

Broken Arrow leads in housing starts for 2009

Staff Reports | Broken Arrow Ledger

375 new homes in 2009

Both Broken Arrow and Tulsa logged 32 housing starts in December, but Broken Arrow led the Tulsa metro area with 375 for 2009, a dozen more than Tulsa.

In December, 190 permits were issued in the metro area, according to information released today by the Home Builders Association of Greater Tulsa.

The monthly total is 14.5 percent increase from the November total, and a substantial 81 percent increase over December 2008. Boosted by the December activity, Tulsa's annual housing starts increased to close the year at 2,445, trailing the 2008 total by just 9.5 percent, the narrowest margin since the beginning of the year.

"The end of year total is better than the local industry initially expected," said Gary Soderstrom, owner of Gem Properties, a local building company, and president of the Home Builders Association of Greater Tulsa. "We are fortunate to be in an area with one of the smallest declines in building activity, however, the industry and our local businesses remain very much at a critical point. The building industry is key to Tulsa's local economy, and although we are optimistic that we are on the path to recovery, we are prepared that it will be a slow process."

Bixby followed Broken Arrow and Tulsa in December with 18 starts. For the year, Owasso had 299, rounding out the top three highest totals in the metro area.

Housing starts at the beginning of the year trailed prior year totals by upwards of 50 percent. The gap has gradually closed month to month as residential construction saw signs of a rebound through the peak summer months. The year was marked by a variety of unprecedented changes, from incentives such as the first-time home buyer tax credit (which has been extended through April) to new Oklahoma legislation requiring builders to carry worker's compensation insurance in order to receive a building permit (effective in November).