

RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

St. John's Area Housing Starts Positive in First Quarter

ST. JOHN'S, April 8, 2009 – Urban housing starts were positive during the first quarter of 2009, despite retreating slightly during the month of March, according to preliminary data¹ released today by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC). Housing starts totaled 214 throughout the St. John's area during the first quarter compared to 172 starts during the same period last year. For the month of March, there were 45 starts compared to 55 during March of 2008. With 224 total starts recorded province-wide versus 176 a year ago, Newfoundland and Labrador was the only province in Canada with positive first quarter results.

“Despite retreating slightly during the month of March, urban housing starts posted solid results during the first quarter of this year, increasing 24 per cent over the same three-month period in 2008,” said Chris Janes, senior market analyst with CMHC in Newfoundland and Labrador. “The local economy remains stable and continues to support housing market activity and prices so far in 2009,” added Janes.

For Canada's urban centres, total housing starts fell 45 per cent with 8,629 recorded in March compared to 15,616 during March of 2008. Single-detached starts decreased 46 per cent to 2,566, while multiple starts of 6,063 represent a 44 per cent decline from a year ago. Throughout Atlantic Canada, there were 244 urban housing starts posted versus 522 the previous March, a decrease of 53 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
	MAR	MAR		2009	2008	
ALL URBAN CENTRES WITH POPULATIONS > 50,000						
ST. JOHN'S CMA						
Single	39	49	-20.4%	166	141	17.7%
Multiple	6	6	0.0%	48	31	54.8%
TOTAL	45	55	-18.2%	214	172	24.4%
ALL URBAN CENTRES WITH POPULATION > 10,000						
ALL CENTRES*						
Single	41	50	-18.0%	174	145	20.0%
Multiple	6	6	0.0%	50	31	61.3%
TOTAL	47	56	-16.1%	224	176	27.3%

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, Bay Roberts CA, 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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