

Fort Bend NOW

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National Real Estate Figures Show Sugar Land Could Be The Top U.S. Market

Sugar Land is not only the hottest real estate market in the Greater Houston area – it could be the hottest market in the country.

Last week, the Houston Association of Realtors ranked Sugar Land No. 1 on what it calls the “Hotness Index,” derived from the percentage of home listings that gain a sales contract in a given month.

On Thursday, the Wall Street Journal released a ranking of 28 major U.S. metropolitan areas ranked by the strength of their housing markets. Houston ranked No. 2 behind Seattle, and Dallas ranked No. 3.

They were the only markets in the country ranked as “strong.” (The Journal did not specify what period of time it used to measure the rankings).

However, Houston was ahead of Seattle in three of four major ranking factors:

- Houston had a 6.6% increase in its housing inventory, but the number of houses on the Seattle market jumped a whopping 45.9%;
- The average home price dropped 4.2% in Seattle, but rose 10% in Houston;
- The employment outlook was “strong” in Seattle, but the Journal ranked Houston’s as “very strong” (the only metro area in the country with such a ranking).

In Seattle, 2.2% of loan payments were overdue. In Houston, that number was 4.8% – the only category in which Seattle fared better. Thus, if the case can be made that the Houston metro area has the strongest real estate market in the country, and Fort Bend County has some of the strongest sub-markets in the Houston area, then Sugar Land, at the top of the Hotness Index in March, could conceivably be the best real estate market in the U.S.

Missouri City fares pretty good, too, as it was ranked at No. 5 on the March Hotness Index. And South Katy, which HAR says includes the Cinco Ranch area, ranked No. 6 on the Hotness Index.

Meanwhile, the real estate markets in most of the rest of the country appear to have cooled considerably. Aside from Seattle, Houston, Dallas and Charlotte, N.C., no other major market is seeing overall home values appreciate. Values appear to be dropping the fastest in San Francisco, where the average price change was off 134%, according to the Journal.

But the paper ranked Washington, D.C. as the worst real estate market in the nation, followed by Orange County, Calif., and New York City. No other Texas markets besides Houston and Dallas were ranked.