

RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

St. John's Area Housing Starts Cool in February

ST. JOHN'S, March 9, 2009 – Urban housing starts cooled during the month of February, according to preliminary data¹ released today by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC). February's housing starts totaled 45 throughout the St. John's area versus 51 starts in February of 2008. No housing starts were recorded in other urban areas across the province.

"Despite cooling 12 per cent compared to the same month in 2008, February's urban housing starts still posted solid results for this time of year," said Chris Janes, senior market analyst with CMHC in Newfoundland and Labrador. "Home builders were over capacity throughout much of 2008 and they now appear to be catching up, with many of the recent housing starts based on contracts signed last year," added Janes.

For Canada's urban centres, total housing starts fell 59 per cent with 5,594 recorded in February compared to 13,531 during February of 2008. Single-detached starts decreased 53 per cent to 2,019, while multiple starts of 3,575 represent a 61 per cent decline from a year ago. Throughout Atlantic Canada, there were 262 urban housing starts posted versus 255 the previous February, an increase of three per cent.

New home construction in Canada 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.

¹ Figures for the most recent month are preliminary and subject to revisions due to corrections or updates from quarterly enumeration or sampling results.

For more information, visit www.cmhc.ca or call 1-800-668-2642.

PRELIMINARY URBAN MONTHLY HOUSING STARTS NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR SUMMARY						
	2009	2008	% Change	YEAR-TO-DATE		% Change
	FEB	FEB		2009	2008	
ALL URBAN CENTRES WITH POPULATIONS > 50,000						
ST. JOHN'S CMA						
Single	39	40	-2.5%	127	92	38.0%
Multiple	6	11	-45.5%	42	25	68.0%
TOTAL	45	51	-11.8%	169	117	44.4%
ALL URBAN CENTRES WITH POPULATION > 10,000						
ALL CENTRES*						
Single	39	41	-4.9%	132	95	38.9%
Multiple	6	11	-45.5%	43	25	72.0%
TOTAL	45	52	-13.5%	175	120	45.8%

Figures for the most recent month are preliminary and subject to revisions due to corrections or updates from quarterly enumeration or sampling results.

* Includes all centres with a total population of more than 10,000 (St. John's CMA, Corner Brook CA, Gander CA, Grand Falls/Windsor CA, and Labrador City CA)

Indicates changes in excess of 100% which are not reported due to volatility resulting from small absolute numbers.

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