



HOMEOWNERSHIP

- > First-time homebuyers continue to fuel the housing rebound. In the first seven months of 2009, first-time homebuyers – mostly between the ages of 25 and 45 – accounted for nearly 50 percent of home sales.
- > N.C. existing home sales posted its fourth consecutive month of improvement in September, the longest period of monthly gains in more than five years.
- > While nationwide housing production remained virtually unchanged in September, the South registered a 7.5 percent gain for the month, making it the only region in the country to post an increase in construction starts.
- > Over the past three years, nearly half of all states have recorded home price gains in the majority of their metro areas, particularly in the South, the Plains, and most of the non-coastal West.

ECONOMY

- > The nation's gross domestic product – the broadest measure of the government's total goods and services produced – expanded at an annual rate of 3.5 percent in the quarter that ended in September. Up until the third quarter, the GDP had been shrinking for nearly a year.
- > N.C. continues to top a wide range of rankings. In October alone, Asheville was named among the top 10 best affordable places to retire; Durham was predicted to be one of the top cities to post a big rebound; and Raleigh was named one of the top locations for newcomers.
- > N.C. ranks as the sixth most popular state in the nation when it comes to where people want to live, according to a recent Harris Interactive poll.

- > Federal stimulus money sent directly to N.C. state agencies has saved or created at least 24,000 jobs, according to the North Carolina Office of Economic Recovery and Investment.

FORECLOSURE FACTS

- > National foreclosure rates soared in the third quarter, with one in every 136 homes going into foreclosure. North Carolina, however, had the 14th-lowest foreclosure rate in the nation, with one in every 417 homes going into foreclosure.
- > North Carolina's State Home Foreclosure Prevention Project has helped more than 2,100 families prevent foreclosure since its inception in January. Fight NC Foreclosure, sponsored by NC REALTORS® and other groups, is an extension of this Foreclosure Prevention project. The campaign highlights a toll-free number, 1-866-234-4857, and a website: www.fightncforeclosure.org.
- > The North Carolina Housing Finance Agency, which operates affordable housing programs in the state, was recently awarded \$895,350 in federal money that will be used to help stem the tide of home foreclosures. This is the third grant the agency has received, with funds representing nearly \$6 million. So far, the effort is credited with helping more than 1,100 residents stay in their homes.