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Erica Filipek or Stephen Cooper
Manufacturing and Construction Division
(301) 763-5160

NEW RESIDENTIAL SALES IN DECEMBER 2009

Sales of new one-family houses in December 2009 were at a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 342,000, according to estimates released jointly today by the U.S. Census Bureau and the Department of Housing and Urban Development. This is 7.6 percent ($\pm 14.6\%$)* below the revised November rate of 370,000 and is 8.6 percent ($\pm 15.2\%$)* below the December 2008 estimate of 374,000.

The median sales price of new houses sold in December 2009 was \$221,300; the average sales price was \$290,600. The seasonally adjusted estimate of new houses for sale at the end of December was 231,000. This represents a supply of 8.1 months at the current sales rate.

An estimated 374,000 new homes were sold in 2009. This is 22.9 percent ($\pm 2.9\%$) below the 2008 figure of 485,000.

New Residential Sales data for January 2010 will be released on Wednesday, February 24, 2010, at 10:00 A.M. EST.

Our Internet site is: <http://www.census.gov/newhomesales>

EXPLANATORY NOTES

These statistics are estimated from sample surveys. They are subject to sampling variability as well as nonsampling error including bias and variance from response, nonreporting, and undercoverage. Estimated average relative standard errors of the preliminary data are shown in the tables. Whenever a statement such as "2.5 percent ($\pm 3.2\%$) above" appears in the text, this indicates the range (-0.7 to +5.7 percent) in which the actual percent change is likely to have occurred. All ranges given for percent changes are 90-percent confidence intervals and account only for sampling variability. If a range does not contain zero, the change is statistically significant. If it does contain zero, the change is not statistically significant; that is, it is uncertain whether there was an increase or decrease. The same policies apply to the confidence intervals for percent changes shown in the tables. Changes in seasonally adjusted statistics often show irregular movement. It takes 4 months to establish a trend for new houses sold. Preliminary new home sales figures are subject to revision due to the survey methodology and definitions used. The survey is primarily based on a sample of houses selected from building permits. Since a "sale" is defined as a deposit taken or sales agreement signed, this can occur prior to a permit being issued. An estimate of these prior sales is included in the sales figure. On average, the preliminary seasonally adjusted estimate of total sales is revised about 3 percent. Changes in sales price data reflect changes in the distribution of houses by region, size, etc., as well as changes in the prices of houses with identical characteristics. Explanations of confidence intervals and sampling variability can be found on our web site listed above.

* 90% confidence interval includes zero. The Census Bureau does not have sufficient statistical evidence to conclude that the actual change is different from zero.

Table 1. New Houses Sold and For Sale

[Thousands of houses. Detail may not add to total because of rounding]

Period	Sold during period ¹					For sale at end of period					Months' supply ²	Median sales price (\$)	Average sales price (\$)
	United States	North-east	Mid-west	South	West	United States	North-east	Mid-west	South	West			
Seasonally adjusted													
2008: December	374	30	59	193	92	350					11.2		
2009: January	329	30	53	181	65	340					12.4		
February	354	28	50	207	69	328					11.1		
March	332	19	44	195	74	313					11.3		
April	345	21	40	204	80	300					10.4		
May	371	25	48	206	92	293					9.5		
June	399	36	60	197	106	280					8.4		
July	419	41	57	223	98	270					7.7		
August	408	36	56	208	108	262					7.7		
September ^f	391	37	66	192	96	252					7.7		
October ^f	408	33	56	224	95	242					7.1		
November ^f	370	28	73	192	77	235					7.6		
December^p	342	40	43	178	81	231					8.1		
Average RSE (%) ³	8	27	20	11	14	3					7		
Percent Change:													
<i>December 2009 from November 2009</i>	<i>-7.6%</i>	<i>42.9%</i>	<i>-41.1%</i>	<i>-7.3%</i>	<i>5.2%</i>	<i>-1.7%</i>					<i>6.6%</i>		
<i>90% Confidence Interval⁴</i>	<i>± 14.6</i>	<i>± 61.9</i>	<i>± 24.0</i>	<i>± 18.0</i>	<i>± 30.8</i>	<i>± 1.3</i>					<i>± 20.0</i>		
<i>December 2009 from December 2008</i>	<i>-8.6%</i>	<i>33.3%</i>	<i>-27.1%</i>	<i>-7.8%</i>	<i>-12.0%</i>	<i>-34.0%</i>					<i>-27.7%</i>		
<i>90% Confidence Interval⁴</i>	<i>± 15.2</i>	<i>± 64.8</i>	<i>± 25.6</i>	<i>± 22.6</i>	<i>± 26.0</i>	<i>± 2.9</i>					<i>± 14.3</i>		
Not seasonally adjusted													
2008:	485	35	70	266	114	352	37	57	175	83	(X)	232,100	292,600
2009:	374	31	54	202	87	234	28	38	119	49	(X)	215,900	270,400
RSE (%)	3	10	15	4	6	3	12	8	5	7	(X)	3	3
Year to Year Percent Change⁵	-22.9%	-11.4%	-22.9%	-24.1%	-23.7%	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)
<i>90% Confidence Interval⁴</i>	<i>± 2.9</i>	<i>± 11.5</i>	<i>± 11.2</i>	<i>± 4.4</i>	<i>± 5.8</i>	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)
2008: December	26	2	4	14	6	352	37	57	175	83	13.6	229,600	263,100
2009: January	24	2	3	14	5	340	36	55	169	79	14.3	208,600	245,200
February	29	2	4	17	6	324	35	52	161	76	11.2	209,700	258,600
March	31	2	4	18	7	311	35	51	154	71	9.9	205,100	259,800
April	32	2	4	18	7	300	34	50	148	69	9.4	219,200	269,800
May	34	2	5	19	9	290	33	49	143	65	8.4	222,300	274,600
June	37	3	6	19	10	282	32	48	140	62	7.6	214,700	274,800
July	38	4	5	20	9	272	30	46	136	59	7.2	214,200	271,100
August	36	3	5	19	9	263	30	45	132	56	7.3	207,100	257,800
September ^f	30	3	5	14	8	254	29	43	130	53	8.4	216,600	290,300
October ^f	33	3	5	19	8	242	28	42	122	50	7.3	213,700	262,200
November ^f	26	2	5	14	5	234	28	39	119	48	8.9	210,300	270,000
December^p	23	3	3	12	5	234	28	38	119	49	10.2	221,300	290,600
Average RSE (%) ³	8	27	20	11	14	3	12	10	4	8	7	5	6

^fPreliminary. ^rRevised. RSE Relative standard error. X Not applicable. Z Less than 0.5 percent.

¹Seasonally adjusted houses sold are published at annual rates. ²Ratio of houses for sale to houses sold. ³Average RSE for the latest 6-month period.

⁴See the Explanatory Notes in the accompanying text for an explanation of 90% confidence intervals. ⁵Computed using unrounded data.

Note: The sales price includes the land.

Table 2. New Houses Sold, by Sales Price

[Thousands of houses. Components may not add to total because of rounding. Percents computed from unrounded figures]

Period	Total	Under	\$150,000 to	\$200,000 to	\$300,000 to	\$400,000 to	\$500,000 to	\$750,000
		\$150,000	\$199,999	\$299,999	\$399,999	\$499,999	\$749,999	and over
Number of houses ¹								
2008:	485	77	106	149	69	35	31	18
2009:	374	67	97	113	45	23	19	10
RSE (%)	3	10	7	5	7	10	11	17
2008: December	26	4	6	9	4	2	1	(Z)
2009: January	24	5	7	7	3	1	1	(Z)
February	29	6	7	9	3	2	1	1
March	31	6	8	10	3	2	2	1
April	32	6	8	10	4	2	1	1
May	34	5	9	11	4	3	2	1
June	37	6	10	11	5	2	2	1
July	38	6	11	10	5	2	2	1
August	36	8	9	10	4	3	2	1
September ^f	30	5	8	10	3	2	2	1
October ^f	33	6	8	12	4	2	1	1
November ^f	26	5	7	8	3	1	1	1
December^p	23	4	5	6	3	1	2	1
Average RSE (%) ²	8	18	15	14	19	28	36	40
Percent distribution								
2008:	100	16	22	31	14	7	6	4
2009:	100	18	26	30	12	6	5	3
2008: December	100	15	25	33	15	7	4	1
2009: January	100	19	28	31	12	6	3	1
February	100	20	25	30	12	7	5	2
March	100	20	27	31	10	5	5	2
April	100	18	24	31	14	7	4	3
May	100	15	25	32	13	9	5	2
June	100	17	28	30	12	4	5	3
July	100	17	28	27	14	5	6	3
August	100	22	26	28	10	8	5	1
September ^f	100	15	26	32	11	5	8	3
October ^f	100	19	24	35	11	5	4	2
November ^f	100	20	27	30	11	5	3	4
December^p	100	19	24	24	14	5	8	7

^fPreliminary. ^rRevised. RSE Relative standard error. X Not applicable. Z Less than 0.5 percent.

¹Houses for which sales price was not reported have been distributed proportionally to those for which sales price was reported.

²Average RSE for the latest 6-month period.

Note: The sales price includes the land.

Table 3. New Houses Sold and For Sale by Stage of Construction and Median Number of Months on Sales Market

[Thousands of houses. Detail may not add to total because of rounding]

Period	Sold during period				For sale at end of period				Median months for sale ¹
	Total	Not started	Under construction	Completed	Total	Not started	Under construction	Completed	
2008:	485	104	134	247	352	41	139	172	9.2
2009:	374	84	107	184	234	34	101	99	13.9
RSE (%)	3	7	5	5	3	5	4	6	8
2008: December	26	4	6	16	352	41	139	172	9.2
2009: January	24	6	5	13	340	40	133	167	9.4
February	29	6	7	16	324	38	127	159	9.9
March	31	7	7	17	311	39	120	152	10.2
April	32	7	8	17	300	39	118	143	10.8
May	34	10	9	16	290	39	115	136	11.5
June	37	9	11	18	282	37	116	128	11.9
July	38	8	12	18	272	35	116	121	12.5
August	36	8	12	16	263	35	113	115	12.9
September ^f	30	6	10	15	254	32	112	111	13.2
October ^f	33	6	11	16	242	30	106	106	13.7
November ^f	26	6	8	12	234	28	105	101	13.8
December^p	23	7	6	10	234	34	101	99	13.9
Average RSE (%) ²	8	8	10	10	3	8	5	5	5

^pPreliminary. ^fRevised. RSE Relative standard error. Z Less than 0.5 percent.

¹Median number of months for sale since completion.

²Average RSE for the latest 6-month period.