



Louisiana REALTORS® Expand Advocacy Web Site into Online Information Hub for Homeowners

The association of Louisiana REALTORS® (LR) had an enviable problem on its hands. Last year, as part of its wildly successful initiative to prohibit any future proposed state-wide transfer taxes, it had created a website to bolster and communicate its position. After the vote, the website remained: a highly effective platform that had connected with thousands of Louisiana citizens interested in property-rights and home-ownership issues.

The challenge was to keep all these folks engaged. LR's Chief Executive Officer Malcolm Young explains, "We had earned the trust and respect of a very broad demographic, and wanted to keep their interest up by providing good and timely information on protecting and maximizing home value." Through LR's work with the REALTOR® Party, Young knew they could capitalize on the beta site they'd already created, taking the website to the next level. "We decided to transform what we had into an online, Louisiana-specific, home-ownership resource center – one that would serve as a model for other state associations," says Young.

A \$25,000 Game Changer Grant from the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® enabled LR to do just that. No longer focused on a single political goal, the LAHomeowners.org website now serves as a broad-based, information-rich, one-stop resource for homeowners and would-be homeowners.

Young points out, "It's full of great ideas on how to save money, whether you're a current homeowner, or looking to buy a home." From discounts on homeowners insurance to information on hurricane protection and tax credits; from tips on subjects from home-buying to leveraging property investments, there's something for everyone with an interest in homeownership. Helpful links connect directly to relevant state and federal agencies, school information resources, and NAR's HouseLogic site.

LAHomeowners.org has a simple and easy sign-up page to register for news, updates, and action alerts on issues that could affect home values. Before the new site even launched in mid-October, over 10,000 Louisiana REALTORS® and residents, most of whom had signed on through the previous site, had registered as users.

"The fact is, we've done something good for this audience we had captured," says Young. "And our REALTOR® members certainly see it as a benefit. It's a real tool that helps them to re-connect with existing customers and clients, and something really valuable to offer others." LR's hope is that the new site will become a centerpiece for its legislative advocacy, making Louisiana's REALTORS® the true advocate for the state's property owners.

LR has an active work group devising ways to get the word about LAHomeowners.org out to the general Louisiana public and to fellow associations. "We've designed this site as a model for others to use, borrow, or steal from," laughs Young, "I've already heard from other Association Executives that the concept is a home run, and we'd be delighted to see it replicated all over."

To use, borrow, steal, or learn more about Louisiana's innovative website, contact Malcolm Young, Chief Executive Officer of the Louisiana Association of REALTORS® at 800.266.8538.



LAHomeowners.org

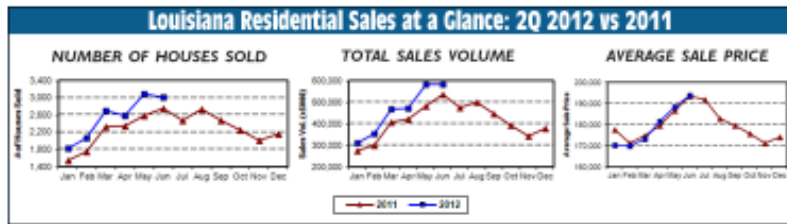
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Louisiana Real Estate Statistics

Latest quarterly market snapshot from the Louisiana REALTORS Association.

2nd Quarter 2012 (Released August 2012)



Home Prices Start Moving Up as Sales Activity Continues to Strengthen

Louisiana's residential real estate market continued its positive upward track with a 12.7 percent increase in the number of homes sold for the second quarter of 2012, according to the latest Louisiana REALTORS Real Estate Trends report.

Throughout the six month period ending in March 2012, Louisiana sales prices had failed to keep pace with the previous year, but the increase shown during the second quarter is positive news for sellers and a sign of the market recovery taking hold.

"Sales activity has been up for a while now, but many industry observers have been waiting for home prices to start bouncing back before declaring the housing market to be in recovery," said Rick Roberts, Louisiana REALTORS president.

Seven of the state's eight major metropolitan areas saw an increase in the number of sales during the second quarter. Leading the way was the Lafayette area, with residential sales jumping 27 percent over the second quarter of 2011, and 27 percent year to date.

Elsewhere around the state, the Greater New Orleans metro area registered a 12.1 percent increase in the number of sales compared to 2Q11, and year to date remains ahead of last year's sales pace by 13.8 percent.

In Shreveport, home sales increased 6.9 percent for the quarter and are up 10.7 percent year to date, while the average sales price dipped slightly to \$175,156 for the quarter (-1.9 percent).

Sales activity in the Alexandria-Prichville metro increased 3.5 percent during 2Q12 and is up nearly 7 percent year to date. The average home sales price in central Louisiana jumped 5.1 percent for the quarter and is up 8.8 percent year to date.

In general, the Louisiana housing market has shown significant growth in 2012, and is expected to continue the upward trend through the summer. Rising prices are a positive sign being seen in an increasing number of markets nationwide, with half of the nation's metropolitan statistical areas showing price gains during the second quarter from a year earlier - exactly what the quarterly numbers in Louisiana are showing. — LR.

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Residential sales statistics are for the period of January 2011 through March 2012 and provided by the following sources: Bayou Board of REALTORS, Greater Baton Rouge Association of REALTORS, Central Louisiana Association of REALTORS, Gulf States Real Estate Information Network, Northeast Louisiana Association of REALTORS, Northwest Louisiana Association of REALTORS, REALTOR Association of Acadiana, Southwest Louisiana Association of REALTORS.

For more information, contact Kevin Gilbert with Louisiana REALTORS at 800-366-6636.

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