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Dallas-Fort Worth new housing starts up in 2nd quarter, second report shows

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New home construction in Dallas-Fort Worth is up, a second market report in less than a week shows.

Dallas-based Residential Strategies said Monday that home builders in Fort Worth and Dallas started 4,467 houses in the second quarter, a nearly 40 percent increase from the same quarter of 2009, which had 3,200 starts.

That closely tracked last week's report by Dallas-based Metrostudy, which said the 4,601 new homes begun in North Texas during the three months ending in June were the most since the third quarter of 2008 and up nearly 50 percent from a year ago. Metrostudy surveys a slightly different area than Residential Strategies.

Ted Wilson, a partner at Residential Strategies, said builders were spurred by the \$8,000 housing tax credit offered through April to first-time home buyers.

"The stimulus created by the housing tax credit that provided a boost to the new home market in the first quarter of 2010 saw continuation into April," Wilson said. "May and June were not quite as robust for most builders, as traffic and sales moderated as the tax credit expired."

New home starts were also strong in the first quarter, when builders started 4,147 houses, 320 fewer than the second quarter.

Residential Strategies said new home sales outpaced starts in the second quarter, as builders sold 5,025 houses, up nearly 20 percent from the 4,196 houses sold in the second quarter a year ago.

Builders focused on reducing inventory, and only a modest amount of new lot development took place in the second quarter, Wilson said.

In the Fort Worth area, the inventory of new houses at the end of the second quarter was 3,294, a 9.5 percent decrease from the 3,639 new houses available at the end of the second quarter of 2009.

There were 77,187 vacant developed lots available as of June 30 in Dallas-Fort Worth, about a 4 1/2-year supply. The supply of developed lots peaked at 98,570 in the first quarter of 2008.

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