Homebuyers paying sellers' listing price

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By: Matthew Harris

DELRAY BEACH, Fla. - Some promising news for homeowners thinking about selling right now. The ball is headed back to your court. Buyers are starting to get into bidding wars, paying the list price, and sometimes even more.

Lars Heldre, a real estate broker with Superior Florida Reality, just sold 31 condo units at Pineapple Grove Village in Delray Beach. They all went to a single investor from Norway, who paid the asking price for each unit, about $267,000 a piece.

"The reason that he paid list price for 31 units is that what tends to happen is that when a developer has sold three or four units, they inflate the price a little bit. Then they sell another three units and the price goes up a little bit. So actually, buying 31 units all at once, at list price, really happen to be a really good deal," Heldre said.

It's a trend that's spreading north from Miami where condo sales have been on fire.

"When people are willing to pay list price, that's when you know the market has turned. It's because developers don't really have to give you a discount," Heldre said.

Chappy Adams, President of Illustrated Properties in Palm Beach Gardens, says it's simple supply and demand. Inventory is dropping in Palm Beach County.

"We've gone from a 12-month supply, down to about a 5.7-month supply right now. As inventory goes down, prices go up. We're even seeing some bidding wars. That, we haven't seen since 2005," Adams said.

Adams predicts prices will continue to edge up, especially for homes between $100,000 and $200,000, giving sellers more control when setting a price.

"I think a year from now people will be very happy that they purchased a home," Adams said.

"The bottom line is, list price today is 40-percent lower than what list price was in 2005. So paying list price now isn't a bad thing, as long as you know the prices are going up," Heldre said.

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