

## Housing starts for April down from '07

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For the first time in 20 months, new monthly housing starts in Saskatoon were lower than starts recorded the year before, says a report released Thursday.

At the same time, the development of single-detached homes in April was higher than new single-detached home starts in Edmonton, a census metropolitan area (CMA) with a population four times the size of Saskatoon, the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corp. (CMHC) reported in its monthly residential construction survey.

"This is a rare occurrence that has not happened since 1986," said CMHC's senior market analyst for Saskatchewan, Paul Caton.

Year-to-date single-detached starts in Saskatoon reached 180 units in April, the highest number of starts in any April since 1983.

Still, the report showed total housing starts in April dropped by 25 per cent compared to April 2007. Last month, construction started on 207 total units in the Saskatoon CMA compared to 275 units in the same month last year.

While single-detached home starts were strong at 180 in April, up nine per cent over the 165 single-detached starts in April 2007, multiple-family starts took a significant drop last month, down 76 per cent to 27 starts from 110 during the same time last year.

Year-to-date, total housing starts in Saskatchewan's largest city are up 34 per cent to 797 units from 594 during the same period in 2007.

In Regina, total starts for the year are up 20 per cent to 378 from 314 last year. Total housing starts in Regina in April were 66 per cent higher at 93 than in April 2007 when 56 were recorded.

Combined year-to-date housing starts for Regina and Saskatoon are up 29 per cent to 1,175 from 908 during the same period last year.

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