



For Immediate Release
January 5, 2010

Contact: Sarah Thornton
PH: 239-0785; sthornton@cox.net

Prudential Americana Group Posts Banner Year in 2009 *Despite Recession, Nevada's largest real estate company posts gains*

(Las Vegas, Nev.) The final numbers are in and Prudential Americana Group remains the top-selling real estate company in Nevada. In 2009, the company posted approximately 9,000 transactions, which equates to approximately 4,500 total homes purchased and sold.

The Greater Las Vegas Association of Realtors posted approximately 95,000 transaction sides, which was made up of approximately half sales sides and half listings sold sides. "Prudential Americana Group was involved in more than one out of every ten home sales in Las Vegas last year, which is far more than any of our closest competitors," said Mark Stark, CEO of the company. "Our units closed increased nearly 50 percent over 2008, when we posted 5,969 total listings sold and buyer sales."

One standout figure from 2009 is that 67 percent of all pending sales in Las Vegas right now are short sales, with 8,935 of 13,406. And GLVAR now lists just 2,367 available REO, or bank-owned, properties compared to nearly 10,000 one year ago.

According to Stark, the statistics on home sales throughout the year, and particularly in December, signify a stabilization of sales prices in 2010. This stabilization will be the result of approximately 25 percent less homes available in the GLVAR's MLS (Multiple Listing Service) than the same time last year. "We will also experience higher price properties hitting the market for sale, which will drive the average sales up even though the price of that particular property is actually decreasing from its past value," he said. GLVAR currently lists 11,921 available residential properties in Las Vegas.

According to the GLVAR's records, the average single family home sales price was \$204,000 in December 2008. In December of 2009, the average sale price was \$165,000. "Prices are down 14 to 15 percent year over year, but that is a victory after dropping three percent per month," said Forrest Barbee, Prudential Americana Group's corporate broker and a GLVAR board member. "Prices dropped 33 percent from December 2007 to December 2008," he said.

One other bright spot Stark saw was the overall affordability of homes. "People who thought in the past that home ownership was out of reach have now come to understand that they have a golden opportunity to not only purchase a home, but look forward to long-term appreciation," he said.

The Year In Review

"In 2009, the big trend in the Las Vegas resale market included the significant increase in cash sales for both investors and first time homebuyers," said Barbee. "We saw 41 percent of home closings in December 2009 made with cash while FHA/VA buyers continue to make up one third of the closings and conventional loans only 24 percent of sold homes." Barbee noted that over the past 12 months Las

Vegas has experienced a shrinking inventory of available properties - most notably bank-owned listings. "This came in the wake of a significant increase in overall demand, which resulted in record high resale closings in the last half of 2009," he said.

"As we expected, 2009 began with market values declining at least 2 to 3% per month," said Stark. "We found some stabilization during the last quarter of the year and expect it to continue throughout 2010, but we expect market prices to remain relatively flat or increase only slightly throughout the course of the year."

We also made significant investments in 2009 to increase productivity for our sales executives," said Stark. "We feel this will continue to drive even more business to them and help more clients achieve their goals." The technology investment has already begun paying off. "We have increased our company productivity year over year by approximately 75 percent," he said. "We are again attracting full time career minded Realtors that are committed to building a successful career in the real estate industry."

Looking Ahead

"2010 should be the beginning of a recovery for residential real estate," said Barbee. "The actual extent of the recovery will depend in part upon how successful Southern Nevada is in continued job creation."

For Prudential, 2010 looks to be a year of building on its own momentum. "Our focus in 2010 will be in further developing our online presence to make it easier than ever to find a home online and purchase it with our web-based paperless system," said Stark. "We are also looking to help educate both buyers and sellers about short sales so they can make informed decisions in this often complex process."

And for residential real estate, Barbee predicts that 2010 will be the year that strides will be made to create a more efficient climate for conducting short sales and loan modifications. "The Home Affordability Financing Alternatives (HAFA) legislation will pave the way for a much needed streamlined short sale process," he said. "Short sales have been very, very difficult the past two years. Banks have not been truly motivated to work on them expeditiously and as a result they have taken anywhere from 6 months to 18 months to complete. The lengthy timeframes have led to unusually high fallout rates in those escrows. Worse yet, the majority of approved short sale transactions left the seller in a position where the lender could still file a deficiency judgment against them for the balance owed for up to six years after the sale."

"We are looking forward to the year ahead," said Stark. "We will continue to focus on our opportunities and develop new programs that make buying and selling a home as easy as possible."

Prudential Americana Group is Nevada's most productive real estate company with more than 1,200 sales executives and approximately 2,200 current home listings. It is an independently owned and operated member of Prudential Real Estate affiliates and is the 8th largest in the company's national network of 677 franchises. For more information, visit www.americanagroup.com.

-END-