

2004 REAL ESTATE MARKET

What an absolutely terrific year 2004 has been. I have been selling real estate in Vernon for 28 years and like many other realtors, October 2004 was my all time record in sales achievements. The Multiple Listing Service shows 2004 dollar values of real estate sold at even higher than 2003 levels. Where is this going? How long will it last?

There is unprecedented interest in our area from developers. We are about to see the arrival of the exciting Outback development on Okanagan Lake located just past our picturesque Ellison Park. In the hills above the Bella Vista area, a huge development is in the planning which includes a golf course, vineyards and another winery. The Okanagan Landing area will soon see lots of new proposals and developments begin to take shape. Vernon has grown to a maturity that has caused a need for tourist commercial development. There are several projects of varying size on the books for that area. This sounds so good to me! It will promote tourism and our city can certainly use growth in that regard. The development of lots and housing continue in the Middleton Mountain area and Foothills areas.

Our framers, carpenters, roofers, plumbers, electricians and other sub-trades can barely keep up to the demand. Concrete, lumber and other building supply sales are strong. Floor covering, furniture and decorating businesses are flourishing. All of this is adding strength to our local economy.

Retail construction continues exciting growth too. Rona will commence construction in the Spring at the north end. Beachcomber Home and Leisure is in the process of adding a huge warehouse to their near new store and the acreage behind the Village Green mall is buzzing with construction activity. This demonstrates that retail interests from outside our city are showing great confidence in our future.

I still see plenty of interest in residential real estate. Baby boomers are retiring and moving here. Boomer interest is expected to continue into about 2010 as the last of them reach age 65. Interest rates don't seem to effect the purchases of retiring buyers. Starters, however, are greatly effected and these continuing great rates keep first time buyers flowing onto the marketplace and encourage those who already own to upgrade to a new home or to renovate.

I will be surprised if the marketplace slows anytime soon when there is so much growth in progress. I look forward to a great 2005 for all of us.