

Appeal Tribune

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 2, 2022 | SILVERTONAPPEAL.COM

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Home prices continue to rise

Salem Statesman Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

The median sales price for a single-family home in Marion County during November was \$385,000, an increase of 17.9% compared with November 2020, according to a USA TODAY Network localized analysis generated with data from Realtor.com.

In Polk County, the median sales price for a single-family home during the same month was \$399,900, an increase of 17.6% compared with Novem-

ber 2020.

The number of houses sold in Polk County rose by 31.9% from a year earlier, with a total of 124 houses sold county-wide compared to 94 sold in November 2020.

The number of houses sold in Marion County rose by 11.8% from a year earlier. A total of 445 single-family homes were sold in the county during November while 398 houses were sold the previous November.

Real estate sales can take weeks or months to be recorded and collected.

This is the latest data made available through Realtor.com to the USA TODAY Network.

Twelve condominiums and townhomes were sold in November in Marion County, with a median sales price of \$301,000, a 23.9% increase year over year.

In Polk County, just three condominiums and townhomes were sold in November with a median sales price of \$286,500, a 26.8% increase year over year.

The top 10% of the properties sold in

November in Marion County had prices of at least \$574,500, up 11.6% from a year before. Four properties sold for \$1 million or more.

The top 10% of the properties sold in Polk County in November had prices of at least \$599,900, up 23.7% from a year before.

The median home sale price — the midway point of all the houses or units sold over a period of time — is used in this report instead of the average home

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Regrowing pains



Workers harvest seedlings at Brooks Tree Farm in Salem. There is an expected shortage of saplings to replant areas of forest that were destroyed by wildfires. PHOTOS BY BRIAN HAYES/STATESMAN JOURNAL

Snags slow replanting forests burned by 2020 wildfires

Adam Duvernay Register-Guard | USA TODAY NETWORK

An expected shortage of seedlings available to replant after the 2020 wildfires is turning out to be not just about supply, but landowners' readiness to begin reforestation. • Woodlands and fire recovery experts last year noted a shortage of seedlings in the wake of the wildfires that ripped across Oregon in 2020. While it was expected to stall efforts to replace scorched forests, 17 months after the fires, many still aren't ready to replant.

"We're not distributing nearly as many as I thought we could have," Oregon State University Extension Service Forester Glenn Ahrens said. "The fires were such a devastating event and they have a lot of things to deal with, starting with their homes and their livelihoods, and reforestation of the trees are a bit lower on the list of priorities."

About a year ago, the Oregon Department of Forestry estimated between 80 million to 140 million seedlings would be needed for post-wildfire replanting, two to three times the usual annual need.

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A pallet of saplings waits to be loaded at Brooks Tree Farm in Salem.

Dems release package to address homelessness, affordable housing

Connor Radnovich
Salem Statesman Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

Oregon Democrats announced a \$400 million funding package on Thursday aimed at addressing the state's long-standing crises in homelessness and housing affordability.

"We have heard from Oregonians that they want to see action," House Democratic Leader Julie Fahey, D-Eugene, said in a statement. "This funding plan will invest in effective state, local and community-based

efforts that will prioritize getting unhoused people on the path out of homelessness."

The majority of the funds — \$215 million — will be directed toward building more affordable homes, apartments and manufactured housing parks and preserving affordable housing for families currently in those units.

An additional \$20 million will go to nonprofits and homeownership centers that help Oregonians navigate the process of searching for and purchasing a

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Oregon's rank for student mental health concerning

Alia Wong
USA TODAY

Young people's mental health is in such bad shape that several of the country's leading pediatric groups called it a national emergency last fall.

U.S. Surgeon General Vivek Murthy even issued an advisory — a move reserved for the most urgent public health challenges — highlighting the COVID-19 pandemic's devastating impact on the already-dire state of children's mental health.

"It would be a tragedy if we beat back one public health crisis only to allow another to grow in its place," Murthy wrote, outlining recommendations on how agencies such as schools can take action.

Experts agree that schools play various key roles in stymieing the crisis. But according to a first-of-its-kind report card released Wednesday, all 50 states are failing to implement at least some of the policies that enable schools to fulfill those roles.

"Everyone cognitively gets that this is a crisis, but I don't think we've moved as if it is," said Lishaun Francis, the director of behavioral health at Children Now, an advocacy and research organization. Children Now is among the 17 school mental health groups comprising the Hopeful Futures Campaign, the coalition that produced "America's School Mental Health Report Card."

Oregon's statistics in the report card are cause for concern. Oregon ranked 45th in student mental health in 2022.

Of the estimated 633,000 K-12 students in 2022, it estimates 55,000 youth experienced at least one major depressive episode in the past year, and the number of personnel available to aid these students is well below what's recommended.

Oregon lawmakers and local districts have made efforts in recent years to provide more funding for mental and behavioral health support in schools, but with still far to go and additional needs due to the pandemic.

Most Americans — 87% — are concerned about the mental health status of young people, with 2 in 3 parents saying they're "extremely" or "very" worried, according to a Harris poll to be released Thursday. Yet less than a quarter of Americans feel their state legislators, governor or congressional representatives are doing enough about the crisis.

The crisis isn't new. In 2019, 1 in 3 high schoolers reported persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness, a 40% increase from 2009. About 7.7 million young people in the U.S. experience a mental health condition annually. Suicide is the second-leading cause of death among people ages 10 to 24.

But the problem appears to have worsened with the pandemic, which for many children exacerbated or introduced new traumas. From 2019 to 2020, the rate of mental health-related emergency department visits increased by 24% for children ages 5-11 and 31% for adolescents ages 12-15.

Nearly 1 in 3 parents say their children's mental health is worse now than it was before the pandemic, according to a Kaiser Family Foundation poll.

"Everybody is going through something," said Jaylen Waithe, 16, a junior at Battlefield High School in

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A protester advocates for children's mental health during an Open Oregon Schools rally on Oct. 5, 2020 at the Oregon State Capitol. ABIGAIL DOLLINS / STATESMAN JOURNAL

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Vol. 141, No. 11

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A Unique Edition of the Statesman Journal

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