

Sarasota ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS

For Immediate Release

Sarasota Association of Realtors

Oct. 24, 2007

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2007 Sarasota real estate market continues to mirror 2006

The Sarasota real estate market this year continues to mirror last year, with sales figures year-to-date for homes and condominiums in the Sarasota MLS declining only a modest 7 percent through the first nine months of 2007 compared to the same period in 2006.

In total, 4,830 closings were reported through the end of September 2007, compared to 5,194 closings through September 2006. These numbers are reminiscent of the market through Sept. 30, 2001, when there were 4,476 closings reported. However, home and condominium prices have obviously increased dramatically during the past six years.

In fact, the total volume of sales for the first nine months of 2001 was only \$1.22 billion, while the figure was \$2.365 billion, or almost double this year. This is an indicator of how much homes and condominiums have appreciated in only a short time in our area. Despite the recent downturn in median prices from the peak experienced in 2005, for those who owned a home for the past several years, there has still been a substantial increase in value and equity in the property.

Condominium prices were a bright spot, up year-to-date through Sept. 30, with the median sale price for the first nine months at \$355,000, compared to only \$310,000 for the same period in 2006. This represents an increase of 14.5 percent.

The median sale price of a home was \$309,000 year-to-date through September 2007, compared to \$350,000 for the first nine months of 2006, for a decline of 11.7 percent.

The Sarasota MLS did show a dip in sales for September 2007, with 234 single family home sales and 104 condominium sales, compared to September 2006, when 316 home and 134 condos were reported sold. However, September is often one of the slowest sales months of the year, prior to the return of seasonal residents and potential home buyers.

“We are continuing to see stabilization in our market numbers as we come out of the slower, end-of-summer months,” said Joe Hembree, 2007 SAR President. “Word of mouth indicates we are already seeing an increase in visitors to open houses, and we

expect the season will bring a new wave of serious buyers, who will see a market in recovery, with prices lower than people have seen in a few years.”

Viewing the statistics generated by the Florida Association of Realtors®, which combines the Sarasota-Bradenton-Venice area as one Metropolitan Service Area (MSA), Hembree noted this region is still doing better than the overall state.

“We were only down 10 percent in terms of condominium sales for the month, while the overall state was down 37 percent,” said Hembree. “The median condo sale price also was up by 6 percent for our MSA, while the state was down 4 percent. Our single family home sales were down 25 percent, September to September, while the state was down 38 percent. Ocala’s MSA was down 57 percent, and Orlando was down 48 percent. So you can see that we are still performing relatively well in a down market.”

On Oct. 16, during a panel discussion concerning the local market, sponsored by SAR and the Time2Buy Sarasota campaign, noted national economist John Tuccillo said all signs are pointing to the first phase of a market recovery now in progress in Sarasota.

The cyclical real estate industry often sees the start of a new phase reflected in lower numbers of listings, which is evident in the Sarasota market. Tuccillo noted this is normally followed by the second phase, a reduction in the number of days on market, and then the third phase, a rise in the ratio of sale price to list price.