

Sarasota ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS

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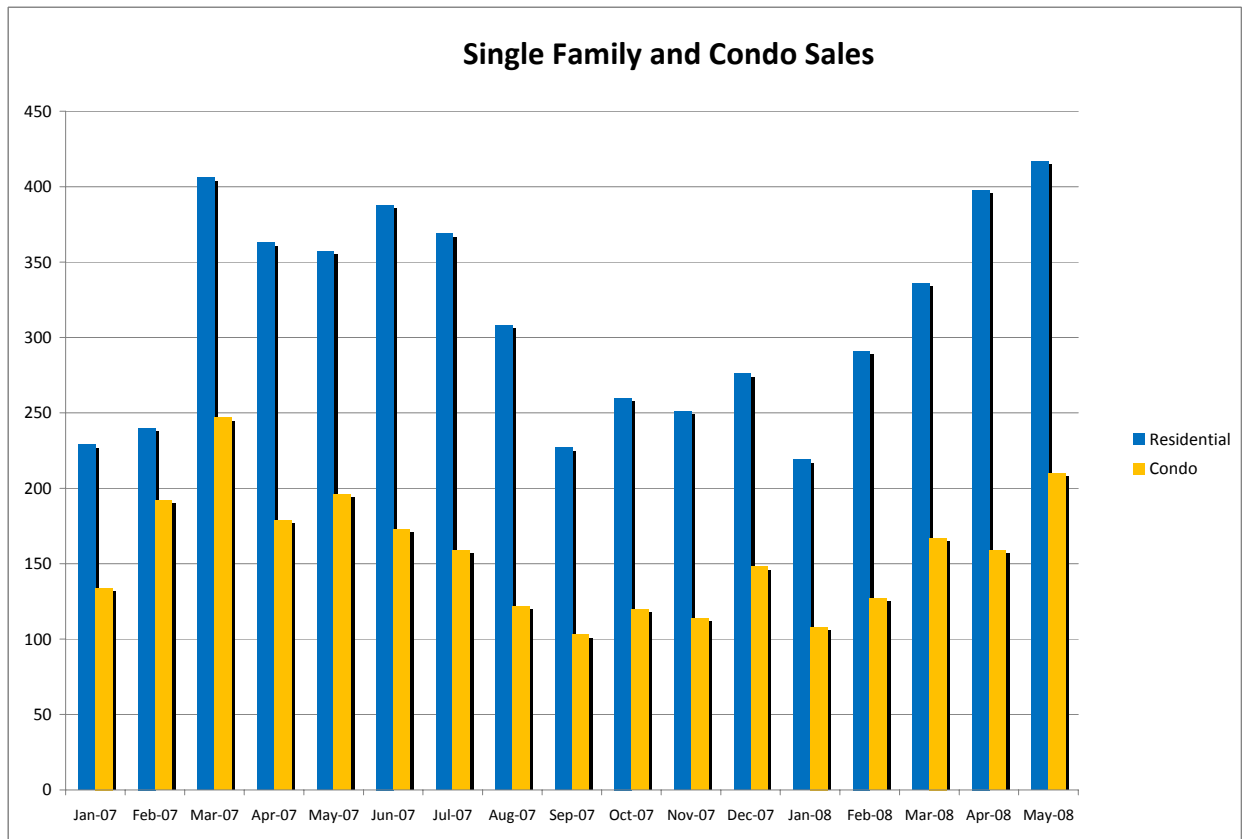
Sarasota Association of Realtors

June 26, 2008

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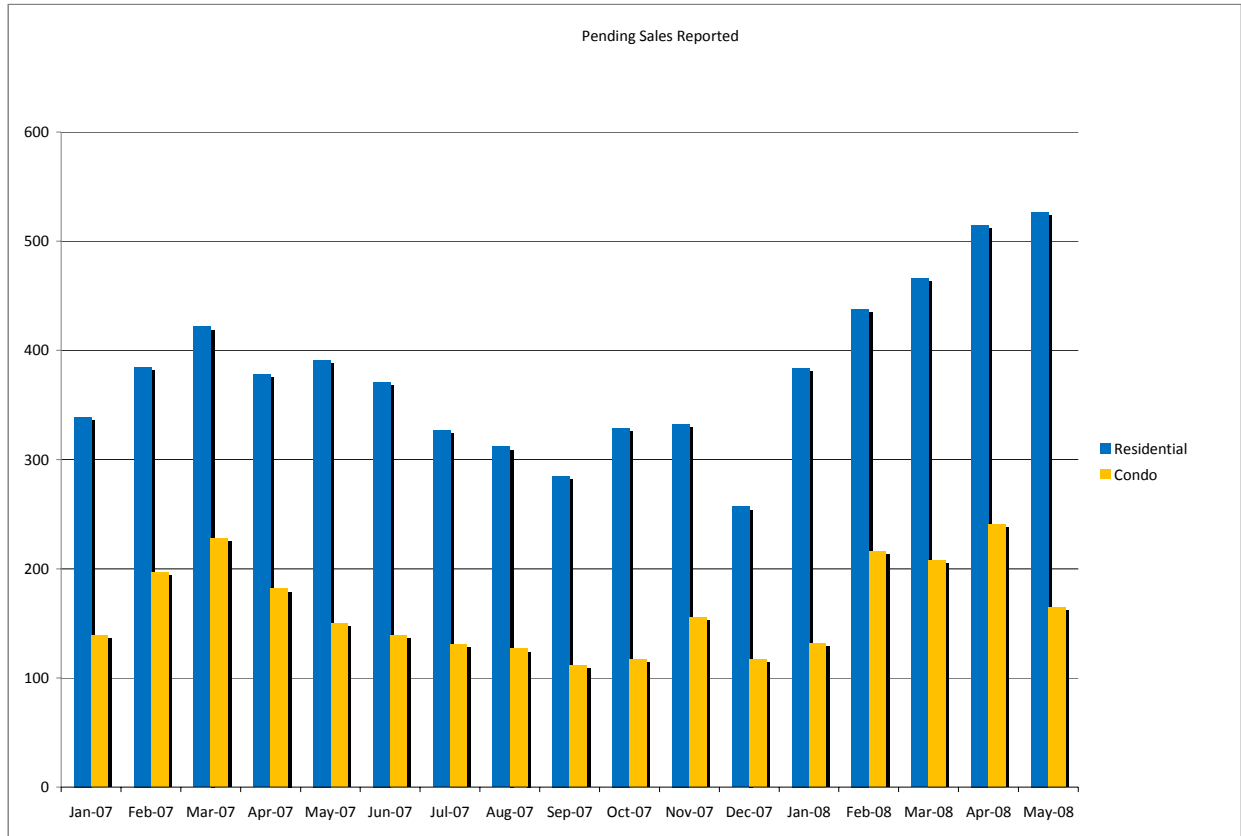
Sarasota market hits highest sales figure since March 2007

Home sales in the Sarasota MLS for May 2008 stood at 627 – the highest level in 14 months, and approximately 92 percent higher than the sales in January 2008. In 2008, sales have been increasing each month, possibly due to the influence of the new property tax portability law enacted in late January. Sales have climbed from 329 in January to 423 in February, 514 in March and 567 in April.



“This year, the Sarasota real estate market has been a beacon of hope as the state and national markets continue to struggle,” said Helen Sosso, 2008 SAR President. “I believe our local agents have embraced the concept of a buyers’ market, and educated sellers on the realities of pricing. We still have advantageous interest rates, and our communities’ natural and cultural amenities always attract buyers.”

The May 2008 report continued to reflect strength in pending sales, which stood at 692 – the second highest level since June 2006. Last month’s pending sales stood at 756, the highest in the period. In May 2007 only 541 pending sales were reported. Like closed sales, pending sales have been edging upward since December 2007, when there were only 374 pending sales reported. Pending sales reflect contracts executed by buyers and sellers, and indicate more closings in upcoming months and an improving market in the early summer months.



Inventory levels were lower in May 2008 for the third month, and are the lowest they have been since February 2006. Still, with 9,500 single family and 5,100 condos listed, buyers have a huge selection of more affordably priced housing to select from. The reduced inventory is a combination of fewer properties being listed, and increasing sales numbers. As the inventory continues to decline, the market will come back to more balance. As we approach equilibrium, the buyer’s market we’ve been experiencing will be gone, and price appreciation will creep back into the market.

In general, the Sarasota MLS statistics show a rebound throughout 2008 – every month seeing stronger numbers than the month before. In fact, Sarasota statistics have been stronger in recent months than sales in the Miami market, which is a much bigger geographic and demographic area.

In the local Sarasota market, we have seen the trend already beginning toward lower inventories, higher sales, and a leveling of prices after several months of declines. The May figures reflect this new reality.