

## Winnebago County Not Participating in Housing Downturn

**Oshkosh** – Winnebago Home Builders Association members gathered Wednesday to illustrate that despite well-publicized reports of a nationwide housing downturn, local housing market conditions make it a great time to buy, build or remodel a home in Winnebago County.

“The problems in the nation’s housing market are not consistent with what we are experiencing here in Winnebago County,” said WHBA President Phil Baeten, a local remodeling contractor. “It’s important to remember that all housing markets are local, and conditions in them are dictated by the local economy and job market.”

Shellie Mathe, a local realtor with 24 years of experience, said the Winnebago County housing market is bucking nationwide trends of decreasing sales volume and plummeting home values.

“Winnebago County home values continue to increase, sales volume is steady and there is a variety of quality, affordable homes for sale – all positive signs the local market is on solid ground,” said Mathe, a past president of the Oshkosh Board of Realtors.

From a home financing perspective, it’s an exceptionally good time to purchase a new or existing home, according to local banker Mark Stano.

“In my 15 years of helping people finance their dream home, only three years – 2003, 2004 and 2005 – have had lower average interest rates for 30-year fixed mortgages than 2007,” said Stano. “If you’ve got a steady income and a good credit history, there is plenty of available mortgage money available at rates near historic lows.”

Jim Kubasta, 28-year home building veteran, said that the quality of life and affordable housing market have helped Winnebago County weather the housing downturn plaguing other parts of the nation.

“We all know Winnebago County is a great place to live, work and play,” said Kubasta. “With all that the area has to offer – a great quality of life, great schools and a strong economy – it’s easy to see why Winnebago County is not participating in the housing downturn.”

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