

MEDIA RELEASE

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Okanagan-Shuswap Housing Market Steady and Driven by Local Buyers

Kelowna, BC – The Okanagan Mainline Real Estate Board (OMREB) reported sales activity of all MLS® property types remained strong in May 2015 as confident local buyers continue to drive sales. While up marginally (1.6%) from the same month last year and rising 12% over April sales, the market showed a 9% improvement year-to-date compared to the same five-month period in 2014.

“Despite a minor slowdown in some areas, residential sales in the Okanagan-Shuswap were steady in May and days on market continued to improve,” says Christopher Miller, OMREB President and active REALTOR® in the Central Okanagan.

“Overall, spring sales activity has been brisk to date,” Miller reports. “Well-positioned and well-presented homes are in demand and selling quickly in all markets within our Board area, and the houses sold were on market an average of 82 days during May compared to 106 last year at this time.”

Within OMREB’s three diverse markets – Central Okanagan, North Okanagan, and Shuswap-Revelstoke areas – sales activity and prices, and supply and demand tends to vary among property types at different times and locations, with ups and downs experienced zone-by-zone and month-by-month.

While Alberta home buyers and retirees seem to have been only modestly affected by the recent decline in oil prices and continue to participate in 10% to 15% of home sales in the region – especially in the Central Okanagan -- the North Okanagan and Shuswap markets have experienced some pullback in activity from these segments.

“Single family residential sales in the Central Okanagan remained at the same level as last May while year-to-date totals improved by 15% over the same period last year,” Miller explains. “Inventory continues to be tight for all types of housing, resulting from high buyer demand and not enough new listings to fill the need.”

In the Shuswap, single family home sales for the month improved by 50% compared to May 2014 and saw a 20% improvement year-to-date as local buyers continue to snap up homes and drain inventory in the high \$200,000 to low \$300,000 range. Sales of high-end recreational and retirement properties have stalled with the absence of Alberta buyers.

Despite rallying in April, the North Okanagan saw an 11% slip in single family residential sales during May compared to 2014, resulting in an 8% decline year-to-date. The softer market may be attributed in part to oil patch workers who live in the area and work in Alberta, and are facing employment uncertainty and financial instability.

“It is more important than ever to consult with a REALTOR® in order to fully understand the current residential market, and to look at trends within property types and varying price points in different neighbourhoods,” Miller notes.

Board-wide (*Peachland to Revelstoke*): Overall sales of all property types reported in OMREB's Board area during May 2015 improved by 1.6% compared to 2014 (to 965 units from 950) – up 11.8% compared to April (from 863), and up 9.2% year-to-date over 2014 (to 3,412 from 3,126).

Total residential sales for the month rose by 5.6% (899 units board-wide compared to 851 in 2014), while single family home sales were up marginally (1.5%) compared to May 2014 (to 480 from 473).

The average number of days to sell a single family home in May was 82 days Board-wide, compared to 106 days at this time last year.

The 1,867 new listings taken board-wide for the month were down 3.8% compared to the 1,940 listings posted in May 2014, while inventory (active listings) declined 6.0% to 7,452 from 7,925 last year at this time.

Central Zone (*Peachland to Lake Country*): During May, overall sales of all property types in the Central Zone were up minimally (0.5%) compared to 2014 but remained strong at 597 units (up from 594). Year-to-date sales activity was up 12.6% compared to the same period last year (January through May) -- to 2,259 units from 2,007 in 2014.

Total residential sales for the month improved by 4.6% to 570 units compared to 545 in 2014. The sale of 291 single family homes remained at the same level as last May (293), while apartment sales were up 25.8% (to 122 from 97), and townhouse sales remained steady at 95 units (same as in 2014).

Average days to sell a single family home in the Central Okanagan in May was down to 56 days compared to 74 in 2014 while days to sell year-to-date averaged 65 days compared to 79 last year at this time.

The 1,104 new listings taken in the Central Okanagan during the month saw a 3.5% dip compared to 1,144 in 2014, and total inventory was reduced by 7.3% to 3,781 units from 4,078 last May.

North Zone (*Predator Ridge to Enderby*): Overall property sales for May in the North Zone edged back 6.2% to 229 units compared to 244 last year at this time. However, year-to-date sales activity was the same level (742 units) as the first five months in 2014.

Total residential sales dipped 5.4% this past month to 209 units compared to 221 in 2014. Single family home sales slipped 11.4% over last May (to 117 from 132), while the sale of townhouses and apartments remained at the same levels as 2014 (27 townhouses and 14 apartments).

Average days to sell a single family home in the North Okanagan in May was down to 74 days compared to 91 in 2014, while homes sold in 85 days on average year-to-date compared to 111 during the first five months last year.

The 468 new listings taken for the month were up nominally (1.1%) from the 2014 level of 473. Inventory for May dipped to 2,154 from 2,224 in 2014.

Shuswap Zone (*Salmon Arm to Revelstoke*): In May, sales activity in the Shuswap-Revelstoke Zone improved by 24.3% compared 2014 (to 138 units from 111), while the year-to-date sales were up 8.8% over the same month last year at 408 units from 375 (January through May).

Total residential unit sales for the month were up 41.2% at 120 units compared to 85 in 2014, while the sale of single family homes improved 50% (to 72 units from 48 in May 2014).

The average of 118 days to sell a single family home in the Shuswap in May was down significantly compared to 132 in April and 153 in 2014, while days to sell year-to-date averaged 125 days compared to 162 during the same period last year.

The 294 new listings taken in the Zone were down 8.7% compared to 322 in May 2014. Overall inventory dipped 6.4% to 1,513 from 1,616 last year at this time.

Whether you are selling or buying a home, a professional REALTOR® who is familiar with the area and your particular neighbourhood can assist with searching, listing, negotiating and closing. The key to a successful sale is being realistic about the market value of your home and willing to negotiate for the best offer.

How REALTORS® can help when buying or selling a home in the Okanagan-Shuswap:

- **BUYING OR SELLING – Home values vary based on type and location:** Talk to a REALTOR® about how your property type is currently faring locally, and how it compares to similar listings in your particular neighbourhood.
- **SELLING – Pricing is crucial when listing your home:** Serious sellers recognize that their properties must be priced within the current market conditions. Homes that are priced well are the ones that are selling, as has been evident this year.
- **NEGOTIATING – For a successful purchase and sale:** The professional negotiation skills of a REALTOR® bring buyers and sellers together for a successful sale.

The Okanagan Mainline Real Estate Board is comprised of 1,064 member REALTORS® and 91 real estate offices in the Southern Interior of BC. The Board area covers the Central Okanagan, North Okanagan and Shuswap – from Peachland to Revelstoke.

For the most comprehensive source of all real estate listings, home buying and selling information, visit our national websites at: www.realtor.ca and www.icx.ca. To find out about the advantages of using a REALTOR®, check out www.howrealtorshelp.ca.

*All OMREB listings are published in the **MLS® Real Estate Review** and **MLS® Commercial Review** magazines available at all real estate offices and various locations in the Central Okanagan, North Okanagan, the Shuswap and Revelstoke areas. For comprehensive Board-wide statistical information, please visit our local public site: www.omreb.com*

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