

MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release:

January 6, 2014



Stronger Finish for Okanagan-Shuswap Housing Market in 2013

Kelowna, BC – The Okanagan Mainline Real Estate Board (OMREB) reported a strong finish to 2013 with December sales activity of all MLS® property types up 44% compared to the same month in 2012 -- posting the strongest unit sales for the month of December since 2009.

“The housing market in the Okanagan-Shuswap continued the steady upward trend begun earlier in the year when sales levels were at a cyclical low, and ended 2013 on a fairly strong note with a 13% improvement in overall sales year-to-date compared to 2012,” says Karen Singbeil, OMREB President and active REALTOR® in the Shuswap.

“We are pleased to have surpassed forecasted expectations for sales growth in year-over-year residential sales for our Board area, and experienced moderate to strong gains for various property types in each Zone -- despite 2013 being the second consecutive year of relatively slow economic growth and moderate consumer confidence in the province. Competitive home sellers appear to be more market conscious and are sharpening their pencils when setting their list price, which has led to more transaction volumes.”

OMREB’s three market areas are diverse, Singbeil notes. “As a result, sales activity tends to vary among property types zone-by-zone and month-by-month with ups and downs at different times and locations. In order to fully understand the overall picture of the current residential market in our Board area it important to look at prices within property types and sale price trends within different price points.”

Although total active listings have trended lower over the past few years and reduced supply, market conditions in the Okanagan-Shuswap remain in buyer’s territory which can be very challenging for sellers and buyers alike. While short-term interest rates are expected to remain low and accommodating to consumer demand, buyers could face less flexible lenders and the risk of rising long-term fixed mortgage rates going forward, especially as the U.S. economy strengthens.

The total level of employment has remained unchanged and will likely limit consumer demand to its current pace, perhaps with some moderation over the next quarter. However, stronger demand in the second half of 2014 should create more balanced market conditions in the Okanagan-Shuswap.

Board-wide (*Peachland to Revelstoke*): Overall sales of all property types reported in OMREB’s Board area during December improved by 43.9% compared to 2012 -- to 400 units from 278. Total residential sales for the month rose 43.3% to 334 units board-wide compared to 233 last December.

New listings taken board-wide for the month dropped 4.0% with 530 listings posted compared to 552 last December, while inventory (active listings) was down 10.2% over this time last year – to 6,167 from 6,870.

Year-to-date (January through December), overall sales Board-wide improved 12.8% during 2013 compared to 2012 – rising to 6,857 units valued at \$2.5 billion from 6,079 at \$2.2 billion.

Central Zone (Peachland to Lake Country): During December, overall sales in the Central Zone were up 33.2% to 253 units from 190 in 2012. Total residential sales for the month improved 28.1 % to 210 units compared to 164 last year at this time.

The 341 new listings taken in the Central Okanagan during the month saw an 11.2% decline compared to 384 in 2012, while total inventory was reduced by 12.7% to 3,208 units from 3,676 last December.

Overall sales at year-end (January through December) improved by 13.6% in 2013 -- rising to 4,429 units valued at \$1.7 billion from 3,900 at \$1.5 billion in 2012. Total residential sales at year-end rose 14.3% to 4,016 units over 3,514 last year. Single family residential sales for the Zone were up 18.1% for the year compared to the number of units sold during 2012 (to 2,164 from 1,832).

North Zone (Predator Ridge to Enderby): Overall sales for December in the North Zone rose 58.1% to 98 units compared to 62 units sold last year at this time. Total residential sales for the month improved by 70.0% over last year with 85 units sold (up from 50).

While the 114 new listings taken for the month were up 23.9% from the 2012 level of 92, inventory for December saw a 11.7% drop to 1,668 from 1,889 in 2012.

Year-to-date (January through December), activity in this Zone remained strong with overall sales improving by 6.4% compared to the same period last year -- to 1,555 units valued at \$507.3 million from 1,461 at \$484.9 million. Total residential sales at year-end rose 6.8% over 2012 (1,397 from 1,308). Compared to last year, single family residential sales were up 2.5% (to 782 units from 763).

Shuswap Zone (Salmon Arm to Revelstoke): During December, overall unit sales in the Shuswap-Revelstoke Zone rose 84.6% to 48 units compared to 26 in 2012. Total residential unit sales for the month improved by 105.3% to 39 units compared to 19 last year.

While new listings taken in the Zone were down 4.0% compared to last December (to 73 units from 76), overall inventory dipped 1.0% to 1,287 from 1,300 during the same month in 2012.

Year-to-date figures for overall sales in the Shuswap during 2013 rose 20.7% compared to January through December last year -- to 864 units at \$246.4 million from 716 at \$208.4 million. Total residential sales at year-end improved by 21.3% compared to the previous year (to 713 from 588). Single family sales at year-end were up 25.6% to 403 from 321 in 2012.

How REALTORS® can help when buying or selling a home:

- **BUYING OR SELLING – Home values vary based on type and location:** It is important to consult with 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 1,018 member REALTORS® and 92 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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For more information:

Karen Singbeil, OMREB President (*Board-wide statistical information*)
karen@shuswap4sale.com (250) 836-2223

Cameron Muir, BCREA Chief Economist, or Brendon Ogmundson, Economist
(*Province-wide stats information*)
cmuir@bcrea.bc.ca (604) 742-2780 / bogmundson@bcrea.ca (604) 742-2796

Jan Bauman, OMREB Communications
jbauman@omreb.com (250) 491-4560, Ext 224

