

PRESS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release**

JANUARY MLS® DOLLAR VOLUME RECORD SET**First Time MLS® January Sales Dollar Volume Cracks \$100 million**

WINNIPEG – Despite MLS® sales being down less than 500 for the first time in 6 years, dollar volume continues to forge ahead as it crashed through the \$100 million mark for the first time in the month of January. Helping bring this level up to a record total in January was a home sale worth \$1,080,000. Last year WinnipegREALTORS® saw more million dollar plus sales than ever before at 14 (previous best was 2008 with 8 sales).

The weak sales results to a large degree reflect a real shortage of residential-detached listings in a number of the sought after MLS® neighbourhoods within Winnipeg. There were a number of areas where there were more sales than new listings coming on the market in January so any of the remaining inventory from December was adding to the larger sales figure. With the exception of 2009, the overall MLS® listing inventory is still better than some previous years but that does not mean anything to a buyer looking for a home in a particular area with nothing for sale.

More credence to the lack of listings yet strong demand was the fact 35% of homes this January sold for above list price. This was over twice the percentage recorded in January 2009. The average residential-detached sales price was up 17 % from January 2009 and rose 2% over the best December ever in 2009 where the average sale price was \$219,000. The average days on market to sell a residential-detached listing in January was 10 days faster than the same month last year.

January MLS® unit sales were down 7% (487/524) while dollar volume was up 6% (\$102.1 million/\$96.5 million) in comparison to the same month a year ago. The equivalent of one in two new listings were sold in the month of January and one in four active listings changed hands.

“While a somewhat disappointing sales result given how strong a finishing month WinnipegREALTORS® enjoyed last year, there are signs based on other performance indicators that market improvement is in the offing once more listings start coming on stream,” said Claude Davis, president of WinnipegREALTORS®. “You might say it is still too early in the game to get overly concerned and the next few months will show more of a trend line that will determine how our MLS® market should perform this year.”

The latest employment numbers released in February show an improvement in employment across the country (Manitoba’s unemployment rate edged down from 5.8 to 5.4 per cent) and Bank of Canada Governor Mark Carney gave no hint in Winnipeg while speaking at a Chamber event this week that he was about to raise the bank rate anytime soon so Canadians can continue to take advantage of the most favourable mortgage financing terms in years.

“It is important to understand how the affordability of housing through lower interest rates can help the entire housing market,” stated Davis. “If someone is looking to build and/or buy a brand new home which is significantly higher than the average resale home price in this market then they will be relying on selling an existing home to give them the necessary equity to qualify them for the more expensive undertaking. Their move to a new home triggers the release of an existing home to go on the market and therefore can even set the stage for another home listing if the buyer of the resale home is a homeowner.”

The most active residential-detached price ranges in January 2010 were the \$150-\$199,999 and the \$200,000 to \$249,999 ranges with 21 and 20% respectively of total sales. While less active than the aforementioned price ranges, the \$250,000 to \$299,999 price range had the lowest average days to sell on market at 24 days. Speaking of days on market, the average residential-detached days on market for January 2010 was 32 days, 3 days faster than last month and 10 days quicker than January 2009.

The average days on market for condominium sales in January 2010 was 47 days, over three weeks slower than the previous month and ten days off the pace set in January 2009.

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