



Case-Shiller index: South Florida home prices on the rise

May 29, 2012 09:45 AM

South Florida home prices ended the first quarter on an upswing, according to national data released Tuesday.

March prices in Palm Beach, Broward and Miami-Dade counties rose 0.9 percent from February and 2.5 percent from a year ago, figures from the Standard & Poor's/Case-Shiller home price index show.

That follows optimistic reports last week from the Greater Fort Lauderdale Realtors and the Realtors Association of the Palm Beaches. A growing number of analysts say the region's housing market has recovered from the six-year slump and that prices will remain stable and slowly increase during the next few years.

"I think we're at the bottom," said Ken H. Johnson, an economist and finance professor at Florida International University. "The question is, how fast will the comeback be? I do not see rapid price appreciation. I think we're looking at a 10-year cycle to get back to levels we had before."

Prices hit new lows in Atlanta, Chicago, Las Vegas, New York and Portland, according to the index. It analyzes prices in 20 major metro areas nationwide.

Only South Florida and Phoenix had monthly price increases.

"While there has been improvement in some regions, housing prices have not turned," David M. Blitzer, chairman of the index committee at Standard & Poor's, said in a statement.

A sustained national recovery won't happen until more parts of the country show monthly and yearly price increases, Blitzer said.

March was the third consecutive month that prices increased annually in the three South Florida counties, according to the index. Prices have risen on a monthly basis here since December.

Case-Shiller records prices of the same house over time, and many analysts believe that's a more accurate measure of values than releasing a median price for homes sold in a month, as the Realtor trade groups do.