



The South Florida Title News

Title Services with Integrity

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Our Name Says It All

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From the Editor...

Everywhere you go these days, it seems people are talking about the fortunes that are being made in South Florida real estate.

Credit is plentiful and it seems as if everyone in Florida is either a real estate investor or a real estate agent. People outside the state hear about real estate prices doubling and tripling and eagerly pump their money into the state's hot real estate market.

It seems you can do no wrong by just buying any property in Florida to become a millionaire.

So began the Florida Land Boom of the 1920s.

The stories of today sound similar, with many fortunes still being made in Florida real estate. Palm Beach County resales passed \$370,000 in March, while Miami-area condo values have increased by 30% from their 2000 prices. And, according to "Spring Sales Start Strong," a downturn hasn't yet materialized. Just a few reminders that real estate still creates more millionaires in America than any other business.

Florida Real Estate

PBC Home Resales Soar Past \$370,000

Palm Beach County's pricey used-home market climbed even higher in March.

After falling in February to \$352,900, the median price of existing homes in Palm Beach County rose to \$371,500 in March. According to the Florida Association of Realtors, that's a 37 percent jump from the \$272,100 median price in March 2004.

Median prices soar since March 2004



Palm Beach County placed second only to the Naples area, which

had a whopping \$430,800 median price last month.

On the Treasure Coast, the median used-home price rose to \$235,000 in March, up from \$222,300 in February and from \$169,100 in March 2004.

In Palm Beach County, the number of existing homes sold jumped 54 percent from February to March. But sales dipped 7 percent compared with March of last year.

Houses sell so quickly in Palm Beach County that buyers are looking for ways to get a seller to sign on the dotted line in a hurry. For example, many buyers are now forgoing the typical sales contingency that the price will be no more than the appraised value. Meaning they'll buy the house regardless of its appraised value.

Another change is that buyers are getting approved for mortgages at specific amounts before they start looking — rather than getting pre-qualified for loans — to speed the buying process.

Source: <http://www.palmbeachpost.com/>; edited by Kevin Duncan

How Florida Title Insurance Works

By Leslie Mendenhall

THE TITLE SEARCH (Part 3 of a Series)

A title search determines if the Seller has the right to convey "marketable title" to the Buyer. "Marketable Title" means that the Seller is able to sell or market the property without a title defect or "cloud" hindering their ability to do so.

Title Abstract and Title Examination. In the Title Abstract, each document in the chain of documents leading back to the "root title" is located and photocopied. When compiled, these documents, such as deeds, mortgages, judgments, liens, Covenants and Restrictions, Easements, and any other document affecting the subject property, constitute The Abstract.

Once the Abstract is complete, a qualified Title Examiner inspects each document to ensure it complies with formality of execution, recordation, and other legal requirements. So long as documentation is not found to "break" the chain of title, the Title Search can then be used to obtain a Title Insurance Commitment.

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.**

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Condominiums

Miami Condo Development is Hot, Hot, Hot

Florida's developers and real estate brokers are flying high amid an unprecedented wave of condo building and buying they hope won't end anytime soon.



Miami-area home values increased 20% in 2004, vs. a national gain of about 12%, the federal government says. But that measure fails to register the dizzying price escalation for new condos on or near the water.

As of last year, the average price for a condo in Miami-Dade County hovered close to \$300,000, a third higher than in 2000. But in downtown Miami's more desirable neighborhoods, one-bedrooms in new projects start at about \$350,000 in the earliest stages of selling. In

Miami Beach and other communities, one-bedroom units in new oceanfront projects start at close to \$500,000 and run into the millions of dollars.

An estimated 50 major condo projects are proposed or under construction, with a remarkable 69,000 condo units currently in the permit pipeline or newly built and for sale citywide. By comparison, Las Vegas — perennially among the USA's hottest housing markets — issued permits for 40,000 units of all types of housing last year.

Source: http://www.usatoday.com/money/perfi/housing/2005-04-19-florida-boom-usat_x.htm

National Real Estate

Spring Sales Start Strong

After a multiyear real-estate boom that has raised concerns about a housing bubble in a number of markets, economists and homeowners are closely watching this year's spring selling season for any signs of a slowdown.



So far, there aren't many of them.

Spring tends to be the hottest selling season, with families looking to move before the start of the next school year. And sales are getting off to a strong start in many parts of the country.

In a revised forecast, the National Association of Realtors now says it expects sales of existing single-family homes to fall 2.4% to 6.62 million

units for the full year, which still would be the second-highest level on record. That is better than the 5% slide the Realtors group predicted at the start of the year.

One reason is the much-anticipated increase in long-term mortgage rates has yet to materialize. Weak economic news provides a nudge to buyers fearful of rising rates.

But in Miami, where sales remain strong, resale prices of existing condos in the \$500,000 to \$900,000 price range could fall by as much as \$200,000 later this year, predicts broker Mark Zilbert of Zilbert Realty Group.

With so many new units coming onto the market, "the motivation is to be in a hip new property," Mr. Zilbert says. With existing units, "the value isn't there."

Source: <http://www.realestatejournal.com/buysell/salestrends/20050421-simon.html>