

BC NORTHERN REAL ESTATE BOARD



January 7, 2016

News Release

The REALTOR® members of the BC Northern Real Estate Board (BCNREB) reported 4840 property sales worth \$1.2 billion in 2015 through the Multiple Listing Service® (MLS®), down from last year's 5,218 sales worth \$1.3 billion.

Both sales and listings were down slightly in 2015 from the previous year, though both were also near 2013 levels. Looking specifically at sales, and only for the month of December, BC Northern saw 6% more sales (12.3% more detached residential sales) than the prior December, though, as stated, the overall annual sales dropped by a slight 6.5%. The average price of residential detached homes rose by 1% across the Board, though all property types, in aggregate, saw a drop of less than 2%.

Considering the size of our Board area, Board averages may not reflect local markets. This year, in particular, significant regional disparity is apparent, with those areas most exposed to commodity markets experiencing a higher than average drop in sales and, in some instances, a drop in average prices. Other areas remained stable or saw higher than average sales.

“Some areas in the BC Northern area are being affected by the global commodity slowdown and have seen a drop in sales volume and also price pressure,” comments Ken Laursen, Past President of BC Northern. “The effect of commodity markets on the housing market in some areas brings to the forefront the fact that the economy of the north remains largely commodity driven.”

Prince George continues to be mostly unaffected by the economic conditions in either the northern, western or southern areas of our Board area, likely thanks to a more diversified economy. Sales for 2015 are nearly identical to the year before, while average sale prices for all properties have risen slightly (approximately 6%).

The western area saw larger drops in sales, with Kitimat being particularly affected. After seeing a few consecutive years of significant increases in price, the average price of property in Kitimat has dropped this year. Sales to active listing ratio for December 2015 was 11% and suggestive of a buyer's market. Terrace also saw a drop in sales and average prices in 2015, though the Board believes this drop is more of a market

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normalization after the City experienced an unusually hot and speculative 2014. While prices for the average property have dropped, they remain above 2013 levels. As seen throughout the western region, Prince Rupert's sales have fallen more than the Board average. The City has, however, continued to see an increase in average sale prices. Smithers has seen a small drop in sales for 2015 but an overall raise in average sale price.

The northern area, as expected, was particularly affected by the commodity (especially oil and gas) markets. Fort St John's sales dropped by approximately 28% with an approximately 9% drop in average property prices. The sales to active listings ratio for December 2015 was 7%, suggestive of a buyers' market.

In the southern area, 100 Mile House has benefitted from the hot market in the lower mainland, with an influx of recreational property buyers driving the short distance north to purchase vacation homes. Both the number of sales and the average sale prices were up in the District. Williams Lake saw a modest drop in sales and average sale prices which, the Board surmises, may be caused by concerns over the lower rates for copper.

While BC's economy continues to outperform the rest of Canada, some areas of the north have seen difficult economic conditions. Some of the previous price gains in the northern and western areas of the Board were caused by speculation and a return to pre-2014 numbers may actually benefit local residents, especially local buyers. Forecasts for 2016 suggest commodity markets will continue much as they have through 2015, though the Board sees some hope for improvement toward the end of the year.

By Region

Cariboo Region

In the **100 Mile House** area 384 properties worth \$88.3 million sold this year through MLS®, compared with 345 properties worth \$71.6 million in 2014. The 114 single family homes that sold in 2015 had a median value (half sold for less) of \$220,500. In addition, 81 parcels of vacant land, 106 homes on acreage, 24 manufactured homes on land, 4 manufactured homes in a park, and 40 recreational properties changed hands in 2015. At the end December there were 465 properties of all types available for sale through MLS® in the 100 Mile House area, down from the 542 properties at the end of 2014.

In **Williams Lake**, 359 sales worth \$76.3 million were reported through MLS® in 2015, down from 369 sales worth \$87 million the previous year. Half of the 134 single family homes sold in 2015 sold for less than \$224,000. 33 parcels of vacant land, 82 homes on acreage, 17 townhomes, 30 manufactured homes in parks and 28 manufactured homes on land were also sold in 2015. At the end of December there were 286 properties of all types available through MLS® in the Williams Lake area, down from 329 properties at the same time last year.

273 properties changed hands in the **Quesnel** area in 2015 through MLS®, down from 281 that were sold in 2014. The value of these properties was \$50.4 million (\$54.3 million in 2014). The median value of the 121 single family homes sold in 2015 was \$202,500. In addition, 35 parcels of vacant land, 60 homes on acreage, 13 manufactured homes in parks and a further 19 on land were reported sold in 2015. At year end there were 181 properties of all types available for purchase through MLS® in the Quesnel area, down from 192 properties at the end of 2014.

Northwest Region

In **Prince Rupert** 209 properties worth \$51.4 million changed hands in 2015 compared with 289 properties worth \$63.2 million in 2014. Half of the 158 single family homes sold in 2015 sold for less than \$260,000. In addition 19 parcels of vacant land, 1 townhouse and 8 half duplexes sold in 2015. At year end there were 153 properties of all types available through MLS® in the Prince Rupert area, down from the same time last year.

The 271 properties that sold in the **Terrace** area in 2015 were worth \$70 million compared with 2014's 351 properties worth \$87.3 million. Of the 153 single family homes that changed hands, half sold for less than \$307,000. In addition, 16 parcels of vacant land, 22 homes on acreage, 33 manufactured homes in parks and a further 19 on land sold in 2015. As of December 31st there were 151 properties of all types available through MLS® in the Terrace area, down from the 152 properties available at December 31st, 2014.

In the **Kitimat** area, 120 properties worth \$33 million changed hands in 2015 compared to the 146 properties worth \$41.6 million that sold in 2014. The median value of the single family homes sold in 2015 was \$307,300. In addition 20 half duplexes and 5 townhomes were sold. At year end there were 63 properties of all types available in the Kitimat area, compared with 94 at December 31st, 2014.

Bulkley Nechako Region

60 properties worth \$9.9 million changed hands in the **Houston** area in 2015, compared to the 64 properties worth \$10.7 million that sold in 2014. The median value of the 32 single family homes sold was \$159,500. As of December 31st there were 50 properties of all types available in the Houston area.

REALTORS® reported 252 sales worth \$65.9 million in the **Smithers** area in 2015, compared to 266 sales worth \$60.5 million in 2014. The median value of the 113 single family homes that sold in 2015 was \$258,000. 22 parcels of vacant land, 59 homes on acreage, 17 manufactured homes in parks and a further 17 on land also changed hands in 2015. At year end there were 211 properties of all types available through MLS® in the Smithers area, no change from the 211 properties available a year ago.

In **Burns Lake** 105 properties with a value of \$12.7 million sold in 2015 compared with 71 worth \$8.2 million in 2014. Half of the 45 single family homes that sold, sold for less than \$97,500. 18 parcels of vacant land, 24 homes on acreage and 6 manufactured homes on land also changed hands in 2015. As of December 31st there were 114 properties of all types available through MLS® in the Burns Lake area, down from 130 at the end of 2014.

The 120 properties sold in **Vanderhoof** in 2015 were worth \$22.2 million, compared with 2014's 132 properties worth \$25.4 million. Of the 44 single family homes that sold in 2015, half sold for less than \$218,000. In addition, 17 parcels of vacant land, 31 homes on acreage, 6 manufactured homes in parks and a further 10 manufactured homes on land changed hands in 2015. As of December 31st there were 103 properties of all types available through MLS® in the Vanderhoof area, compared with 95 properties a year ago.

In **Fort St. James** 53 properties worth \$11.8 million sold in 2015, compared to 42 properties worth \$7.9 million in 2014. At year end there were 58 properties of all types available through MLS® in the Fort St. James area, compared to 57 at the same time last year.

Northern Region

In **Fort St. John** 691 properties with a value of \$253.6 million sold in 2015, down from 943 properties worth \$379 million that sold in 2014. Of the 266 single family homes sold in 2015, half sold for less than \$403,500. In addition, 97 parcels of vacant land, 90 half duplexes, 51 homes on acreage, 43 manufactured homes in parks and a further 75 on land sold in 2015. At the end of December there were 479 properties of all types available through MLS® in the Fort St. John area, up from the 400 properties at the end of 2014.

The 41 properties sold in the **Fort Nelson** area through MLS® in 2015 were worth \$9.6 million, down from 2014's 56 properties worth \$14 million. Half of the 19 single family homes sold in 2015, sold for less than \$274,900. There were 4 homes on acreage and 3 townhomes also sold in 2015. As of December 31st, there were 117 properties of all types available through MLS® in the Fort Nelson area, up from the 95 properties on December 31st, 2014.

Fraser Fort George Region

In the **Mackenzie** area 67 properties worth \$11 million were reported sold in 2015, compared with 2014's 77 properties worth \$12.7 million. The median value of the 47 single family homes that sold in 2015 was \$158,000. At year end there were 72 properties of all types available through MLS® in the Mackenzie area, no change from the 72 properties at the same time in 2014.

In the City of **Prince George**, 1442 properties worth \$377 million sold in 2015, compared with 1449 properties worth \$355.5 million in 2014. At year end there were 481 properties of all types available through MLS® compared to 556 properties at the end of 2014.

In the area **west of the by-pass**, half of the 303 single family homes sold in 2015, sold for less than \$250,000. As well, 24 apartment units and 47 townhomes changed hands in 2015. As of December 31st there were 30 single family homes listed through MLS® in this area of the City, compared to 40 at the same time last year.

East of the by-pass 16 apartment units, 16 half duplexes, and 15 townhomes sold in 2015. The 185 single family homes sold had a median value of \$205,000. At the end of December there were 27 single family homes available for sale through MLS® in this area compared with 38 at the end of 2014.

In the **northern part of the city**, 40 homes on acreage, 23 manufactured homes in parks and a further 55 manufactured homes on land sold in 2015. Of the 199 single family homes sold, half sold for less than \$289,900. As of December 31st there were 31 single family homes available through MLS® in this area of the City compared with 33 at the end of 2014.

In the **southwest sector** 9 half duplexes, 21 townhomes, 9 homes on acreage, 7 manufactured homes in parks and a further 2 manufactured homes on land sold in 2015. Half of the 272 single family homes sold in 2015 sold for less than \$352,300. At year end there were 57 single family homes available for sale through MLS® in the southwest sector, compared with 43 at the end of 2014.

The members of the BC Northern Real Estate Board are committed to improving the Quality of Life in their communities. The BC Northern Real Estate Board supports the growth which encourages economic vitality, provides housing opportunities and builds communities with good schools and safe neighbourhoods. The REALTOR® members of the BC Northern Real Estate Board serve the real estate needs of the communities from Fort Nelson in the north to 100 Mile House in the south and from the Alberta border to Haida Gwaii.

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Average Selling Price (Year to Date)
 MLS® Reported Sales – Single Family Residential
 BC Northern Real Estate Board

Community	December 31, 2013	Units	December 31, 2014	Units	December 31, 2015	Units
100 Mile House	238,189	78	243,605	119	226,984	114
Williams Lake	232,301	118	253,773	138	237,103	134
Quesnel	204,483	105	212,152	123	213,704	121
Prince Rupert	192,379	187	217,651	212	260,604	158
Houston	166,547	21	157,063	44	157,487	32
Smithers	254,853	110	247,458	106	273,241	113
Burns Lake	129,728	23	117,815	35	133,756	45
Vanderhoof	219,221	43	204,255	52	211,179	44
Fort St. James	174,531	16	192,276	21	171,139	27
Fort St. John	373,648	381	418,646	422	425,083	266
Fort Nelson	316,880	31	302,961	27	280,278	19
Mackenzie	153,032	79	164,662	61	169,321	47
Prince George	259,962	910	271,580	950	284,611	976
Terrace	251,477	219	302,340	177	308,436	153
Kitimat	238,411	142	318,046	78	298,624	82

Consumers are reminded that real estate is a local commodity and average price can only give an indication of trends. Contact a REALTOR® in your community to determine the value of specific properties.

-30-

For more information about local conditions, contact:

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