

Short sales spur Tahoe-Reno real estate market

The Reno-Tahoe real estate market began the year with signs of growth as home and condominium sales showed significant increases throughout the area, according to the quarterly report by Chase International.

The data compares home and condo sales from January-March 2010 to the same period in 2009.

Sales of single-family homes in Lake Tahoe were up 52 percent and Reno-Sparks saw a 26 percent increase in home sales. Carson Valley experienced a 27 percent jump while Truckee home sales were up 44 percent.

Sue Lowe, corporate vice president of Chase International, notes that the strong upswing in sales is a partial result of short sales and bank-owned properties, federal tax credits for first-time home buyers as well as investors coming back into the market.

First-time buyers hoping to take advantage of the \$8,000-federal tax credit must have their homes in escrow by April 30, with sales closed by June 30. State tax credits are also available.

Reno-Tahoe home sales are following national trends. The National Association of Realtors recently announced that pending U.S. home sales climbed above expected projections to 8.2 percent in February, primarily in response to the home buyer tax credit.

Lowe acknowledges home prices are slow to recover due to the amount of short sales and bank-owned property deals.

For homes priced above \$1 million, the East Shore was up 33

percent, Tahoe City up 100 percent, South Lake Tahoe down 50 percent, Incline Village up 117 percent, and Truckee down 8 percent. Reno/Sparks was down 13 percent and the Carson Valley remained flat.

The less than \$1 million Tahoe market showed significant double digit gains with East Shore up 25 percent, South Shore up 41 percent, Tahoe City up 90 percent, Incline up 64 percent and, Truckee up 55 percent. Reno Sparks less than \$1 million market was also up 27 percent and the Carson Valley up 28 percent.

The condo market was up across the board with Lake Tahoe posting a 143 percent increase in units sold and Reno Sparks posting an 83 percent increase.