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## Foreclosures drive up existing home sales numbers in Washoe County

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Existing home sales in October in Washoe County swelled by 47 percent from a year earlier as buyers found bargains in foreclosed properties, a report today shows.

The report from the Reno/Sparks Association of Realtors also indicates double-digit drops in median home prices attributed largely to bank-owned properties.

The report on existing single-family, stick-built homes showed a year-over-year 22 percent drop in the October median sales price in Reno to \$274,000 and a slip since September of 7 percent.

"Sales were definitely on the increase driven by steep discounts. There are great opportunities for buyers, but (foreclosures) are driving down the median price," said Wayne Capurro, realtor association president.

"The benefit of a lower median sales price is that it creates an affordable market that is getting potential buyers off the sidelines, where they have been for months, and making purchases," he said.

"However, we still need to keep an eye on the high level of foreclosures, as this is still a concern because of the effect they have had on the continuing decline in median price."

To that end, while having no foreclosure figures for October, Capurro estimated that more than half of all sales last month were bank-owned homes. He said he expects foreclosures to rise in October after tapering off earlier in the summer.

"It seems like every month they represent a higher percentage of sales," Capurro said. "So if you're an owner-occupied seller, it's still a tough time out there."

He also downplayed the 47 percent rise in sales as the number compares with October 2007 when sales plummeted.

"It sounds good, and it is, but it's not as impressive. A year ago, we were really grinding to a halt," he said.

But Capurro added, "We are remaining cautiously optimistic with the increase in sales."

The report's figures, based on information from the regional Multiple Listing Service, also showed similar trends in Washoe County in the existing condominium/town home market.

October sales countywide jumped 47 percent with a 39 percent drop year over year in the median price to \$120,000.

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