

Lake Tahoe real estate market starting to stabilize

Year-end home sales at Lake Tahoe are holding steady compared to 2010 with some indicators on the rise, according to a quarterly report released by Lake Tahoe-based real estate firm Chase International, which notes a 1 percent increase in units sold around the lake.



The National Association of Realtors recently reported that existing home sales rose again in November and remain above a year ago, and the latest Tahoe housing market sales figures concur with this national trend.

While real estate sales and prices took a slight dip around the lake overall, the East Shore market segment saw a 1 percent increase in median home price (\$575,000) and a 35-percent jump in average price (\$1,286,924). Volume sold on the East Shore was up 26 percent, while the number of units was down 7 percent.

Although the number of units sold is up slightly, the median price of a home in Lake Tahoe is down 13 percent to \$365,000 from 2010's year-end numbers. The average home price fell 14 percent to \$607,683.

"It definitely is still a buyers' market as average and median prices have continued to fall but with units sold rising we believe the market is strengthening," Sue Lowe, corporate vice president for Chase International, said in a statement.

Deb Howard of South Lake Tahoe-based Deb Howard & Co. expects a "new normal" market to appear this year.

"I'm cautiously optimistic to report that the industry leaders

at (California Association of Realtors) and (National Association of Realtors) are predicting that during the next year we will experience modest increases in median home price with continued increases in home sales as well," Howard said. "In the forecast for the Lake Tahoe South Shore: Stabilization of median home prices; steady increase in home sales; and improving consumer confidence will be felt in response to the 'bottom of the market' data."

Truckee saw a 2 percent increase in units sold and a 17 percent rise in units sold for less than a million. The median price of a home in Truckee is \$438,166 (down 10 percent) and the average price is \$562,811 (also down 10 percent).

The condominium market around Lake Tahoe experienced a 6 percent decline over 2010 in units sold. However, for units sold for more than \$500,000, a notable 29 percent jump occurred. Tahoe City experienced the most pronounced increase in sales over 2010 sales figures, with a 3 percent rise in units sold and up 50 percent in units sold for over \$500,000. South Lake Tahoe saw a 21 percent increase in overall volume sold, with median and average prices rising 14 and 69 percent, respectively. The median price of a condo in Lake Tahoe is \$262,000 (down 8 percent) and the average price is \$348,868 (down 12 percent).

– Lake Tahoe News staff report