

## **SASKATOON RESIDENTIAL REAL ESTATE MARKET EXPERIENCES SOFT LANDING IN THE FIRST QUARTER**

*Ongoing price appreciation slows as inventory nears record high*

**SASKATOON, April 15, 2015** – The Royal LePage House Price Survey released today showed mixed year-over-year results in the major housing types surveyed in Saskatoon.

Standard two-storey homes and detached bungalows prices remained relatively flat, increasing 0.6 per cent year-over-year to \$396,000 and 0.5 per cent to 365,750, respectively. Meanwhile, standard condominiums prices experienced a steadier increase of 4.5 per cent to \$277,000 over the same period.

“We saw a record year in Saskatoon in 2014, and are now experiencing a cooling off where prices are increasing, but at a drastically slower rate,” said Norm Fisher, broker and owner, Royal LePage Vidorra. “The exception is in the condominium category, which has been bumped up by a collection of new units making their way onto the market during the quarter.”

“Among the detached bungalow and standard two-storey homes categories we have seen a slight dip in unit sales and a considerable increase in available inventory when compared to this time last year. In fact, the number of available residential units is sitting at near record numbers,” he added.

Fisher isn’t deterred by current market conditions as he sees the wealth of inventory enticing buyers who want to take advantage of attractive prices in the spring market and expects activity to ultimately be in line with the five-year average for sales.

Nationally, Canada’s real estate market is experiencing a soft landing, characterized by slower than normal home price increases. Much higher price increases were observed in the country’s two largest urban markets, which combined to send the national average values upwards, partially obscuring the broader national trend.

During the quarter, the average price of a home in Canada rose between 3.8 per cent and 6.6 per cent year-over-year in the first quarter. When broken out by housing type, the survey showed a year-over-year average price increase of 5.3 per cent to \$451,463 for standard two-storey homes, while detached bungalows rose 6.6 per cent to \$405,895. During the same period, the average price of standard condominiums climbed 3.8 per cent to \$261,782.

The steady softening of prices in most markets across the country was first observed in the mid-year 2014 Royal LePage House Price Survey. In recent months, two unanticipated factors

disrupted the natural housing price cycle: the steep decline in oil prices late in 2014 and the Bank of Canada's subsequent reaction in lowering the overnight rate early in 2015.

“Canadian home buyers, with the last decade's recession still top of mind, have been very sensitive to shifting, broad economic factors. The oil shock has been unsettling for the national economy, consumer confidence and by extension, the housing market,” said Phil Soper, president and chief executive, Royal LePage. “That said, lower prices at the pump and the confidence boosting move by the central bank to lower interest rates have been supportive. With these factors combined, we have a soft-landing for housing after several years of robust expansion. We define a soft-landing as a market in which home prices are flat or increasing slightly, giving the economy and family incomes, a chance to catch up.”

“On balance, we believe we will not be seeing the kind of appreciation observed over the last three years any time soon, as markets work through the current cycle and align with broader economic conditions,” continued Soper. “In terms of downside risk, we do not foresee a sharp decline in home prices, particularly in today's low interest rate environment.”

### **About the Royal LePage House Price Survey**

The Royal LePage House Price Survey is the largest, most comprehensive study of its kind in Canada, with information on seven types of housing in over 250 neighbourhoods from coast to coast. This release references an abbreviated version of the survey which highlights house price trends for the three most common types of housing in Canada in 90 communities across the country. A complete database of past and present surveys is available on the Royal LePage website at [www.royallepage.ca](http://www.royallepage.ca). Current figures will be updated following the complete tabulation of the data for the first quarter of 2015. A printable version of the first quarter 2015 survey will be available online on May 15, 2015. Housing values in the Royal LePage House Price Survey are Royal LePage opinions of fair market value in each location, based on local data and market knowledge provided by Royal LePage residential real estate experts.

### **About Royal LePage**

Serving Canadians since 1913, Royal LePage is the country's leading provider of services to real estate brokerages, with a network of over 16,000 real estate professionals in more than 600 locations nationwide. Royal LePage is the only Canadian real estate company to have its own charitable foundation, the Royal LePage Shelter Foundation, dedicated to supporting women's and children's shelters and educational programs aimed at ending domestic violence. Royal LePage is a Brookfield Real Estate Services Inc. company, a TSX-listed corporation trading under the symbol TSX:BRE.

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*For further information, please contact:*

Eddie Tabakman  
Kaiser Lachance Communications  
604-637-6664  
[eddie.tabakman@kaiserlachance.com](mailto:eddie.tabakman@kaiserlachance.com)