

**PRESS RELEASE**

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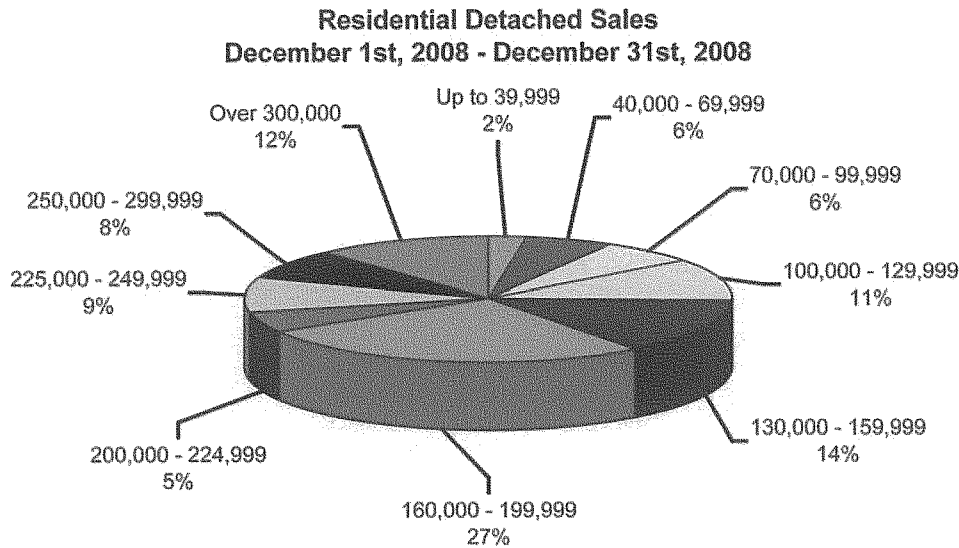
DECEMBER MLS® SALES HOLD UP WELL**MLS® Sales Off 3%; MLS® Dollar Volume Up 5%**

WINNIPEG - The Winnipeg real estate market recovered some of its lost form in the fourth quarter by posting a solid showing to end an excellent year of MLS® market activity. Sales finished over 500, less than twenty sales off December 2007, while dollar volume recorded the second highest dollar volume level ever for this month at just under \$92 million. It is only surpassed by the \$94.7 million total set in 2006 when there were close to 600 MLS® sales. New MLS® listings continued to show healthy increases over the same month the year before with a 25% jump. December sales were close to matching the number of new listings entered this month.

December MLS® unit sales were down 3% (504/522) while dollar volume rose 5% (\$91.8 million/\$87.4 million) when compared to the same month last year.

Going into the final month of the year, we knew the year end results would not be affected to any major degree so our concern was more on how the numbers stacked up against December 2007," said Darlene Clare, outgoing president of WinnipegREALTORS®. "I am pleased to say our December results were in line with previous Decembers and give us some optimism going into 2009." "Even though multiple offers have dropped off substantially in the last quarter there were still 27% of house sales selling for above or at list price."

Residential-detached sales in December were by far the most active in the \$160,000 to \$199,999 price range with 27% of total sales. A distant second at 14% was the next lower price range from \$130,000 to \$159,999. The highest sale price was \$740,000 and the lowest went for only \$17,000. The average days on market for home sales in December was 42 days, 10 days off last month and December 2007.



2008 SETS A NEW MLS® DOLLAR VOLUME RECORD

Annual MLS® Sales Down 3%; Dollar Volume Up 9%

2008 continued a six year trend line where Winnipeg’s real estate market outperformed the previous year in generating a higher year end dollar volume. As was predicted at the beginning of the year, 2008 turned in the second consecutive year of MLS® sales in excess of \$2 billion.

“It is quite amazing when you think it took WinnipegREALTORS® 99 years to reach \$1 billion in 2002 and now six years later, we have done back to back years of over \$2 billion,” said Clare. “This is not only a testimony to the hard work and effort of our network of over 1300 REALTORS®, but to the positive developments happening in Winnipeg.”

Sales finished exceptionally well. They were only 3% off the record-breaking milestone set in 2007 of over 13,000 sales. The 11% increase of MLS® listings to just fall shy of 18,000 is one of the most encouraging developments to occur as it helped bring more balance to a market in need of more inventory. The sales to conversion ratio of these MLS® listings is a respectable 70%.



MLS® sales totaled 12,630 while dollar volume reached a new record level of over \$2.4 billion. This result translates to a 3% decline in sales from 2007 and a 9% increase in dollar volume.

Besides the emergence of a more balanced market as the year progressed a marked difference from 2007 was the rise in upper end home sales. Despite having more sales in 2007 overall, the sales of homes over \$300,000 in 2008 were up 44% (1283/898). There were also 9 million dollar plus home sales, the most ever in one year.

As a result of the movement to higher priced home sales, pie charts in 2009 will reflect more price category breakdowns above \$300,000.

The significant increase in higher priced sales was certainly a contributing factor in the average residential-detached sale price climbing 13% from \$182,459 in 2007 to \$206,213 in 2008. It is the sixth year in a row where the average price has gone up in the low teens compared to the previous year. The other major driver of average price increases was the abundance of multiple offers, especially in the first three quarters of the year. 46% of all MLS® homes sales went for above list price with another 11% selling at list price.

The condominium average sale price increased too with a 9% rise from \$158,632 to \$172,649. As has happened in other cities, there was a flight of buyers to more affordable condominiums as the busiest condominium price range by far was from \$120,000 to \$149,999 with 29% of total sales. The most active residential-detached price range was at a higher price point from \$160,000 to \$199,999 with 21% of total sales.

“Winnipeg’s MLS® market in 2008 can be characterized as one that evolved into a healthier, more balanced market where buyers got more time and choice in what they chose to buy” said Clare. “The other important ingredient to this mix was ushering in more affordability as the degree of upward price push that was so evident in the earlier part of the year became far less pronounced later on with a drop off in the number of multiple offers.”

“In comparison to other major markets, Winnipeg is still one of the most affordable real estate markets in the country with the vast majority of condominium sales occurring below \$200,000 and over 50% of homes selling below this amount.”



“I am going into 2009 with some optimism given local economic indicators remain solid and our market remains affordable,” said Clare. The real plus in 2009 is we have a better supply of listings than 2008 so buyers will have more to choose from when taking advantage of historically low mortgage rates.”

Established in 1903, WinnipegREALTORS® is a professional association representing over 1,500 real estate brokers, salespeople, appraisers, and financial members active in the Greater Winnipeg Area real estate market. Its REALTOR® members adhere to a strict code of ethics and share a state-of-the-art Multiple Listing Service® (MLS®) designed exclusively for REALTORS®. WinnipegREALTORS® serves its members by promoting the benefits of an organized real estate profession.

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