Upstate housing prices increase

Region bucks national trend in second quarter

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Housing prices appreciated slightly in the Upstate during the second quarter, while values dropped nationwide.

A home value report by Zillow.com shows the median price for houses in the Greenville, Spartanburg, and Anderson metropolitan areas rose 2.3 percent, 0.6 percent, and 1.5 percent, respectively, in the year's second quarter.

But like the nation, those areas had year-over-year declines. The drops ranged from a 0.4 percent in Greenville to 2.7 percent in Spartanburg.

While home values in the United States fell 3.2 percent year-over-year and 0.6 percent from the first quarter to $182,500, "we saw a lot of price increases in the South in general," said Katie Curnette, spokeswoman for Zillow.com, a real estate marketplace.

"Some of the markets didn't see as much as a runoff as a lot of the markets on the coast in the Northeast and the West Coast," she said. "Their downturn hasn't been as severe either."

Nick Sabatine, chief executive officer for the Greater Greenville Association of Realtors, said he's just returned from Chicago where Lawrence Yun, chief economist for the National Association of Realtors, said that home prices across the nation have stabilized.

"There certainly are markets where this is not true, as the Zillow report points out, but our local market is holding its own as far as home prices are concerned," Sabatine said. "The first-time home buyer tax credit made the lower priced houses more attractive, and foreclosures certainly have an effect on house prices."

Closer to home, the Columbia and Charleston markets had lower median prices from first to second quarter, Zillow data show. The median price in Columbia was 2.1 percent lower than the year before, while the median price in Charleston was down 5.1 percent.

Stan Humphries, Zillow.com chief economist, said double tax credits for some California homebuyers are "partly responsible for the rapid — and likely unsustainable — rates of appreciation" in many markets across that state.

He said markets like Miami and Phoenix are not yet showing signs of reaching a bottom, and high supply is hurting some states.

"Nationally, home values are moving in the right direction as rates of decline continue to slow," he said. "There is a large unknown on the horizon, however, as these second quarter numbers are still heavily influenced by the federal homebuyer tax credits."