



RBC SURVEY FINDS HOMEBUYING INTENTIONS LEVEL OFF IN B.C.

But over two-thirds believe it's a buyer's market

VANCOUVER, March 4, 2009 — According to the 16th Annual RBC Homeownership Survey, 78 per cent of British Columbians – the highest percentage in the country – believe a buyer's market exists right now. Only five per cent indicated sellers hold an advantage given current prices and conditions.

“Despite concerns about the economy, buying intentions remain healthy in B.C. and in check with the national average,” said Kevin Lutz, regional manager, Mortgage Specialists, RBC Royal Bank. “Based on these figures most British Columbians believe that the time is right for buyers, and most remain largely confident that the long-term value in a home makes for a good purchase.”

The survey, conducted by Ipsos Reid, found that homebuying intentions in the province remain unchanged from last year, with 26 per cent of residents saying they intend to buy in the next two years. A majority (55 per cent) think it makes more sense to wait until next year to purchase a home, rather than buy now.

According to the survey, 81 per cent of those polled in B.C. said that buying a home is a good or very good investment. On average, B.C. homeowners approximate the value of their home at \$355,571 – the highest average home value across Canada. On average, they also estimate that the value of their homes increased 10 per cent over the last two years.

Among those who plan to purchase this year or next, 27 per cent said they will do so because their current home does not meet their needs. Twenty-three per cent cited attractive house prices, and another 23 per cent said they will purchase to own a bigger home. Eighty-three per cent said they plan to purchase resale and most (76 per cent) will opt for a detached house.

Future B.C. homebuyers also said environmental considerations would weigh on their purchase decision. Over 90 per cent of respondents indicated that buying a home with low energy consumption was important to them and 72 per cent said the same about environmentally-friendly features. Further, 93 per cent of those surveyed were interested in having standardized energy ratings for their homes.

Regional Differences	Nat	BC	AB	SK/MB	ON	QC	AT
Own a home	67%	69%	69%	70%	68%	60%	67%
Percentage of homeowners who have a mortgage	61%	56%	46%	62%	64%	66%	60%
Percentage who believe it is a buyer's market	65%	78%	72%	34%	73%	52%	58%
Owners and renters who are 'likely' or 'very likely' to purchase a home in the next two years	27%	26%	35%	25%	30%	22%	25%
Believe mortgage rates will be higher in one year's time	33%	28%	26%	35%	33%	33%	46%
Believe housing prices will be higher in one year's time	25%	20%	23%	27%	26%	25%	36%
Believe buying a home is a good investment	83%	81%	86%	83%	84%	79%	84%
Homebuyers planning to purchase a detached home	68%	76%	63%	63%	69%	60%	84%
Homebuyers planning to buy a bigger home	47%	42%	40%	69%	52%	49%	20%
Homebuyers planning to buy a resale home	74%	83%	71%	60%	76%	75%	64%
Homebuyers planning to buy a new home	26%	17%	29%	40%	24%	25%	36%

These are some of the findings of an RBC poll conducted by Ipsos Reid between January 6 and 9, 2009. The online survey is based on a randomly selected representative sample of 2,026 adult Canadians. With a sample of this size, the results are considered accurate to within ± 2.2 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what they would have been had the entire adult Canadian population been polled. The margin of error for residents of British Columbia is ± 5.5 per cent (N=314) and the margin of error for British Columbia homeowners is ± 6.6 per cent (N=223). The margin of error will be larger for other sub-groupings of the population. These data were statistically weighted to ensure the sample's regional and age/sex composition reflects that of the actual Canadian population according to the 2006 Census data.

For further information contact:

Christie Smith, RBC, (604) 668-2651
Sean Simpson, Ipsos Reid, (416) 572-4474

For full tabular results, please see the Ipsos Reid website at www.ipsos.ca.