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Home sales mixed

Market strengthens in Salem, Westminster

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SENECA — Tri-county homes sales recorded mixed results in Oconee and Pickens counties, the latest housing market information shows.

For instance, while sales were up last month in the Salem area that includes Lakes Keowee properties, they plummeted in Seneca, Walhalla and Westminster.

In Pickens County, home sales improved considerably last month in Central, but were disappointing in Clemson and Liberty, according to data released this week by the South Carolina Realtors.

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AREA HOME SALES

Area	May '10 sales	May '09 sales	%+ or -	2010 YTD	2009 YTD	%+ or -
Central	9	3	+200.0	29	24	+20.8
Clemson	12	17	-29.4	51	42	+21.4
Fair Play	1	1	0.0	5	7	-28.6
Liberty	7	10	-30.0	26	28	-7.1
Pendleton	8	8	0.0	26	30	-13.3
Pickens	5	4	+25.0	20	21	-4.8
Salem	8	3	+166.7	34	19	+78.9
Seneca	28	31	-9.7	124	125	-0.8
Walhalla	1	6	-83.3	16	16	0.0
Westminster	5	8	-37.5	29	21	+38.1

AREA MEDIAN SALES PRICE

Area	May '10	May '09	%+ or -	2010 YTD	2009 YTD	% + or -
Central	$93,000	$170,000	-45.3	$70,000	$160,500	-56.4
Clemson	$104,250	$136,000	-23.3	$129,900	$138,000	-5.9
Fair Play	$92,000	$293,279	-68.6	$92,000	$167,000	-44.9
Liberty	$124,500	$116,250	+7.1	$116,450	$109,000	+6.8
Pendleton	$117,900	$102,254	+15.3	$121,800	$119,800	+1.7
Pickens	$112,520	$116,000	-3.0	$127,700	$135,00	-5.4
Salem	$275,120	$262,500	+4.8	$327,000	$245,000	+33.5
Seneca	$146,000	$185,000	-21.1	$153,613	$173,000	-11.2
Walhalla	$140,000	$65,000	+115.4	$77,500	$95,000	-18.4
Westminster	$76,000	$77,544	-2.0	$90,000	$83,088	+8.3

Source: Western Upstate Association of Realtors

HOME SALES: Clemson, Central sales are up

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The strongest local markets in the area according to year-to-date results are Salem and Westminster in Oconee and Clemson and Central in Pickens.

Through May of this year, 34 properties sold in the Salem area, or almost 79 percent more than the 19 homes sold through the same period a year ago.

So far, 29 properties changed owners through May 2010, or 38.1 percent more than the 21 percent sold during the same stretch in 2009.

In Clemson and Central, homes sales are up almost 21 percent this year over the same period a year ago.

Median sales prices also show that properties in the Salem and Westminster areas are recapturing much of the value lost when the housing market tanked along with the economy.

The year-to-date median price of home sales in Salem jumped to $327,000 or 33.5 percent more than what it was a year ago.

Westminster's year-to-date median price, which was just over $83,000 a year ago, climbed 8.3 percent to $90,000 this year.

Property values have taken a beating in Central and Fair Play, where they are down this year by 56.4 percent and 44.9 percent, respectively.

Home sales continue to get a boost from record low mortgage rates that are hovering around 4.69 percent.

Also, real estate experts said the homebuyer tax credit, which expired in April, continued to show its impact locally and nationally.

Lawrence Yun, chief economist for the National Association of Realtors (NAR), said the effects of the tax credit likely would linger through June.

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