

BUSINESS

Foreclosure filings surge here

Rate falls nationally, but Greenville County sees 83 percent jump in May

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The state followed the national trend in seeing a year-over-year drop in foreclosures last month.

But in the Greenville-Mauldin-Easley metropolitan area, foreclosure filings rose 57 percent in May from April, and in Greenville County alone, the number went up 83 percent last month, according to RealtyTrac's U.S. Foreclosure Market Report for May.

Nationwide, foreclo-

sures hit a 42-month low last month with filings reported on 214,927 properties. That represents a two percent decrease from April and a 33 percent drop from May 2010, said RealtyTrac.

South Carolina moved up to 15th in the foreclosure ranking among the states, but properties with a foreclosure filing dropped 8.5 percent from April and 20 percent from May 2010.

Daren Blomquist, spokesman for RealtyTrac, said the "foreclosure

freefall" has less to do with a recover and more with continued delays in processing foreclosures.

He said RealtyTrac saw some areas where foreclosure activity spiked last month. It's a pattern that has been seen over previous months, he said.

"That is a sign to us that there's still a lot of pent-up inventory or distressed loans that the lenders are working through," he said. "Once in a while, you'll see this jump in certain areas as some of that inventory is pushed through the foreclosure process."

The Greenville metro area is a good example of that, Blomquist said.

The number of default or initial foreclosure notices in the region increased from 181 in April to 330 in May. The 330 default notices in the Greenville area is an increase of 23 percent from a year ago.

Previously, Greenville enjoyed three straight months of decreases in the default notice category.

"That's a sign to me that the lenders, for whatever reason, decided that they were going to push a batch of those (delinquent loans) into foreclosure," Blomquist said. "That's why you see this spike in numbers."

In spite of that spike, foreclosure auctions were down in the Greenville

area from the previous month and a year ago, and although bank repossessions were up from the previous month, they're still down from a year ago, Blomquist said.

There is 25 month supply of unsold bank-owned properties nationwide, Blomquist said. South Carolina has a 26 month supply, he said.

Statewide, one in every 730 housing units had a foreclosure filing last month. May was also the state's fifth straight month of decreasing foreclosure activity, Blomquist said.

The state sits among the top half because of the number of filings.