

# Homes

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price for those 113 January single-family home sales was \$236,750. That was 2.7 percent higher than the median a year earlier, it is down from the trend of the whole year, which had a median of \$248,000.

Tambone said that "appears to be consistent with the seasonal variation."

The homes sold a little faster, with an average of 151 days from listing to closing. The inventory stood at 1,538 detached homes for sale, up 6.8 percent from a year ago but down from December's 1,802 homes.

The average sale price was \$298,607, down 15.7 percent from a year ago, but Tambone noted that comparing with 2013 data involves anomalies, including a \$9.5 million sale.

For attached homes, which are town houses, condos and co-ops, there were 16 sales, one more than a year ago but well below the 41 units that changed hands in December. The median selling price was \$188,950 for attached units. That can vary widely because of the small number of units that make up the median, as well as the great range of prices seen in Dutchess' condo market.

## AT A GLANCE DUTCHESS COUNTY HOME SALES

**January units sold:** 113, up 7.6%  
**Median sale price:** \$236,750, up 2.7%  
**Average sale price:** \$298,607, down 15.7%  
*Source: MetLife Home Multiple Listing Service*

Ann Dyal, an associate broker with Houlihan Lawrence, said she's seeing recent activity in the higher end of the market in northern Dutchess, which is her primary area.

"I am seeing that between November and the end of the year, we were very, very slow. In the last couple of weeks, the buyer activity has increased substantially."

These include young families "that are no longer enjoying the Hamptons," she said. "They have found that the Hudson Valley is easy to get to, and affordable." What's missing is that there are not as many locally based higher-income buyers looking for homes as earlier years, she said.

**Craig Wolf: 845-437-4815; cwolf@poughkeepsiejournal.com; Twitter: @craigwolfPJ**

# Lyme

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seriously as a public health issue and we are monitoring it all the time," Shah said. "We are the recipient of multiple grants to conduct primary research on tick-borne illnesses."

The Rhinebeck Democrat has proposed spending \$1 million on research of the disease.

He asked Shah how much New York is spending on the fracking review.

"We've spent hundreds of thousands of dollars,"

Shah said. Gipson responded: "So we've spent hundreds of thousands of dollars studying a substance such as natural gas. We can't drink it. We can't use it to irrigate our crops, but we're only spending \$50,000 researching something like tick-borne illness that is affecting people right now?"

Gipson said it appears funding for various diseases are being lumped into one pot, questioning whether that means cuts in aid or a competition for funds. Shah said the funding levels aren't changing.

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**Barry Rothfeld**, publisher  
brothfeld@poughkeepsiejournal.com

**Jan Dewey**, advertising director  
jedewey@poughkeepsiejournal.com

**Bill Farrell**, circulation manager  
farrellb@poughkeepsiejournal.com

**Jean Harris**, market development manager  
harrisje@poughkeepsiejournal.com

**Nora Pietrafesa**, human resources manager  
npietra@poughkeepsiejournal.com

**Stuart Shinske**, executive editor and director of content and audience development  
shinske@poughkeepsiejournal.com

**Randy Sutherland**, controller  
rsuth@poughkeepsiejournal.com

(USPS 440-480)

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# Westchester Med Center to bid for Saint Francis

By Craig Wolf  
Poughkeepsie Journal

Westchester Medical Center will make a bid for Saint Francis Hospital, following a vote by its board of directors Wednesday evening.

Michael Israel, CEO of the Valhalla-based center, said the board gave its formal OK for management to enter the contest to own the Town of Poughkeepsie hospital. This makes two suitors who are in the health care, the other being Health Quest, owner of Vassar Brothers Medical Center in the City of Poughkeepsie.

The board passed a resolution to submit a bid by the deadline on Monday," Israel said. "We will be submitting a bid to buy Saint Francis Hospital."

He declined to give any numbers and said there's still work to do to

## ONLINE

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arrive at a final number for the bid.

"We feel very comfortable that this is the right thing to do for Westchester Medical and for Saint Francis," Israel said.

Fiscally struggling Saint Francis filed for protection under Chapter 11 of the federal Bankruptcy Code on Dec. 17, bringing along a "stalking horse" bidder for its assets. That is Health Quest. Having an initial bidder establishes a target price that other bidders would need to beat. Health Quest and Saint Francis put that number at \$24.15 million, assuming bonds are used in the financing.

Medical had filed a formal "expression of interest" in

the bankruptcy case, but one requirement is that the ultimate authority controlling a potential bidder must vote officially to approve its entry into the bidding. With the board's vote, the way is clear for Westchester Medical to bid and compete with Health Quest and any others who may appear.

Saint Francis was at least \$50 million in debt, about \$30 million of which is long-term bonded indebtedness. But the rest is shortfall that accumulated due largely to a failed implementation of a new computer billing system, Saint Francis said in its filings.

Westchester Medical in the bidding, it sets up a potential bankruptcy auction for Saint Francis' assets. The due date for any party wanting to bid is Monday at 5 p.m., by which time the

parties must file formal bids. Other parties can come in with bids, too. Bids must be filed with Saint Francis' attorneys to approve its entry into the bidding. With the board's vote, the way is clear for Westchester Medical to bid and compete with Health Quest and any others who may appear.

The sale documents provide that Saint Francis can then examine those bids to ensure that they are qualified under terms approved by the Bankruptcy Court. Health Quest's bid is deemed qualified already. Saint Francis would then identify the apparent high bidder.

Assuming there are two or more qualified bids, an auction would take place on Feb. 13. The auction could go for multiple rounds until a winner is apparent. The schedule calls for a sale hearing in court on Feb. 18.

**Craig Wolf: 845-437-4815; cwolf@poughkeepsiejournal.com; Twitter: @craigwolfPJ**

# Snow

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rain Wednesday made travel difficult. All local schools were closed Wednesday due to the road conditions. Districts are facing a shortage of budgeted snow days.

Christina Baker of the City of Poughkeepsie said her son at Poughkeepsie High School and two other children at St. Peter's School in Hyde Park had the day off due to the snow.

"My kids spent the day reading and shoveling and on the computer," she said.

## ONLINE

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## Snow days

Two districts — Dover and Pawling — have already exceeded allotted snow days. Arlington Central School District used its last snow day Wednesday and five others — Beacon, Red Hook, Rhinebeck, Wappingers and Webutuck — have one day left.

If districts exceed their number of snow days, that will mean a loss of vacation days later in the year, school officials have said.

The Dover Union Free School District will hold classes the Friday before Memorial Day weekend and Easter Monday, which follows a weeklong spring break, when it goes

over the five snow days, Superintendent Mike Tierney said.

But it will try to keep spring break intact, because families travel, said Tierney. If more days are needed, he said, the school's 184-day calendar could be shortened to 183 days.

"It's been a tough winter," Tierney said.

Pine Plains Central School District used four of its six planned snow days.

Superintendent Martin Handler said if they exhaust the snow days, "We start then taking days of spring vacation," starting with the Monday of the April break.

Yvette Temple, mother of two students at North Park Elementary School in Hyde Park, said because she works, her two children spent the day at her parents' house.

"The last time I talked to my Mum, they were helping my father clean the driveway and sledging in the front yard," she said.

significant traffic accidents were reported by the Dutchess County Sheriff's Office.

Gov. Andrew Cuomo declared a state of emergency for New York. He said the state of emergency allows New York to circumvent some regulations to provide additional help to areas being pummeled by the storm.

Poughkeepsie Mayor John Tkaczyk said he expected to lift the snow emergency at 9 a.m. today. City bus service will resume Friday and garbage pickup will be moved to the next regular day, Tkaczyk said.

Hyde Park Highway Superintendent Walt Doyle said crews plowed the roads twice on Wednesday due to the heavy snowfall.

"The idea is to leave some snow on the road so that the freezing rain has something to adhere to, instead of adhering to a blacktop road, because then it turns it into a sheet of ice," Doyle said.

**Staff writers Roberto Cruz and Emily Stewart contributed to this report.**  
**John Davis: jpdavis@poughkeepsiejournal.com; 845-437-4807; Twitter: @JohnDavisPJ**

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## Slippery roads

Exits to and from the Taconic State Parkway were treacherous Wednesday morning. No

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