



Donna C. Anderson · Long Realty · 5683 N Swan Rd Tucson, AZ 85718 · (520) 918-2410

## Southern Arizona Market Remains Strong

Just about everyone these days seems to be saying, "This has to be the end of Arizona's 'up' cycle – it's been going too good for too long and can't last much longer." However, not much evidence supports that comment. Southern Arizona home sales remained in the double digits this fall.

The Metropolitan Phoenix and Tucson markets reached all-time highs in June 2004, then dropped off slightly. Historically, this market begins to taper in the fall. Even with this seasonal slowdown, the two metro markets were up during September 2004 compared September 2003.

Rosey Koberlein, President and CEO of Long Realty Company, said, "We are fortunate to be in a part of the country where housing affordability remains strong and many first-time home buyers are able to live the American dream."

Year-to-date sales in metro Phoenix were up 22% over the same period in 2003, while Tucson was up 17%. Both these increases are indicative of a growing home market.

In the Tucson area, the number of homes available for sale continued to decline after January 2004 but leveled off in September. The number of homes put on the market this year is only slightly above the number of homes listed last year, yet 2004's increased sales resulted in fewer homes available on the market. Since June, over half of the homes sold have been above \$165,000 while the average sale price continues to hover around \$207,000.

In the Phoenix area there was also a drop in the number of homes for sale, steadily declining since January 2004, reaching an all-time low in September. The strength in sales was due to fewer homes on the market. Over half the homes sold have been above \$168,000, while the average sale price reached \$224,700 in September.

The Green Valley area has remained steady, after a seasonal peak of 176 in May 2004. Average September sale price reached \$153,000 with more than half the homes selling above \$129,000.

The Sierra Vista area remains healthy, with home sales peaking at 189 in July 2004, and returning to a steady 136. Average sale price in September 2004 hit \$164,000, with more than half the homes selling at \$159,000 or higher.

"All the usual factors are influencing buyers in Southern Arizona: a moderate climate, abundant leisure time activities, a good flow of jobs, and affordable housing compared to many other areas of the state," Koberlein said.

## Get Pre-Approved!

Pre-approval, as opposed to pre-qualification, signifies that the loan application has been taken through a rigorous procedure. Here's why pre-approved buyers are ahead in the home buying game:

If you make an offer on a home and then apply for a loan, you are at the lender's mercy, who is aware that you do not have time to shop around.

Pre-approval saves time spent looking at houses you can't afford.

A pre-approval letter from a lender gives you an edge when multiple offers have been made on a house.

Pre-approved buyers can generally close escrow more quickly, since most of the work has already been done.

## Check Your Credit Report

Credit card companies and lenders rely on credit scores, which determine someone's chances to borrow money — and how favorable the terms will be.

Check your own score yearly by ordering reports from the three major credit scoring companies: Equifax ([www.equifax.com](http://www.equifax.com)), Experian ([www.experian.com](http://www.experian.com)), and TransUnion ([www.tuc.com](http://www.tuc.com)).

Notify the credit bureau of inaccuracies. Close accounts not in use. Request that late payments older than seven years be removed. Verify and update accounts and account numbers. Verify address and Social Security number.

How to Improve Your Score: Pay your bills on time. Reduce outstanding debt. Build up your savings. Don't fall for illegal schemes that help you create a new credit identity.

## Tucson Real Estate Market is Red Hot!

If you are thinking of buying a home in Tucson in the near future, make sure you get your mortgage loan pre-approved before looking! Many attractive homes have multiple-offers, and by your offer revealing pre-approval makes yours' more likely to be accepted. Prepare to look at houses for more than a few days, since the housing inventory is so low.

My 20+ years experience, of which more than a few were finding homes for Buyers in a hot market, will insure your success of finding the right home for you.

However, be aware that you will almost always have to pay full price or more to get your dream house. And don't wait too long to make that house hunting trip!