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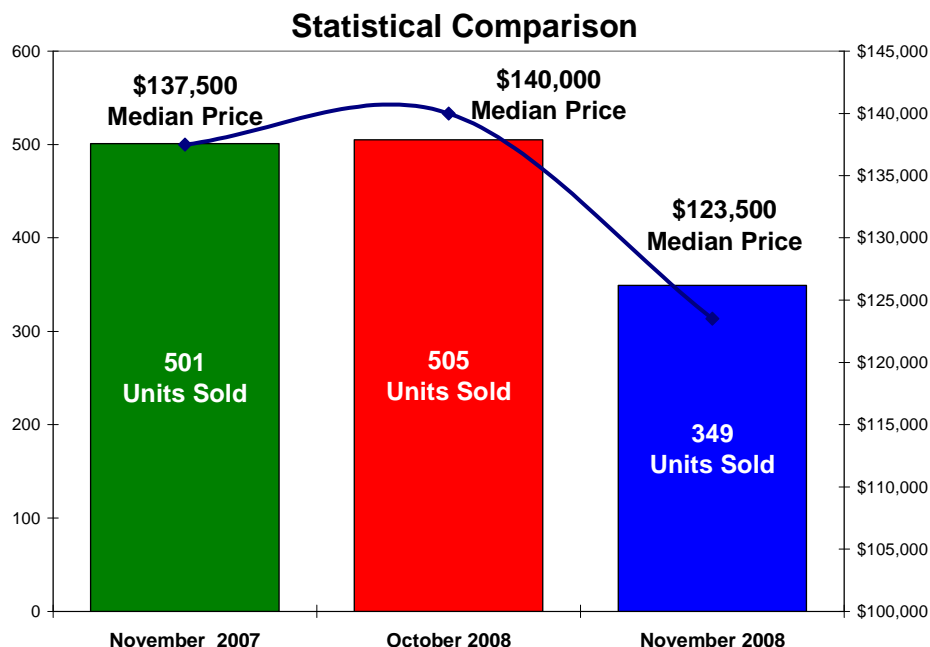
Nationwide Strain in Economy Continues to Impact Local Real Estate Industry

CHATTANOOGA, TN – December 23, 2008 – Residential real estate sales slowed in the month of November, according to figures released by the Chattanooga Association of REALTORS®. The group's Multiple Listing Service (MLS) reported a total of 349 units sold locally last month. It is a 30 percent drop from the same time in 2007, which was the region's third best sales year for real estate. Though this time of year sales are often softer, the country was not experiencing the currently stressed economic conditions and the impact it is having on consumers.

“When we head into the fall and winter months we always see a slow down in real estate related activity,” says Pam Duffy, President of the Chattanooga Association of REALTORS®. “Those who must buy and sell are still making it to the closing table but financial strains and economic uncertainty are keeping many potential buyers sitting on the fence.”

Adds Randy Durham, MLS President, “Consumer confidence is at an incredibly low level. The market conditions are favorable but few are looking to make that investment in real estate.”

With interest rates near record lows, a well-stocked housing inventory and affordable home prices, the local real estate industry is primed for buyers. The median home price – the price at which half of all units sold for more and half sold for less – for the month of November was \$123,500. It's the lowest median price reported for the year and 10 percent less than the price in November 2007 and 11.8 percent off from October of this year. The median price does highlight the region's affordability factor when compared to the aggregate median price released by the National Association of REALTORS®. Higher numbers of foreclosures and short sales pulled the median down to about \$181,300.



“The local market boasts positive conditions and too many people are missing out. Renters, first-time buyers and those looking to trade up ought to seriously be opening the door to real estate,” asserts Duffy.

“Though sellers are motivated and the market fundamentals are strong, buying a home is probably an individual’s most significant investment, and the realities of the shaky economy are making things difficult for the industry. However, five years from now people will be looking back regretting their decision not to buy or invest in the greater Chattanooga area,” believes Durham.

Says Duffy: “The first move for potential buyers and sellers is to contact a REALTOR®. Now, more than ever, this market demands that people are working with a trusted advisor who can help them navigate through the complicated process involved in real estate transactions.”

In terms of the days housing units are listed on the market, November saw a slowdown to an average of 130 days. It’s slightly off from previous months when the average was 118 days in October and 121 days in November last year.

To learn why this is the Right Time, Right Market, the Chattanooga Association of REALTORS® wants people to visit www.RightTimeRightMarket.com, an informative Web site with up-to-date information about the state of the Northwest Georgia and Southeast Tennessee real estate market while also offering helpful tips on buying or selling a home, information on renting versus owning a home, information on the temporary tax credit for first-time homebuyers, and area facts for those relocating or retiring to the greater Chattanooga area.

The Chattanooga Association of REALTORS®, the region’s premier voice for real estate, is made up of over 1,900 real estate professionals engaged in every aspect of real estate throughout Southeast Tennessee and Northwest Georgia.

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