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## Environment

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### Research suggests sales advantage for green-certified homes in county

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A year ago, the Northwest Multiple Listing Service added green design search features to its property listing database. Over that year, green homes in King County have sold quicker and for a higher value, according to research done by GreenWorks Realty.

GreenWorks looked at new homes that were sold on the NWMLS between September of 2007 and May of 2008. It found "environmentally certified" single-family homes sold in 18 percent less time and for 4 percent more than standard houses. They were 25 percent smaller than non-certified homes. Per square foot, green homes were 37 percent more valuable.

New condominiums that were environmentally certified sold for 4 percent more and were 25 percent smaller than standard condos. Priced per square foot, condos were 28 percent more valuable.

Environmentally certified homes represented 16.7 percent of single family and 18.7 percent of condominium sales in King County. About 58 percent of certified homes sold were in Seattle.

Ben Kaufman, broker and owner of GreenWorks, said, "Green homes command a higher return on investment. This information encourages savvy remodelers and builders to make green a priority."

Kaufman said the information reflects his experience at GreenWorks. He said customers value green houses, though he said green features must be balanced with location, design and pricing. "Anecdotally, this is what we've seen for years," he said.

But Kaufman said he was a little surprised the numbers were so consistent. He said the value of green houses were also a little higher than he expected.

The listing service is the primary database agents use to buy and sell homes in Washington. Each listing includes basic facts such as neighborhood, price, number of bedrooms, square footage and taxes. The green features introduced last June allow agents to search for homes certified under Built Green, Energy Star or LEED standards.

The push to include green features on the NWMLS was led last year by GreenWorks Realty, Built Green of King and Snohomish Counties, Northwest Energy Star Homes, Cascadia Region Green Building Council and the NWMLS.

Aaron Adelstein, executive director of Built Green for King and Snohomish Counties, said this proves people are willing to pay more for environmentally certified housing. "Now we have the first hard data to back up what many of us have believed for a long time. Green homes have greater value."

When the NWMLS first included green features a year ago, there was concern that people would deliberately greenwash projects and misrepresent them as green when they were not.

Kaufman said that hasn't been an issue, other than in cases where agents mistakenly checked categories for their project.

For more information, visit <http://www.greenworksrealty.com>

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