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## Our Name Says It All

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## From the Editor...

Ever dream of your own island? For many people, there is a special allure to a private island that even the most spectacular waterfront estate cannot begin to match. And, according to "The Price is Right for Private Islands," it may cost less than you think.

If city living is more to your liking, then "Condo Prices Exceed Single-Family Homes" is a must read article. For the first time, the median condominium price is higher than the median-priced single family home. Excellent news indeed for the burgeoning downtown area of West Palm Beach! At the same time, a recent study in "No Sign of a National Home Price 'Bubble'" disputes the fear that prices may have peaked.

Owner Leslie Mendenhall discusses closing costs in Part Two of "How Florida Title Insurance Works." Integrity Land Title is pleased to share our in-depth knowledge in our support of all parties to the transaction. We know how important a fast and problem-free closing is to you and your client, and pledge to work with you to provide quality closing services. Call us today for a no-obligation title insurance and closing cost analysis of your listed properties.

### Condominiums

## Condo Prices Exceed Single-Family Homes

Sales of existing condominiums and co-ops rose 8% in 2004, the ninth consecutive year of record sales — and the median price for a condo exceeded the median price of a single-family home for the first time since such records were kept.



A total of 970,000 existing condos and co-ops were sold in 2004, according to the National Association of Realtors. The median condo price rose 17% to a record high \$193,600 compared to a median single-family home resale of \$184,100.

Last year marked the first time since such numbers were tracked beginning in the 1980s that the median sales price of a condo in the U.S. surpassed that of a median home price. The median price of a condo also rose faster than the

price of a home in 2004 -- 17% compared with 8.3%.

The existing condo market is about one-seventh the size of the existing home market, and existing home sales actually grew slightly faster than existing condo sales last year. One reason condos have grown more expensive is that they tend to be located in more-expensive urban areas.

Celia Chen, a senior economist with forecasting and consulting firm Economy.com of West Chester, Pa., said she was surprised to see the 2004 median existing home price was lower than the existing condo price. "This says condo demand is very strong in downtown urban areas, and some of that may be due to empty nesters returning to urban cores and driving up demand for luxury apartment buildings," she said.

Source: <http://www.realestatejournal.com/buysell/salestrends/20050215-smith.html> (02/23/2005)

**How Florida Title Insurance Works**

By Leslie Mendenhall

**CLOSING COSTS**  
(Part 2 of a Series)

Real estate transactions incur fees and other costs that are ultimately added to the final sales price. These "closing costs" typically include county and state taxes and fees (Deed and Note Doc Stamps, Intangible Tax and Recording Fees), Lenders' fees (Loan Origination Fees, Discount Points, Tax Service, Flood Certification, VA Funding Fees, etc.), and title-related costs (Title Search, Survey, Mortgage Title Insurance Policy and Endorsements). In Palm Beach County, closing costs are normally split as follows:

**BUYER** - Generally, most of the Buyer's closing costs, if any, are loan-related. If the Buyer is not getting a loan, then closing costs may be as low as \$10.50 for recording the deed in public records.

**SELLER** - Customarily pays the costs associated with delivering good and marketable title to the Buyer. The Seller typically selects the title agent in Palm Beach County.

We at Integrity Land Title are proud to provide quality closing services to all parties to the transaction, and will be honored to work with you to enable a smooth closing.

**Call today for a free, no-obligation rate analysis.**

Kevin Duncan  
Marketing

Leslie Mendenhall  
Proprietor  
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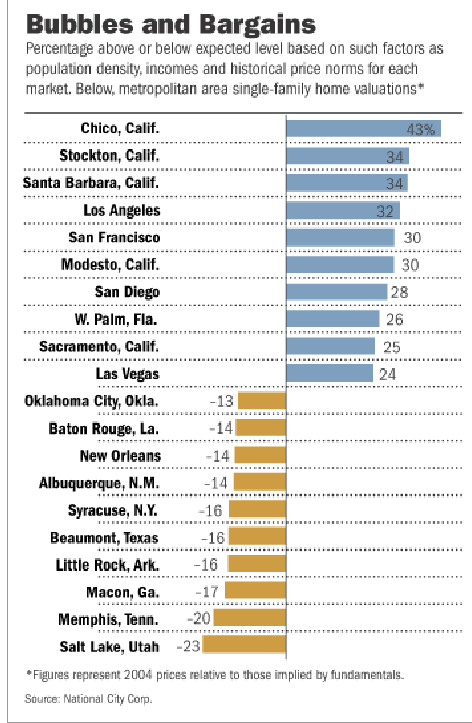
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**National Real Estate**

**No Sign of National Home Price "Bubble"**



Home prices appear to be excessive in more than a dozen US cities, including San Francisco, Miami and Los Angeles, according to a study by one of the nation's largest mortgage lenders.

However, there is no sign of a national "bubble" in home prices, says Richard DeKaser, chief economist at National City Corp., a Cleveland banking company. But "there is a growing risk of 'bubblettes' in certain places."

Markets with an overvaluation of 20% or more account for about a fifth of the total U.S. housing stock, according to the study. In most of the country houses have remained affordable, largely because low interest rates have held down monthly mortgage payments. On a national basis, 22% of the median household income is needed to meet payments on the typical single-family home last year. That's down from an average of about 35% in the 1980s.

Source: <http://www.realestatejournal.com> (02/17/05); Edited by Kevin Duncan

**Specialty Real Estate**

**The Price Is Right For Private Islands**

When Nick Hexum was searching for a South Florida home a little over a year ago, he wanted something on the ocean. While some buyers were paying more than \$1 million an acre, he found a spot with the right price and plenty of beach — in all directions.



To land his bargain, Mr. Hexum, lead singer of the rock band 311, paid \$2.8 million for a three-bedroom home on a six-acre island a mile offshore. "I got a great deal," says Mr. Hexum. "It's just me and the great blue ocean."

Though life offshore has more than a few inconveniences, on a per-acre basis these properties can offer surprising values. Overall, real-estate experts say, price increases for island realty have lagged behind those for traditional waterfront properties.

It's easier now for island shoppers to get their feet wet, in part, because of new online listing sites such as Private Islands Online that are devoted entirely to offshore properties. Technology such as satellite telephones and compact solar-powered generators has also made the isle lifestyle more practical.

Since potential buyers have to be brought in by boat or helicopter, brokers say islands typically take up to three years to sell — and commissions average 10% to 12%, double what's charged on the mainland.

Source: <http://www.privateislandsonline.com> & <http://www.realestatejournal.com>; Edited by Kevin Duncan