

# December home sales go up as available units drop

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Home prices and sales went up, while inventory went down.

Those are among the positives Greater Greenville's housing market saw in December.

Nick Sabatine, chief executive officer of the Greater Greenville Association of Realtors, which includes Pickens and Laurens counties, said the area is in a "soft recovery."

But he expects 2012 to be an unstable year because of the presidential election.

"We're going to see things fluctuate. It won't necessarily be a bad year," he said. "It's just that things will be a little bit crazy."

The market in December was described as encouraging.

Sales were up 7.6 percent from December 2010. Sales in this region spiked in August with a 42 percent year-over year increase, but they never returned to that level.

Still, "December was a much better month this year than it was last year," Sabatine said. "The interest rate is so attractive that I think people who were waiting to buy are no longer waiting to buy."

Though home sales were down 2.1 percent year-to-date, the drop was the lowest decline since 2006, when sales of 10,388 units represented a 3.3 percent drop from the previous year.

The number of units active on the market is at 5,397 compared to 6,411 during the same period in 2011. That means either houses have sold or there aren't as many foreclosures on the market, Sabatine said.

The average sales price in Greater Greenville is up 4.5 percent to \$246,726 and the median sales price is up 1.3 percent to \$169,000.

Also up is the average days homes are spending on the market, from 178 days a year ago to 191 days now.