Final 2012 housing numbers

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Year-end housing figures show an upturn in the housing market in Oconee County and throughout South Carolina, giving officials reason to be optimistic for 2013.

"I don't think we are going to set any records in 2013, but I do think we are going to continue to see steady, modest gains," said Kevin Cope, broker-in-charge for First Choice Realty in Seneca and chairman of the board of directors for the Western Upstate Association of Realtors.

Statewide figures showed home sales in 2012 were up 12.5 percent to 53,375, the most since 2007, according to the S.C. Board of Realtors. Cope said Oconee County saw an 8 to 9 percent increase in home sales that actually closed in 2012.

"We had less home volume than they had in other parts of the state," Cope said. "Some counties and some regions of the state did better than others, but I think we did well here."

Cope said the houses in Oconee County near the lakes, particularly those in the $250,000 to $450,000 price range, showed the greatest gains in 2012.

show positive turn

"Those houses were the ones that took the biggest hits (during the economic downturn)," said Cope.

He said Realtors are learning that pricing houses close to prices similar houses are selling for leads to home sales that are closer to the asking price. Statewide Realtors reported housing selling for 94.9 percent of the asking price.

"Buyers today are not going to overpay," he said.

Cope said the figures in Oconee County and the Western Upstate Region fell right in line with the 1.5 percent increase statewide for median house sales. The average home sold for $150,000 statewide, which Cope said was the average sale price in the region and county as well.

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