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New Home Sales Relatively Strong, Despite Downward Revision

New home sales resumed their upward march in September, rising above August sales which had retreated significantly from a near decade-long high of 629,000 units set in July. The Census Bureau and Department of Housing and Urban Development said newly constructed homes were sold at a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 593,000 in September, up 3.1 percent from August. The number was an improvement however only because the sales rate for August was revised down from the original report of 609,000 units to 575,000. September sales were **29.8 percent higher** than a year earlier when the estimate was 457,000

The September results were in the middle of the range of analysts' expectations. According to Econoday, predictions varied between 570,000 and 635,000 with a consensus of 601,000.

On a **non-seasonally adjusted** basis there were 46,000 homes sold compared to 47,000 in August.

Sales in the **Northeast** were up 33.3 percent from August and were 60.0 percent higher than in September 2015. The **Midwest** saw an increase of 8.6 percent for the month and 33.3 percent year-over-year. Sales in the **South** rose 3.4 percent and 25.7 percent from the two earlier periods while in the **West** there was a decline of 4.5 percent from August while sales remained 32.4 percent higher than a year earlier.

The **median price** of a homes sold in September was \$313,500 compared to 307,600 in September 2015. The average price was \$377,700, up from \$367,800.

At the end of September there were an estimated 243,000 new homes available for sale, a **4.8-month supply**. A year ago the inventory of available homes was estimated at 5.8-month supply at the then current sales rate. Of homes currently for sale 141,000 are under construction and 57,000 are complete.

National Average Mortgage Rates



	Rate	Change	Points
Mortgage News Daily			
30 Yr. Fixed	6.89%	0.00	0.00
15 Yr. Fixed	6.33%	+0.01	0.00
30 Yr. FHA	6.33%	+0.01	0.00
30 Yr. Jumbo	7.05%	0.00	0.00
5/1 ARM	6.58%	0.00	0.00
Freddie Mac			
30 Yr. Fixed	6.77%	-0.09	0.00
15 Yr. Fixed	6.05%	-0.11	0.00
Mortgage Bankers Assoc.			
30 Yr. Fixed	7.00%	-0.03	0.60
15 Yr. Fixed	6.63%	+0.07	0.61
30 Yr. FHA	6.87%	-0.03	0.92
30 Yr. Jumbo	7.13%	+0.02	0.38
5/1 ARM	6.22%	-0.16	0.60

Rates as of: 7/22

Recent Housing Data

		Value	Change
Mortgage Apps	Jul 10	206.1	-0.19%
Building Permits	Mar	1.46M	-3.95%
Housing Starts	Mar	1.32M	-13.15%
New Home Sales	Mar	693K	+4.68%
Pending Home Sales	Feb	75.6	+1.75%
Existing Home Sales	Feb	3.97M	-0.75%

Update: Buyer Broker Agreement

	Value	Change
Builder Confidence	Mar 51	+6.25%

After requests from real estate companies, a nonprofit consumer watchdog group the Consumer Federation of America has developed a list of factors to consider when creating a buyer contract in preparation for upcoming practice changes in the industry.

CFA released its "Proposed Criteria for Evaluating Home Buyer Contract Forms" on Tuesday. The 15 criteria focus on the contracts' form – whether the documents are readable and understandable – and content – whether they are fair to homebuyers.

- the document's expiration date (CFA recommends buyers asks for a three-month contract and never sign one longer than six months)
- the right to terminate the contract
- the disclosure that compensation is negotiable
- the broker's compensation clearly stated and that the buyer broker can't receive additional compensation for facilitating a sale
- that any additional fees, such as for showing a home, will be deducted from the broker's commission if there is a successful sale
- that the commission is due only if there is a successful closing
- that buyers have an obligation – for no longer than 60 days, CFA recommends – to pay a broker who earlier showed them a home they purchased after the contract ended
- seller concessions paid directly to buyers
- dual agency not pre-approved by the contract
- an explanation of how a broker treats different buyer clients interested in the same property
- that buyers should not be required to first go through mediation or arbitration if they have a complaint

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