

Economic and Market Watch Report

6th Quarter, 2009



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Greater Tampa Association of REALTORS®

Economic and Market Watch Report

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Today, the Greater Tampa Association of REALTORS® is the voice for over 9,000 real estate professionals. Our Association has many objectives.

We unite those engaged in the recognized branches of the real estate profession for the purpose of exerting a beneficial influence upon the profession and related interest groups. In addition, we provide and maintain high standards of conduct in the real estate profession as expressed in the Code of Ethics of the National Association of REALTORS®.

Our Association also provides a unified medium for real estate owners and those engaged in the real estate profession whereby their interest may be safeguarded and advanced, and to further the interest of home and other real property ownership.

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Florida

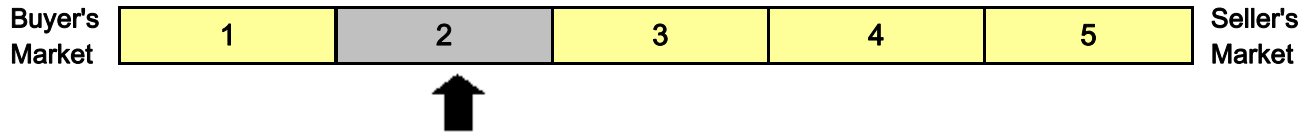
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Hillsborough County, FL



Labor Market :

Employment declined by 7,952 jobs in October and November. The job losses brought about an increase in the average monthly unemployment rate from 11.3% in the third quarter to 11.9% for the second two months of the fourth quarter. Job losses are ticking upwards, creating a drag on buyer confidence and demand in Hillsborough County. However, historically low mortgage rates have created a favorable buying environment for those with a job.

Housing Market :

	Q3' 09	Q4' 09	Q1' 10 (Forecast)
Average Price	\$187,200	\$174,600	↓
# Homes on the Market *	11,247	11,594	↑
# Homes Sold **	3,226	3,079	↓
# New Homes Built ***	781	329	↑
Avg # of Days on Market	101	98	↑

* Available as of Dec. 31, 2009.

** May not add to total of zip codes.

*** During the first two months of 4th quarter.

Data by Zip Codes for Q4 2009

Zip Code	Average Price	Price Change ***	Total # Homes Sold (Quarter)	% Change in # Homes Sold ***	Average Days on Market	% of Asking Price (Sold/ List Price)
33510	\$112,000	-29.78%	65	20.37%	88	87.1%
33511	\$150,700	-7.38%	111	9.90%	89	88.5%
33527	\$160,300	-32.68%	21	-8.70%	97	86.5%
33534	\$121,100	-11.48%	52	73.33%	93	90.6%
33547	\$251,400	1.91%	74	42.31%	96	89.5%
33548	\$344,900	-36.51%	11	37.50%	163	74.3%
33549	\$176,000	-42.56%	28	21.74%	104	85.6%
33556	\$330,200	-2.74%	28	47.37%	133	83.8%

*** % Change of current quarter compared to the same quarter to year ago.



Hillsborough County, FL

Data by Zip Codes for Q4 2009

Zip Code	Average Price	Price Change ***	Total # Homes Sold (Quarter)	% Change in # Homes Sold ***	Average Days on Market	% of Asking Price (Sold/ List Price)
33558	\$297,500	11.38%	52	20.93%	123	85.2%
33559	\$212,900	1.33%	21	110.00%	80	82.0%
33563	\$105,100	-17.57%	39	21.88%	112	82.6%
33565	\$161,700	-37.54%	9	28.57%	120	86.7%
33566	\$144,300	-23.29%	30	15.38%	78	90.9%
33567	\$164,000	-6.39%	13	85.71%	100	85.6%
33569	\$163,200	1.68%	90	-48.86%	124	87.8%
33570	\$147,900	-4.15%	71	115.15%	93	84.6%
33572	\$242,300	12.07%	93	19.23%	157	80.7%
33573	\$106,800	-17.97%	124	22.77%	137	83.8%
33578	\$127,800	N/A	117	N/A	78	91.5%
33579	\$162,400	N/A	96	N/A	55	94.4%
33584	\$137,700	-18.23%	63	36.96%	90	86.8%
33592	\$62,300	-54.19%	3	-57.14%	70	97.4%
33594	\$152,500	-21.07%	114	6.54%	91	90.1%
33596	\$200,900	N/A	69	N/A	74	89.7%
33598	\$232,700	7.93%	25	66.67%	64	94.1%
33602	\$275,000	-12.08%	71	31.48%	129	84.6%
33603	\$105,000	-0.57%	48	37.14%	88	84.1%
33604	\$96,000	18.67%	72	5.88%	69	90.2%
33605	\$48,200	-22.63%	26	0.00%	53	86.9%
33606	\$374,700	-45.20%	36	16.13%	193	80.1%
33607	\$82,100	-19.75%	42	68.00%	90	83.5%
33609	\$281,300	-19.72%	58	70.59%	115	83.4%
33610	\$85,300	17.01%	72	5.88%	82	86.3%
33611	\$194,000	-29.45%	89	53.45%	90	83.8%
33612	\$80,400	-39.23%	66	78.38%	74	83.2%
33613	\$235,000	56.25%	25	78.57%	101	74.7%
33614	\$93,000	-23.39%	64	77.78%	57	91.7%
33615	\$121,400	-22.63%	114	65.22%	100	87.7%
33616	\$211,800	-14.49%	31	34.78%	137	83.6%
33617	\$114,900	9.22%	75	87.50%	93	87.7%
33618	\$192,200	-13.31%	59	55.26%	102	83.7%
33619	\$67,300	-19.21%	52	20.93%	72	91.0%
33624	\$145,600	-4.34%	102	39.73%	77	90.8%
33625	\$161,800	-15.02%	56	30.23%	102	89.6%

*** % Change of current quarter compared to the same quarter to year ago.



Hillsborough County, FL

Data by Zip Codes for Q4 2009

Zip Code	Average Price	Price Change ***	Total # Homes Sold (Quarter)	% Change in # Homes Sold ***	Average Days on Market	% of Asking Price (Sold/ List Price)
33626	\$314,900	-3.35%	79	-11.24%	79	89.7%
33629	\$380,600	-13.50%	73	30.36%	183	80.2%
33634	\$114,400	-24.04%	46	100.00%	84	90.2%
33635	\$160,600	-16.09%	20	-9.09%	76	89.7%
33637	\$110,900	1.37%	38	153.33%	107	89.4%
33647	\$237,100	-7.64%	245	47.59%	104	89.0%
OTHER	\$134,000	-21.18%	1	-98.48%	39	100.0%

*** % Change of current quarter compared to the same quarter to year ago.



Others

Data by Zip Codes for Q4 2009

Zip Code	Average Price	Price Change ***	Total # Homes Sold (Quarter)	% Change in # Homes Sold ***	Average Days on Market	% of Asking Price (Sold/ List Price)
32127	\$215,000	N/A	1	N/A	100	79.9%
32179	\$63,000	N/A	1	N/A	30	90.1%
32701	\$135,000	-49.06%	1	0.00%	284	79.4%
32703	\$275,000	17.82%	1	-66.67%	325	68.8%
32707	\$183,000	-21.12%	1	-50.00%	37	93.8%
32708	\$350,500	N/A	2	N/A	179	87.4%
32712	\$295,000	5.36%	1	0.00%	6	83.1%
32713	\$267,000	N/A	2	N/A	67	93.9%
32714	\$222,500	N/A	1	N/A	190	76.9%
32720	\$215,000	N/A	1	N/A	65	98.2%
32726	\$47,000	N/A	1	N/A	63	82.9%
32746	\$330,000	4.76%	1	0.00%	127	89.3%
32765	\$272,000	N/A	1	N/A	19	91.0%
32771	\$143,600	43.60%	2	100.00%	24	99.2%
32773	\$164,000	N/A	1	N/A	174	112.7%
32776	\$238,300	N/A	3	N/A	188	75.3%
32789	\$302,500	103.02%	1	0.00%	22	98.9%
32792	\$59,000	N/A	2	N/A	30	78.7%
32804	\$513,000	25.83%	1	-50.00%	351	82.1%
32807	\$55,000	N/A	2	N/A	97	89.4%
32810	\$151,100	N/A	2	N/A	48	89.8%
32811	\$51,600	N/A	4	N/A	61	103.5%
32812	\$366,000	0.27%	1	0.00%	172	88.6%
32814	\$456,400	-4.32%	5	66.67%	89	91.3%
32818	\$98,000	N/A	1	N/A	42	98.1%
32821	\$50,000	N/A	1	N/A	50	66.7%
32822	\$78,700	N/A	3	N/A	21	92.8%
32824	\$101,300	-48.68%	3	50.00%	37	103.6%
32825	\$150,000	N/A	1	N/A	12	102.0%
32826	\$176,400	120.50%	1	0.00%	166	89.6%
32828	\$224,100	N/A	4	N/A	60	81.2%
32829	\$98,000	N/A	1	N/A	54	83.8%
32832	\$186,800	N/A	2	N/A	25	94.2%
32833	\$142,000	-39.57%	1	0.00%	2	98.0%

*** % Change of current quarter compared to the same quarter to year ago.



Others

Data by Zip Codes for Q4 2009

Zip Code	Average Price	Price Change ***	Total # Homes Sold (Quarter)	% Change in # Homes Sold ***	Average Days on Market	% of Asking Price (Sold/ List Price)
32835	\$82,500	-61.81%	8	300.00%	55	85.0%
32839	\$42,000	N/A	1	N/A	117	52.6%
32967	\$170,900	N/A	1	N/A	385	95.0%
33132	\$185,100	N/A	1	N/A	94	84.2%
33179	\$280,000	N/A	1	N/A	2	93.6%
33523	\$102,300	-46.77%	26	160.00%	146	80.5%
33525	\$208,700	18.38%	33	50.00%	190	77.3%
33540	\$89,900	-26.13%	20	150.00%	126	85.1%
33541	\$90,100	-9.26%	59	55.26%	139	83.8%
33542	\$88,100	14.27%	27	-28.95%	149	83.9%
33543	\$157,600	-19.05%	86	-5.49%	110	89.7%
33544	\$185,400	-1.64%	69	0.00%	86	90.1%
33545	\$145,100	N/A	64	N/A	76	92.6%
33548	\$275,000	N/A	1	N/A	247	68.9%
33549	\$155,500	-15.31%	12	-20.00%	152	84.4%
33556	\$207,400	-9.27%	13	18.18%	84	85.2%
33558	\$183,200	92.84%	4	300.00%	244	69.4%
33559	\$142,400	-10.89%	24	166.67%	115	88.9%
33576	\$139,500	4.10%	10	66.67%	143	85.0%
33597	\$65,300	N/A	3	N/A	111	70.9%
33701	\$85,500	7.95%	5	25.00%	22	94.0%
33702	\$110,900	79.74%	17	466.67%	108	89.7%
33703	\$224,900	76.81%	14	16.67%	93	78.3%
33704	\$164,700	-34.01%	6	50.00%	109	82.0%
33705	\$80,700	-24.44%	12	-29.41%	59	91.4%
33706	\$407,000	307.00%	4	300.00%	327	87.1%
33707	\$157,700	209.22%	4	300.00%	26	92.2%
33708	\$265,100	-32.89%	10	66.67%	115	86.2%
33709	\$102,100	63.36%	11	175.00%	24	97.2%
33710	\$78,500	-22.81%	9	-40.00%	103	85.5%
33711	\$50,500	-26.06%	7	0.00%	106	81.5%
33712	\$53,800	-7.24%	8	60.00%	83	83.2%
33713	\$82,800	-9.51%	12	20.00%	65	88.4%
33714	\$53,100	0.00%	6	50.00%	42	91.5%
33715	\$170,500	-32.61%	2	100.00%	95	103.4%
33716	\$133,400	-46.64%	6	200.00%	164	70.1%

*** % Change of current quarter compared to the same quarter to year ago.



Others

Data by Zip Codes for Q4 2009

Zip Code	Average Price	Price Change ***	Total # Homes Sold (Quarter)	% Change in # Homes Sold ***	Average Days on Market	% of Asking Price (Sold/ List Price)
33755	\$108,400	-21.56%	8	-20.00%	67	82.6%
33756	\$90,100	-53.19%	9	50.00%	49	87.7%
33759	\$142,900	3.78%	10	150.00%	117	74.8%
33760	\$73,300	-13.76%	4	300.00%	29	93.3%
33761	\$182,600	40.46%	4	300.00%	69	88.8%
33762	\$153,400	N/A	6	N/A	129	79.9%
33763	\$151,600	-4.05%	3	50.00%	183	73.8%
33764	\$200,300	63.91%	12	71.43%	120	85.9%
33765	\$179,900	8.31%	1	-80.00%	92	85.7%
33767	\$208,700	-57.17%	3	-50.00%	198	79.4%
33770	\$111,100	-56.00%	3	200.00%	170	99.4%
33771	\$100,500	26.26%	6	20.00%	144	75.9%
33772	\$147,900	-6.86%	4	33.33%	84	91.0%
33773	\$147,400	47.40%	4	100.00%	38	90.7%
33774	\$94,000	73.43%	1	-66.67%	169	102.7%
33776	\$125,300	-42.39%	5	400.00%	169	75.8%
33777	\$94,400	-61.20%	3	0.00%	21	92.6%
33778	\$80,800	-32.67%	5	400.00%	60	96.6%
33781	\$76,600	-44.89%	9	0.00%	16	97.7%
33782	\$61,300	-37.51%	4	-20.00%	70	87.4%
33785	\$295,600	5.76%	4	33.33%	201	77.6%
33786	\$1,500,000	174.37%	1	-66.67%	187	55.7%
33801	\$58,700	-13.29%	8	300.00%	122	83.5%
33803	\$92,500	-0.32%	7	40.00%	105	89.5%
33805	\$28,500	-50.00%	1	-50.00%	6	95.3%
33809	\$65,400	-60.36%	5	150.00%	39	89.9%
33810	\$140,700	29.80%	20	66.67%	85	88.6%
33811	\$111,300	-43.79%	5	25.00%	23	93.1%
33812	\$174,500	N/A	2	N/A	153	90.7%
33813	\$127,800	-10.63%	10	400.00%	121	86.1%
33815	\$25,000	-22.36%	1	0.00%	82	51.0%
33823	\$108,000	N/A	2	N/A	37	95.2%
33830	\$96,700	-64.60%	6	50.00%	196	83.5%
33837	\$105,000	-51.21%	4	100.00%	84	89.2%
33844	\$45,500	-62.08%	2	100.00%	117	64.1%
33848	\$83,000	N/A	1	N/A	92	83.0%

*** % Change of current quarter compared to the same quarter to year ago.



Others

Data by Zip Codes for Q4 2009

Zip Code	Average Price	Price Change ***	Total # Homes Sold (Quarter)	% Change in # Homes Sold ***	Average Days on Market	% of Asking Price (Sold/ List Price)
33853	\$43,000	N/A	1	N/A	17	100.0%
33860	\$126,000	-30.39%	16	700.00%	106	80.8%
33872	\$50,300	N/A	1	N/A	39	119.8%
33880	\$139,600	99.43%	4	100.00%	121	80.4%
33881	\$59,000	-24.36%	1	-75.00%	273	50.5%
33884	\$111,600	-32.49%	3	-72.73%	125	81.1%
33896	\$133,900	-4.36%	3	200.00%	45	93.5%
33897	\$109,200	-30.67%	6	-45.45%	138	80.8%
33914	\$84,500	N/A	1	N/A	98	93.9%
33946	\$128,800	N/A	1	N/A	450	58.8%
33947	\$125,000	N/A	1	N/A	59	96.2%
33948	\$144,900	N/A	2	N/A	26	67.1%
33950	\$78,400	N/A	3	N/A	140	86.2%
33952	\$49,600	-28.22%	8	300.00%	26	91.7%
33953	\$138,000	84.49%	1	0.00%	14	110.5%
33954	\$80,500	N/A	2	N/A	79	72.6%
33955	\$375,000	N/A	1	N/A	20	79.0%
33976	\$74,900	N/A	1	N/A	273	83.3%
33981	\$57,100	-56.08%	2	100.00%	10	96.9%
33983	\$44,300	-34.85%	3	50.00%	220	74.0%
34104	\$44,500	N/A	1	N/A	4	99.1%
34120	\$111,000	N/A	1	N/A	68	108.2%
34202	\$228,800	6.27%	4	33.33%	15	90.5%
34203	\$190,800	7.49%	4	100.00%	58	93.9%
34205	\$79,300	5.31%	2	-60.00%	180	79.4%
34207	\$42,400	-70.14%	2	100.00%	127	71.7%
34208	\$190,400	57.75%	6	50.00%	29	88.2%
34209	\$120,000	-14.29%	1	0.00%	21	114.4%
34210	\$341,300	51.69%	2	0.00%	189	80.3%
34212	\$208,200	-13.72%	4	33.33%	63	81.9%
34217	\$153,000	N/A	1	N/A	294	61.2%
34219	\$164,700	-18.87%	19	18.75%	38	96.6%
34221	\$95,000	-18.03%	1	-80.00%	155	90.5%
34222	\$344,100	N/A	6	N/A	48	94.5%
34223	\$247,400	205.06%	4	300.00%	156	82.4%
34231	\$79,000	-54.04%	3	200.00%	337	63.7%

*** % Change of current quarter compared to the same quarter to year ago.



Others

Data by Zip Codes for Q4 2009

Zip Code	Average Price	Price Change ***	Total # Homes Sold (Quarter)	% Change in # Homes Sold ***	Average Days on Market	% of Asking Price (Sold/ List Price)
34232	\$204,300	43.57%	2	0.00%	59	83.5%
34233	\$65,000	-78.33%	1	0.00%	80	78.4%
34234	\$47,000	-72.19%	1	0.00%	6	127.4%
34235	\$113,800	4.88%	2	100.00%	81	95.2%
34236	\$62,900	N/A	1	N/A	7	100.0%
34237	\$104,000	N/A	1	N/A	54	61.5%
34238	\$136,000	-43.33%	2	100.00%	122	92.2%
34239	\$74,000	-29.79%	1	-50.00%	132	79.6%
34243	\$306,100	-22.51%	4	33.33%	13	96.3%
34275	\$177,500	N/A	2	N/A	127	83.6%
34285	\$155,000	N/A	1	N/A	74	97.5%
34286	\$108,100	-24.41%	8	700.00%	44	95.7%
34287	\$93,000	118.82%	3	50.00%	63	79.1%
34288	\$124,300	13.52%	2	0.00%	83	87.6%
34289	\$86,900	N/A	3	N/A	65	95.6%
34291	\$120,000	N/A	1	N/A	82	100.1%
34292	\$179,300	N/A	2	N/A	149	86.8%
34293	\$63,000	-45.45%	1	0.00%	295	63.0%
34420	\$101,000	N/A	1	N/A	268	57.7%
34472	\$67,100	N/A	1	N/A	17	101.7%
34488	\$80,000	N/A	1	N/A	204	70.8%
34601	\$140,200	197.66%	5	150.00%	170	71.4%
34602	\$210,700	24.31%	3	50.00%	244	82.1%
34604	\$127,100	-34.79%	9	80.00%	86	89.1%
34606	\$80,300	9.55%	13	-13.33%	56	86.7%
34607	\$109,000	-65.40%	4	33.33%	80	84.1%
34608	\$103,500	0.58%	22	69.23%	89	89.4%
34609	\$115,900	-10.57%	25	-16.67%	110	90.5%
34610	\$119,000	-36.80%	10	42.86%	146	86.1%
34613	\$178,000	56.55%	1	-83.33%	78	82.8%
34614	\$81,800	-51.97%	6	100.00%	82	97.2%
34637	\$168,100	-38.18%	15	-28.57%	127	88.4%
34638	\$186,600	-13.73%	91	46.77%	105	89.7%
34639	\$166,100	-4.70%	78	41.82%	99	88.5%
34652	\$156,000	122.54%	20	100.00%	59	84.1%
34653	\$94,700	-1.66%	17	88.89%	92	92.0%

*** % Change of current quarter compared to the same quarter to year ago.



Others

Data by Zip Codes for Q4 2009

Zip Code	Average Price	Price Change ***	Total # Homes Sold (Quarter)	% Change in # Homes Sold ***	Average Days on Market	% of Asking Price (Sold/ List Price)
34654	\$175,300	44.04%	19	35.71%	67	97.9%
34655	\$145,400	-22.86%	19	-20.83%	129	86.7%
34667	\$94,500	-8.43%	18	-5.26%	88	78.0%
34668	\$56,200	-2.43%	30	25.00%	48	88.6%
34669	\$122,700	-3.39%	23	228.57%	83	89.6%
34677	\$211,600	-8.20%	13	116.67%	187	72.9%
34683	\$120,600	-19.71%	17	142.86%	77	90.0%
34684	\$111,400	-49.09%	7	75.00%	98	93.9%
34685	\$284,600	15.55%	7	133.33%	220	87.1%
34688	\$249,800	-25.99%	4	100.00%	181	74.9%
34689	\$162,800	-2.22%	8	33.33%	39	87.3%
34690	\$76,700	73.14%	8	60.00%	59	91.7%
34691	\$72,800	8.66%	22	100.00%	71	87.3%
34695	\$179,700	-42.55%	4	-20.00%	65	88.2%
34698	\$118,400	-36.38%	8	60.00%	163	74.6%
34711	\$242,500	-4.90%	4	100.00%	196	75.0%
34715	\$182,100	N/A	4	N/A	137	94.1%
34736	\$117,500	N/A	1	N/A	127	63.5%
34741	\$93,900	-39.69%	4	100.00%	18	97.9%
34744	\$252,000	N/A	1	N/A	14	101.2%
34746	\$186,100	-29.91%	9	800.00%	127	89.4%
34747	\$345,000	-20.05%	1	-66.67%	118	88.5%
34758	\$84,200	6.58%	5	400.00%	23	96.2%
34759	\$113,600	34.12%	9	12.50%	32	91.5%
34761	\$137,500	-0.72%	3	200.00%	110	75.1%
34771	\$308,000	N/A	2	N/A	70	87.4%
34786	\$434,600	46.87%	8	700.00%	66	95.1%
34787	\$279,100	N/A	4	N/A	35	97.1%
OTHER	\$168,000	9.59%	2	-81.82%	216	67.0%

*** % Change of current quarter compared to the same quarter to year ago.

One Year After the Crash

By Ken Fears, Manager of Regional Economics

A lot can change in one year. In September of 2008, the Lehmen Brothers investment bank declared bankruptcy. The subsequent chain of events sent global credit markets into turmoil and brought many local housing markets to a virtual standstill. Nationally, seasonally adjusted home sales slipped 11.0% between September and November of 2008. However, over the 12 months ending in November of 2009, home sales rose 44.1% to reach 6.540 million at a seasonally adjusted and annualized rate. Here in the market covered by the Greater Tampa Association of REALTORS® sales were 28.8% higher in December of 2009 than 12 months earlier, a significant gain. Much of this momentum is due to unprecedented government incentives through record low mortgage rates and tax credits. But how will the market fair in 2010 when these incentives are eliminated?

The first-time home buyer tax credit was originally set to expire in late November of 2008. Any home sold by November 30th was eligible for the credit. However, it can take a month to two months to close a contract, so only homes that were under contract in October had a realistic chance of closing in time to use the credit. Consequently, looking at the change in demand from October to November of 2009 can be informative. Nationally, the number of homes under contract rose for nine consecutive months, peaking in October and then falling 15.5% in November of 2009. Likewise, sales fell 16.2% between November and December, reflecting the slump in November contracts. Locally, the number of homes sold fell 1.4% between November and December of 2009. It is unlikely that sale should remain as strong as their November highs, but homes sales should remain above 2009 levels because of the decline in layoffs and improved consumer confidence.

	Less than \$1 Million	More than \$1 Million
Sales Q4 2008	3,398	12
Sales Q4 2009	4,831	19

Another change has developed in the market that could support stronger sales in 2010. A large jump in jumbo mortgage rates created a disproportionate increase in inventory at the higher price ranges in 2007 and 2008, but sales at the upper end have since picked up. The strong incentives for first time buyers spurred buying at the lower end of the market, but the improvement at the upper price range was due to a different factor: better mortgage rates. The spread between average 30-year fixed rate on a jumbo and FHA rates fell from 143 basis points in January of 2009 to 71 basis points in December of 2009¹. As a result, sales have rebounded and the months supply of homes for sale above \$1,000,000 has tightened (improved) from 63.8 in November of 2008 to 23.3 months in November of 2009. Here in the market covered by the Greater Tampa Association of REALTORS®, sales of homes over \$1,000,000 rose by 58.3% from December 2008 to December 2009.

The housing market in 2010 is virtually guaranteed to be better than that of 2009. Sales will improve at the upper end of the market as banks' view of non-agency backed loans as less risky spreads. But rising mortgage rates across the board may create headwinds for sales growth as the economy recovers in late 2010. Regardless, the national market will likely achieve a higher level of sales volume, well below the heady days of 2006, but at a steady, more stable level of sales.

¹ Source: Bankrate.com

A New Year: Good Prospects, Lingering Challenges

by Lawrence Yun, *NAR Chief Economist*

Happy New Year! I think we were all glad to say good-bye to 2009 and the recession, a suffering job market, and at least for most of the year very sluggish housing activity

Fortunately, towards the end of last year things were looking up for housing (finally). As we saw, the first time home buyer tax credit provided a strong incentive for buyers to enter the market. From a sales pace of 4.5 million units (seasonally adjusted annualized pace) in the immediate months prior to the tax credit stimulus, existing-home sales soared to 6.1 million and 6.5 million in October and November, respectively. Now with the tax credit having been extended (and expanded) and the new deadline not looming until the middle of 2010, the deep cold winter will bring us a few calm months before another surge in home sales in spring and early summer. Of course, the big question is, once the tax credit goes away in the second half of the year, what can we expect?

The key to a real and sustainable housing market recovery can be summed up in one word: jobs! The job market continues to struggle despite recent respectable gains in production. That is, total production as measured by GDP grew for the first time in two years in the third quarter of 2009, by a decent 2.2 percent growth rate. Early indications are that the economy expanded by better than 4 percent in the final (fourth) quarter of 2009. Based on many economic indicators - from consumer credit and retail sales to the need for inventory restocking and rising exports - GDP is expected to expand by close to 3 percent for all of 2010. While that 3 percent GDP growth is somewhat lackluster coming out of a deep recession, the worst is definitively over.

Even as production rises, companies coming out of a recession push their existing workers to do more rather than hiring new workers to raise production. Not surprisingly, the unemployment rate remained high at 10 percent in December as far fewer people were working (or even looking for work) during the month. In December a net 85,000 payroll jobs were lost according to company survey data in December tracked by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. In a separate survey of households which asks people whether or not they have a job, there were 589,000 net fewer jobs. Since the beginning of the recession two years ago, the country has shed 7.2 million jobs. Over the short term, the unemployment rate will, I'm afraid, go higher - possibly even to 10.5 percent, particularly if many of the discouraged workers re-enter the labor force and start applying for a job.

However, there are several signs pointing towards potentially consistent job creation in the second half of the year. In December, temporary help employment rose for a fifth straight month. Because many companies first turn to such "temp" jobs coming out of a recession, this rising trend should imply permanent job creations starting in few months. Past historical experience also show that temp jobs rise before permanent jobs.

Sector by sector, manufacturing companies continue to bleed heavily while jobs are still being cut sharply in construction because of weak housing starts and near total collapse in new commercial real estate construction. Jobs at state and local governments fell slightly in December. There will be continuing pressure throughout this year for further job cuts as most state and local governments are running relatively high budget deficits and generally by law have to balance their books.

There are some bright spots. Those sectors that have been gaining jobs consistently have been in health care service and in education. For a recent college graduate with a nursing or education degree, the job

prospects are much better. Another sector that had been hammered badly but is now showing job additions is the professional business service sector (e.g., accounting, management consulting, and law offices) which added about 50,000 payrolls in December. That could signal some good news for commercial real estate: these job gains will require office space, so this could be the very first sign of potential improvement and business opportunities for commercial REALTORS®.

Another bright spot: 2010, fortunately happens to be the year of the Census and the counting of people. Consequently, the government will hire about one million people this year to collect and process the data. Yes, these jobs will be mostly temporary. But nonetheless it will provide jobs and income support until the private sector begins to add jobs on a permanent basis. Currently, the private sector is on the sidelines with a wait-and-see approach. But with overall production continuing to gain respectably, the private sector will eventually need to boost payroll. As the home buyer tax credit expires in June, private sector job creation will be key to a sustainable housing market recovery. My best guess is about 100,000 net job gains per month in the second half of the year.








Assuming the job market does turn around then, home sales for the year will be about 10 percent higher in 2010 compared to 2009. With inventory being absorbed, home values will likely squeak out a gain for the year as a whole. That is important in terms of boosting consumer confidence about home buying.

Home values are also important for boosting income for REALTORS®. Residential brokerage commission fell in 2009 by 6.2 percent to \$40.6 billion according to Real Trends. That figure is roughly in line with NAR's estimated 8 percent decline in average commission income based on 5 percent higher unit sales but 13 percent decline in home values in 2009. While it's true that REALTORS® were much busier than normal in 2009 - both in terms of having more customers as well as having to spend longer on home sales transactions (particularly in regards to short-sales) - lower home values led to overall reduction in income on average.

Based on our home sales and home price projections for 2010, I think we can expect about a 12 to 19 percent rise in overall commission income in 2010. The forecast is never "on the money" (no pun intended) and the actual figure could be measurably higher or lower. Still, I'm comfortable in saying that following four years of a housing market recession, aggregate income is more likely to be up because of the tax credit in the first half of the year and the job creation in the second half.

However, any rise in the aggregate commission income for REALTORS® as a whole may not be reflected in the income for individual REALTORS® if many more people enter the profession. (Remember, this happened during the housing boom years.) Those contemplating entering the profession need to be aware of the business challenges in the early years of a real estate career. The average income of REALTORS® with less than two years of experience is well below \$20,000 per year before expenses. In addition, referrals and personal relationships have been the dominant factors in drawing new clients. Over 80 percent of recent home buyers and home sellers recommend (or will likely recommend) their specific REALTOR® to colleagues, friends, and family members. As with any dynamic entrepreneurial business, there will be some start-ups who will do very well, but the initial edge in real estate business will be with veterans who have served their clients well in the past.

This table reflects data available through January 8th 2010.

Monthly Indicator	Recent Statistics	Likely Direction Over the Next Six Months	Forecast
<p>Existing Home Sales rose 7.4% in November to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 6.54 million units. November resales were more than 44% higher than a year ago and at their highest level since February of 2007. The healthy sales activity helped draw down existing-home inventory to 3.52 million units – a 6.5 month supply at the current sales pace. The national median home price for an existing home was \$172,600.</p>	Nov 09 6,540 Oct 09 6,090 Nov 08 4,540		Second surge coming in spring
<p>New Home Sales declined 11.3% in November to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 335,000 units. November's sales pace was 9.0% off that recorded in November 2008. While the actual number of new homes available for sale decreased to 235,000, inventory rose to a 7.9 month supply at the current sales pace.</p>	Nov 09 355 Oct 09 400 Nov 08 390		The worst is past
<p>Housing Starts posted a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 574,000 in November – a 8.9% increase from October's level, but 12.4% off the rate a year ago. Single-family starts rose 2.1%. Housing permits – generally a reliable indicator of future starts – climbed 6.0% from the previous month.</p>	Nov 09 574 Oct 09 527 Nov 08 655		Construction loans are difficult to come by but more new homes will be built in 2010
<p>Housing Affordability remains at a fairly high level. NAR's latest Housing Affordability Index (HAI) posted a reading of 167.7 in November, just marginally off October's index of 167.8 but well above the 144.3 index reading in November of 2008. Continuing low home prices and mortgage rates are keeping the index historically high.</p>	Nov 09 167.7 Oct 09 167.8 Nov 08 144.3		Soft income growth from high unemployment rates
<p>Mortgage Rates increased slightly, as the average 30-year fixed rate rose from 4.88% in November to 4.93% in December. As the economy further strengthens, the Federal Reserve is likely to raise its overnight target rate, and this will push up short-term interest rates such as those for adjustable-rate mortgages. However, no Fed action is anticipated until the second half of 2010.</p>	Dec 09 4.93% Nov 09 4.88% Dec 08 5.29%		Will no longer remain at rock bottom levels
<p>Employment Despite encouraging signs in other sectors of the economy the job market continues to be a worry. In December, 85,000 jobs were lost, much worse than most analysts expected. November's revised employment figure actually showed a gain of 4,000 – the first job creation figure in nearly two years. That good news was tempered by an upwardly revised job loss number in October. The unemployment rate was unchanged at 10%, most likely due to people who have stopped looking for work.</p>	Dec 09 -85 Nov 09 +4 12-month total: -4,164		Net job gains possibly from spring and definitely by summer
<p>Economic Growth The U.S. economy grew at a 2.2% rate in the third quarter of 2009. This is the third and final estimate of GDP growth based on more complete data. For comparison, second quarter 2009 real GDP growth was -0.7%. The positive GDP growth figure reflects increases in personal consumption expenditures, exports, and federal government spending, as well as contributions from private inventory and residential fixed investment.</p>	2009:III +2.2% 2009:II -0.7% 2008:III -0.5%		Not a robust postrecession growth, but still an expansion

Notes: All rate are seasonally adjusted. New home sales, existing home sales, and housing starts are shown in thousands. Employment growth is shown as month-to-month change in thousands. Inflation is shown as the month-to-month change in the Consumer Price Index. Sources: NAR, Bureau of the Census, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Freddie Mac, and the Mortgage Bankers Association