009

Homes below \$400k make up 85% of sales in September

I recently read that in Phoenix, 93% of September Home Sales were below \$400k. The author says that Phoenix is essentially a “tale of two markets”, one where homes in the lower priced spectrum are selling & where high-end homes are sitting.

We’ve looked at similar numbers before to see how the homebuyer tax credit was effecting the Portland market, so I figured it was time to take a look at these numbers again & see how we compare to the Phoenix sales by price range – here’s what I found:

% of Portland Home Sales by Price Range (September 2009)

| | Sept. 2009 | % of Sales | Sept. 2008 | % of Sales |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| \$0-\$150k | 190 | 10.4% | 115 | 6.6% |
| \$150-\$200k | 383 | 20.9% | 235 | 13.6% |
| \$200k-\$250k | 416 | 22.7% | 420 | 24.3% |
| \$250k-\$400k | 569 | 31.0% | 633 | 36.6% |
| \$400k-\$500k | 142 | 7.7% | 170 | 9.8% |
| \$500k-\$750k | 96 | 5.2% | 114 | 6.6% |
| \$750k – \$1 million + | 38 | 2.1% | 44 | 2.5% |

% of Sales by Price Range, Combined (September 2009)

| | Sept. 09 | Sept. 08 |
|-------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Below \$250k | 53.9% | 44.5% |

| | | |
|-------------------------|-------|-------|
| Below \$400k | 85.0% | 81.1% |
| Above \$500k | 7.3% | 9.1% |

As you can see, not quite as high as Phoenix, but still 85% of sales in Portland were below \$400k, which is up about 4% from last September.

Also note that sales below \$250k are up 9.4% from last September. I suspect a lot of those sales can be attributed to the \$8,000 tax credit (although some investors may also be cashing in on some lower priced homes as well).

The tax credit is set to expire on November 30, and the debate rages on in Washington over its extension. It seems to have given the market here a boost, so it will be interesting to see how the market fares if/when it expires.

If the tax credit does indeed expire, it would still take a lot for things to get worse this winter compared to last year. Last January we saw sales activity drag to the lowest total in the Portland metro area that we had seen since RMLS™ began keeping records in 1992.

What do you think? Did the tax credit help? Should it be extended? Leave a comment, we'd love to hear your opinion!

**HOWNW.com Adds Section on
Avoiding Foreclosure and**

Fraud



PMAR's public service website, HOWNW.com (Home Ownership Opportunities Northwest) has a new section that offers consumers information from reliable sources such as the National Association of Realtors®, the Federal Trade Commission, Fannie Mae and the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency about how to avoid foreclosure and fraud.

To explore these useful new resources, visit:
<http://hownw.com/consumer/avoidingforeclosure.asp>

The \$8K Tax Credit and its Effect on Portland Metro Real Estate

There's been some encouraging news lately in the RMLS™ market areas. The number of sales and pending sales are finally outpacing the totals from the same month in 2008. How much of it might be a result of the \$8,000 first-time homebuyer tax credit, though?

I recently put together some statistics for the Oregonian on the Portland metro area, and thought I would share them with you.

There is no question that home sales in the lower-end of the market have seen a big jump this year. In 2007, homes priced between \$0 and \$249,999 only made up 35% of all sales in the Portland metro area. In 2009 so far, they make up 49.6% of the

market.

As you'd expect, coinciding with the increase in lower-end homes is a drop in high-end homes. Homes priced \$500,000 or above have dropped from 13.5% of the market in 2007, to just 8.2% of the market this year.



Click on the graph for a
larger view

The question is: what will happen when the \$8,000 tax credit expires on December 1?

I know the tax credit definitely got me off the fence & I can literally think of 15 of my friends and acquaintances (off the top of my head) who have bought or are actively looking to buy.

So in my humble opinion, there's little doubt that the tax credit spurred people to buy. But as the deadline for the credit approaches, it should be interesting to see where sales go.