

GALVESTON COUNTY
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Despite uncertain times, isle residential sales staged year-end rally

By LAURA ELDER The Daily News

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Jennifer Reynolds/The Daily News

It began as a slow year with oil and gas prices slumping and a presidential election fueling uncertainty. But 2016 ended on a rally, with residential real estate sales on the island increasing 3 percent compared with the year before.

Last year, there were 749 residential sales in Galveston compared with 726 in 2015.

Sand 'N Sea Properties compiled the data with information from the Houston Association of Realtors.

If energy executives slowed their investments on the island, retirees filled the void, buying properties to rent or to move into right away, Jana Turner, a Realtor with Sand 'N Sea Properties said.

"We started out 2016 really concerned with oil and gas prices down and the first quarter was very much down, but we gained momentum in the fourth quarter and ended really strong," Turner said. "That momentum is carrying through in the first part of 2017."

Galveston Island residential sales highlights year-end market recap 2015 vs. 2016

Average days on market

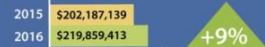


Median selling price

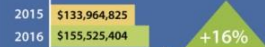


DOLLAR VOLUME

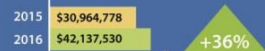
All Galveston Island



West Galveston Island: Sunny Beach to Point West, beach to bay



Mid Galveston Island: 25th St. to 61st St., beach to bay



UTMB, Downtown, East End lofts & condos only



Houston Association of Realtors Multiple Listing Service, Jan. 1 to Dec. 31, 2015 and 2016. Data deemed reliable but not guaranteed by MLS or broker. Compiled by Sand 'N Sea Properties.

SOLD TRANSACTIONS

All Galveston Island



West Galveston Island: Sunny Beach to Point West, beach to bay



Mid Galveston Island: 25th St. to 61st St., beach to bay



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Retirees, many who have grown children in Houston, are buying homes, which helped sales close out strong in 2016.

Buyers also are looking for new construction, particularly on the West End, Turner said.

"In the second half of the year, there were 60 new home starts at one point," she said.

Homes behind the seawall and mid-city also are were selling strong, with buyers willing to invest time and money in renovations, Turner said.

Conventional wisdom has it that home sales typically take a hit nationwide during election years; buyers usually are reluctant to make substantial investments in times of uncertainty. But despite a tumultuous and suspenseful election year, residential sales held their own.

Turner sees the momentum continuing. The prospect of cuts in the capital-gains tax under President Donald Trump also was encouraging sales. A capital gain occurs when you sell something for more than you spent to acquire it.

Along with the number of residential sales, prices also rose in 2016, while the average number of days a house sat on the market was 78, compared with 80 the year before, decreasing by 3 percent.

The median selling price in 2016 was \$235,000 compared with \$213,500 in 2015, a 10 percent jump.

Nur Ain McWilliams/The Daily News

