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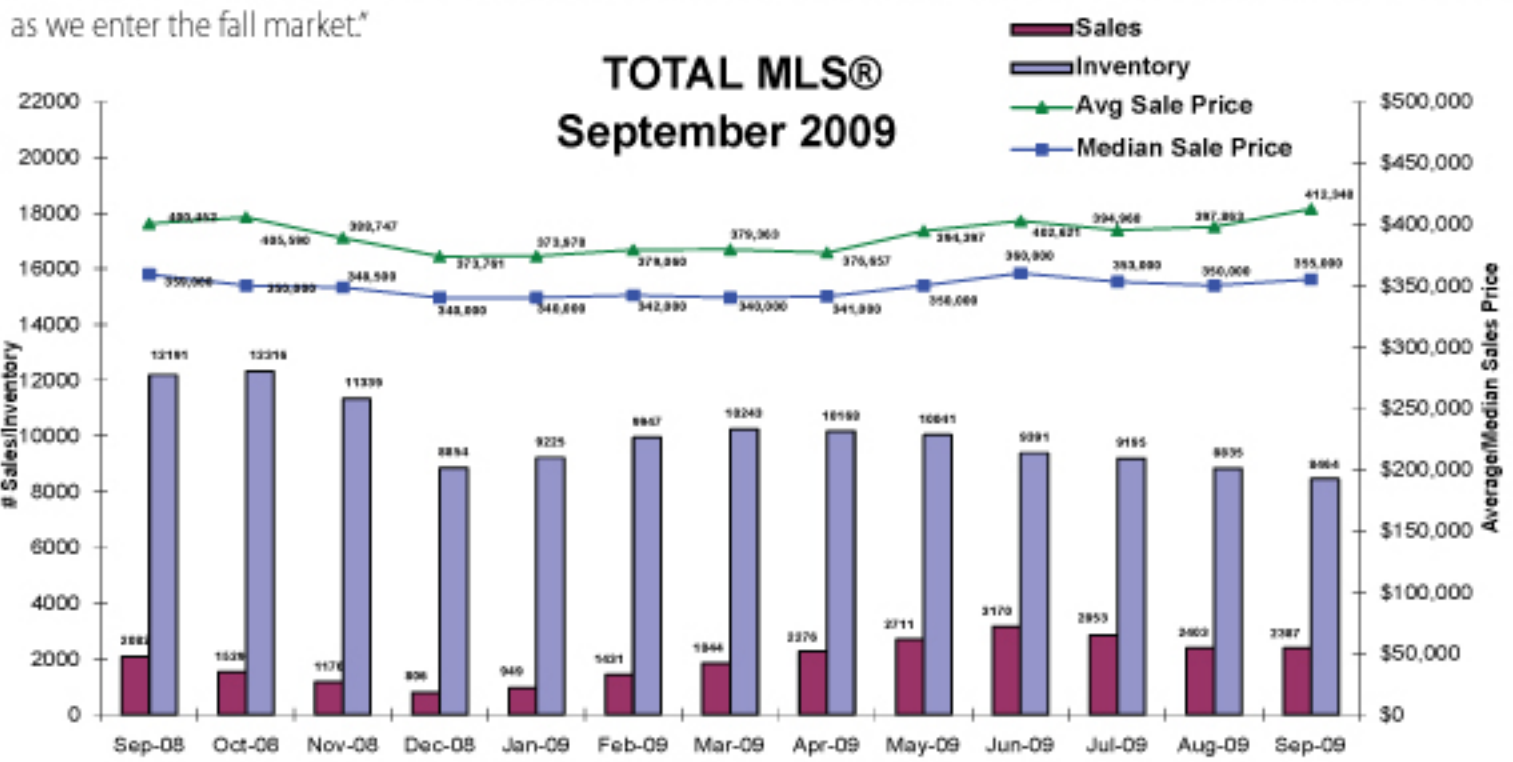
CALGARY HOME PRICES SHOW SIGNS OF STABILITY

Calgary, October 1, 2009 – Calgary home prices show signs of stability as recovery in the housing market begins to take hold.

The average price of a single family Calgary metro home in September 2009 was \$459,085, showing an increase of 1 per cent from August 2009, when the average price was \$454,130, and showing an increase of 3 per cent from September 2008, when the average price was \$444,048. The average price of a Calgary metro condominium was \$290,253 showing a 2 per cent increase from August 2009, when the average price was \$283,330 and an increase of 1 per cent over last year, when the average price was \$287,426. Average price information can be useful in establishing trends over time, but does not indicate actual prices in centres comprised of widely divergent neighbourhoods, or account for price differentials between geographical areas.

"The correction in Calgary housing market appears to be stabilizing and downward pressure on home prices is moderating," says Diane Scott, president elect of the Calgary Real Estate Board. The number of single family homes and condos sold in September 2009 in Calgary metro are also both up from the same time a year ago. September saw 1,257 single family homes sold in Calgary metro. This is an increase of 9 per cent from September 2008, when single family home sales were 1,152. This is a decrease of 2 per cent from 1,277 sales in August of this year. The number of condominium sales for the month of September 2009 was 580, an increase of 25 per cent from September 2008 when 465 condominiums changed hands. This was a decrease of 8 per cent from the 632 condominium transactions recorded last month.

"Indeed the market is harder to predict in these early stages of recovery," says Scott. "Sales were stronger than expected in the summer months -- easing slightly in September. We expect a gradual and measured uptake in sales as we enter the fall market."



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6 Halloween Safety Tips for Householders

1. Put a Halloween decoration in your window if you are happy for trick or treaters to visit you.
2. Leave on an external light to enable trick or treaters to approach your door without accident.
3. Take care when lighting pumpkins -- ensure that curtains and other flammable materials are tied back.
4. Keep any treats near your front door for security -- and don't invite any trick or treaters into your home unless you know them.
5. Do not give homemade or unwrapped treats in case of allergies.
6. Report any unsupervised or unruly group of trick or treaters to the police.



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More Tips on Getting Your Garden Ready for Winter

With the arrival of fall and cold weather, it is essential to complete a few projects to keep your yard and garden protected through the dormant months. Prepare shrubs, trees and grass now and they will return healthy in the spring and will also leave you with a neat, well tended yard through winter.

Lawn — Although grass appears to stop growing in the fall, the roots are growing deeper to prepare for winter. Now is the best time to fertilize and reseed your lawn. Feeding the lawn early in autumn will give the roots a boost before winter arrives. A second feeding in late October will keep it winterized and strong through the freezing weather.

Sod — If your lawn has some bare patches, early autumn is a perfect time to sod or reseed. Adding sod gives you an instantly perfect lawn that will be a pleasure when the warm weather returns. To firmly establish new sod, keep it moist for the first week after it is laid. After the first week, it can be watered as needed. Avoid having sod laid in hot, dry weather, as it will be hard for the roots to establish. Make sure that the sod you are having installed contains varieties of grass that are indigenous to your region. The sod should not look dry and should be sitting on a pallet no longer than two days; it should not be warm to the touch. You can eliminate a lot of the uncertainty by buying sod from a reputable grower.

Pruning — Pruning is very important to encourage healthy growth in spring. Most pruning should be done after the leaves turn, indicating that the plant is dormant. A good rule of thumb is to prune spring blooming shrubs immediately after flowering and to prune summer blooming shrubs in the dormant season. Pruning late in the growing season will encourage new growth that will be damaged by frost. When pruning, use caution to make a good cut at a slight angle about 1/4 inch from the branch. Hire a professional gardener to help with this delicate task. Some shrubs need to be wrapped with burlap to protect them from frost. If you have experienced frost damage in the past, make sure to protect these plants before the temperature dips down. Spread a layer of mulch around the base of plants to provide insulation for the winter. Wait until spring to fertilize shrubs and trees.

Trees — Trees need special care like all the plants in your yard. It is important to keep tree limbs away from power lines and away from the roof of your house. Branches can easily pull down gutters or cause other costly damage if they are hanging over your house. When planning to prune trees, consult with a professional arborist. He or she will know the best method for your species of trees and the correct time of year for pruning. A professional arborist will also know how to safely remove any troublesome branches. Typically, pruning should be done in early autumn or late spring.

Landscaping — Walkways and patios can take a beating in cold weather. Shifts in temperature and humidity can cause concrete and brick to heave and settle unevenly. Keeping them free of water build up and debris will reduce the chances of winter damage. If you noticed water or ice accumulation last winter, take steps now to provide proper drainage. This can be as simple as adding a small gravel drainage channel next to a walkway, or fixing a gutter that drips onto steps.

Cool Ideas for Fall Decorating

These seasonal decorating updates will add cozy warmth to your home — and perk up your spirits — just before the winter months.

1. Warm Up Your Walkways

"As the weather cools, if your floors are totally bare, think about laying down some nice heavy pieces like oriental rugs," home-stager Jennie Norris of We Stage Sacramento suggests. "The same goes if your floors are covered with cotton, sisal or jute area rugs." Add more texture and color with materials like wool. An added bonus: warmer tootsies.

2. Dim the Lights

Earlier sunsets may force you to switch to artificial lighting before dinnertime, but don't make the mistake of relying on glaring overheads. "You should invest in as much ambient lighting as possible," Norris says. If you already have plenty of lamps, consider changing the shades to deeper hues or richer materials. "You can even change a chandelier or put in rose-colored bulbs instead of white ones," says Joanne B. Hans, IADA, with A Perfect Placement.

3. Use Fall Scents

As your garden or window boxes fade, introduce evergreens and cold weather-tolerant flora like mums. Or stock up indoors with houseplants like orchids and succulents. "You can also decorate with earthy finds like twigs and acorns, or seasonal permanent botanicals, too," Hans says.



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