REGIONAL EMPLOYMENT

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the seasonally unadjusted unemployment rate in San Diego County decreased 0.1% to 2.8% in December, down from November at 2.9%.

December’s regional rates were lower than the State and nation. December’s rate was 0.3% below the 3.1% rate reported in December last year.

December’s statewide seasonally unadjusted unemployment rate remained constant at 3.7% from October to December. The State’s unemployment rate was higher than the local and U.S. rates in December. California’s unemployment rate was 0.4% lower than the 4.1% rate recorded last December of 2018.

Nationally, the seasonally unadjusted unemployment rate increased 0.1% to 3.4% in December. December’s national rate was 0.3% below the 3.7% rate reported in the U.S. in December of 2018.

January 2020’s unemployment rates were not available as of the publication of this report.

The national unemployment rate is closely watched because increasingly high rates can signal the start of a recession, but unemployment rates have remained low in the nation and even lower in San Diego County.
HOUSING MARKET: EXISTING SINGLE-FAMILY HOMES

In December, the region’s housing market reported 1,693 existing single-family homes sold, a decrease of 2.5% from the 1,736 homes sold in November. Sales dropped further in January, with 1,283 single family homes sold, a decrease of 24.2% from December’s results. Nonetheless, December’s sales were 13.1% above the 1,497 single-family homes sold in the same month last year, and January’s sales were 5.9% higher than the 1,212 single-family homes sold in January 2019.

December 2019’s median price of a single-family home decreased by 0.8% to $660,000, below November’s reported median price of $665,000. January’s median price of $670,000 is a 1.5% increase above December’s price. December 2019 and January 2020’s median prices were up 5.9% and 9.2% compared to one year ago when the median prices were $623,000 and $613,500, respectively.

On average, single-family homes in the region were on the market for 35 days in December and 39 days in January. December’s results were a 3-day increase from November’s 32-day result, and January’s results were a 4-day increase from December’s results. December’s average market time was down 5 days from the 40-day market time reported in the same month of the prior year, and January’s results were down 4 days below the 43-day average from January 2019.

The increase in both median prices and days on the market combined with the significant decline in total sales of existing single-family homes indicate some uncertainty in the single-family home sector, with the possibility of a slowdown in activity in the upcoming months.
The number of existing attached homes sold in San Diego County in December increased 20.6% to 954, up from the 791 existing attached homes sold in November. Sales declined significantly in January by 29.9% to 669 attached homes sold. However, December’s sales results were up 43.7% compared to the 664 attached homes sold one year ago in December 2018, while January’s results were 18.4% higher than the 565 attached homes sold in January 2019.

The median price of an existing attached home in the region increased 1.6% to $440,000 in December compared to November’s median price of $433,195. Prices remained unchanged in January at $440,000. December’s median price for attached homes was up 6.2% compared to the median price of $414,500 reported one year ago in December of 2018, while January’s median price was up 6.8% compared to the median price of $411,990 in January 2019.

On average, existing attached homes sold in San Diego County were on the market for 34 days in December and 35 days in January. December’s results were a 4-day increase from the 30-day market time seen in November and January’s results were a 1-day increase from the market time in December. December’s results were 4 days less than the 38-day average market time seen in December of 2018, while January’s results were a 1-day decrease from the 36-day average market time in January 2019.

December and January’s results show uncertainty in the region’s attached home sector as sales remain unsteady and average days on the market are increasing, although median prices are becoming steadier.
GASOLINE PRICES

The average price of unleaded regular gasoline per gallon in San Diego County declined 8.1% in December to $3.70, down from November’s price of $4.02. January’s average price of unleaded regular gasoline per gallon decreased by 4.4% to $3.54 from December’s price. December’s average price was an 8.1% increase from the average price of $3.42 recorded one year ago in December of 2018, while January’s average price increased by 7.8% from the average price of $3.28 in January 2019.

Like the region’s results and continuing to provide some price relief to the nation’s drivers, average unleaded regular gasoline prices decreased 1.7% nationwide in December to $2.56, down from November’s average price of $2.60. Prices decreased to $2.55 in January, dropping 0.3% from December. However, December’s average price per gallon of unleaded regular gasoline in the U.S. was 8.0% above the $2.37 per gallon average price recorded nationally last December of 2018, and January’s average price per gallon was 13.4% above the $2.25 price recorded in January 2019.

HOUSING MARKET: FORECLOSURES

The number of foreclosures (Trustee’s Deeds) increased by 12, or 34.3% in December to 47, up from the 35 foreclosures reported in November. The number of foreclosures in January increased by 1 or 2.1% to 48. December’s foreclosure results were 25.4% lower than one year ago when 63 foreclosures were reported, and January’s results were 7.69% lower than January 2019 which reported 52 foreclosures.

According to the San Diego Union-Tribune, foreclosures reached a 14-year low in October and November due to decreased mortgage rates, increased wages, a strong stock market, and strict lending requirements.

However, foreclosures have increased significantly since then and housing production in San Diego County has not been enough to meet demand, which has caused a significant increase in house prices.