

THIRD QUARTER 2010 VS 2011 RESIDENTIAL SALES

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In a way Beaufort County was spoiled for over a decade, with the large amount of marketing and promotions paid for by the owners and investors of the many real estate developments. Over the years they spent many millions on promoting their communities, and by extension, promoting the whole of Beaufort County. When the real estate downturn really started to take hold, many companies, as a part of survival, had to pull in their financial horns and severely cut back on marketing dollars. Unfortunately, even with these cut backs many developments have not made it, and now lay fallow waiting for a knight in shining armor to come along to kick start the development back into life. I believe we are seeing the results of all this cut back in marketing dollars in the form of an anemic performance of overall real estate sales in Northern Beaufort County. This type of performance can be seen in the following comparison of 2010 and 2011 third quarter residential market in the key areas of northern Beaufort County.

Area	Sales Volume (Millions)	Units	Avg Price	Median Price
Beaufort				
2010	\$3.1	14	\$222,742	\$159,450
2011	\$2,9	14	\$208,139	\$181,131
Change +/-	- 6.5%	--	- 6.6%	+ 13.5%
Mossy Oaks				
2010	\$1.0	5	\$208,632	\$195,000
2011	\$1.1	8	\$138,112	\$144,500
Change +/-	+ 1%	+ 60%	- 66%	- 25%
Port Royal				
2010	\$2.3	15	\$155,180	\$169,000
2011	\$1.4	9	\$154,333	\$170,000
Change +/-	- 60%	- 60%	- 0.6%	+ 0.5%
Burton				
2010	\$7.3	31	\$238,390	\$216,000
2011	\$7.3	36	\$204,367	\$177,897
Change +/-	--	+ 16%	- 15%	- 18%
Lady's Island				
2010	\$13.9	49	\$283,536	\$222,500
2011	\$10.4	41	\$253,789	\$203,300
Change +/-	- 25%	- 16%	- 11%	- 9%
Total Northern Beaufort				
2010	\$27.7	114	\$243,619	\$195,000
2011	\$23.1	108	\$214,541	\$180,250
Change +/-	- 13%	- 5%	- 12%	- 12%

Obviously there still are entities promoting Beaufort County. Real estate agents and offices by the nature of their business have to promote the area...and of course organizations such as Main Street Beaufort and the Chamber of Commerce do a great job with limited funds in letting people, in other parts of the country, know why they should relocate to the Beaufort area.

Hilton Head was badly hit initially by the down turn. People stopped buying second and vacation homes – but they seemed to have rebounded faster than those of us north of the Broad River. Delving into the reasons for that is not in the scope of this article. I would be interested to see a survey, asking folks who bought a house on Hilton Head, why they did not buy north of the Broad River!

There are few bright spots in the third quarter numbers. The city Beaufort continues to see some improvement in selling prices, with a handsome increase in median selling prices. Port Royal prices held up well also. Mossy Oaks and Burton saw unit sales numbers increase. Looking back at last years numbers, Lady's Island had a very good third quarter – year on year, so this years results, might not be quite as bad as they first look.

To be honest, the third quarter results are a little disappointing, after a fairly healthy spring season. I often get asked what I think about the real estate market and typically I reply that the market has no traction. We have a reasonably good spell and just as we start to feel better we seem to slip back with a disappointing quarter. In other words, the local market is all over the place. One saving grace though, and there is no point in getting too negative, because just around the corner could be another productive period. As Realtors, we have to keep a positive attitude - that today will be better than yesterday!