



PRESS RELEASE



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Housing Starts Decrease in February

OTTAWA, Ontario, March 09, 2009 — The seasonally adjusted annual rate¹ of housing starts declined to 134,600 units in February from 153,500 units in January, according to Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC).

“Increased listings and reduced sales in the existing home market continue to impact the new home market,” said Bob Dugan, Chief Economist at CMHC’s Market Analysis Centre. “The decrease in February housing starts is partly attributable to the volatile multiple starts segment. In any given month and given its relative importance, the volatility of the multiple starts segment can exaggerate monthly movements up or down in the rate of housing starts.”

The seasonally adjusted annual rate of urban starts decreased 14.9 per cent to 107,800 units in February. Urban multiple starts decreased 17.5 per cent to 63,300 units, while urban single starts fell 11 per cent to 44,500 units in February.

February’s seasonally adjusted annual rate of urban starts moderated in all of Canada’s regions except Atlantic Canada, where urban starts increased by 10.8 per cent. Urban starts fell by 19.6 per cent in Quebec, 14.4 per cent in Ontario, 19.4 per cent in the Prairies, and 12.8 per cent in British Columbia.

Rural starts were estimated at a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 26,800 units in February².

New home construction is slowing to more sustainable levels and starts are forecast to come in at 160,250 units, within a range of 141,000 to 180,000 units in 2009. These trends are reflected in the year-to-date actual starts. These decreases, however, should be viewed in the context that housing starts have been exceptionally strong over the past 7 years, exceeding 200,000 units per year.

As Canada’s national housing agency, CMHC draws on more than 60 years of experience to help Canadians access a variety of quality, environmentally sustainable, and affordable homes — homes that will continue to create vibrant and healthy communities and cities across the country.

For more information, call 1-800-668-2642.

¹ All starts figures in this release, other than actual starts, are seasonally adjusted annual rates (SAAR) – that is, monthly figures adjusted to remove normal seasonal variation and multiplied by 12 to reflect annual levels.

² CMHC estimates the level of rural starts for each of the three months of the quarter, at the beginning of each quarter. During the last month of the quarter, CMHC conducts the survey in rural areas and revises the estimate.

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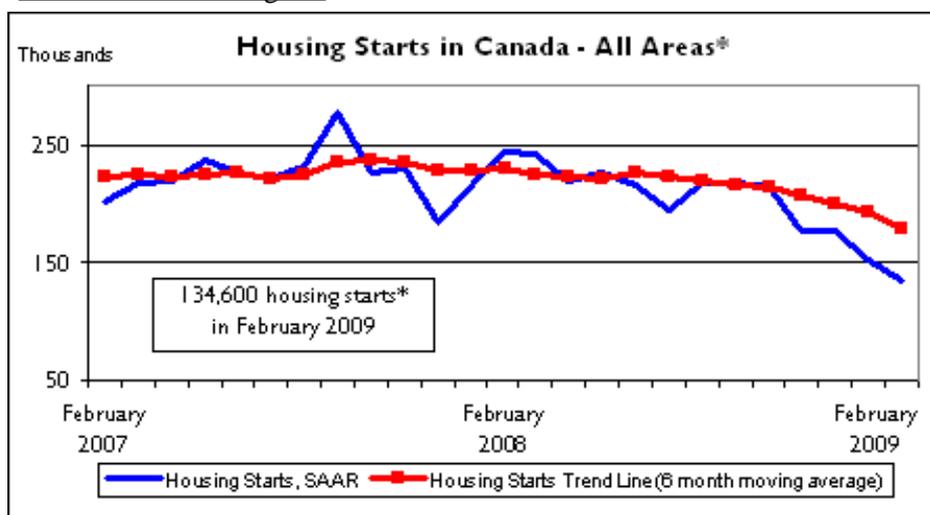
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Housing Starts, Actual and SAAR*				
	Actual		SAAR	
	February 2008	February 2009	January 2009	February 2009
	Final	Preliminary	Final	Preliminary
Canada, all areas	14,268	6,598	153,500	134,600
Canada, rural areas	737	1,004	26,800	26,800
Canada, urban centres**	13,531	5,594	126,700	107,800
Canada, singles, urban centres	4,339	2,019	50,000	44,500

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Canada, multiples, urban centres	9,192	3,575	76,700	63,300
Atlantic region, urban centres	255	262	7,400	8,200
Quebec, urban centres	2,794	1,438	36,200	29,100
Ontario, urban centres	4,399	2,206	51,500	44,100
Prairie region, urban centres	2,464	831	17,500	14,100
British Columbia, urban centres	3,619	857	14,100	12,300