

PRESS & GUIDE

Officials, Realtors raving about Big Open House

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Photo courtesy of the city of Dearborn

Michelle Plucinsky of the Glass Academy and Furnace Hot Glass showed off art work from her organizations to Dearborn resident Tom Laundroche and Fire Lt. Laura Ridenour during the Dearborn Community Expo on Sunday. The event was part of the Big Open House. The Glass group recently held their own event, see People, page 4-B for more.

By Susan Delaney, Press & Guide Newspapers

DEARBORN HEIGHTS/DEARBORN - The best the city of Dearborn has to offer was on display on Sunday during The Big Open House, which featured thousands of homes currently on the market in Wayne, Macomb, Oakland and Livingston counties.

In an effort to attract potential homebuyers, the city hosted a Community Expo on Sunday at the Ford Community & Performing Arts Center on Michigan Avenue.

At the expo, Dearborn officials provided information on the city's services and programs; recreational offerings, including Camp Dearborn; its libraries, and its historical museum. Also participating in the expo were local service clubs, the Dearborn Police and Fire Departments and the Dearborn Public School District.

"People were able to see what a vibrant community we have here, even if they weren't specifically looking for a home," said Mary Laundroche, director of public information for the city of Dearborn.

Dearborn Chamber of Commerce President Jennifer Geiring said the Big Open House turned out to be a huge success. She said one realtor she spoke with said he had 50 people come to look at one home.

"(The Big Open House) was a great way for us to show off our community," Geiring said. "At the Community Expo, there were tons of people there getting information on everything we have here."

Geiring said the success of the event could be attributed to the many groups that worked cooperatively to see it through. She added that information on the number of homes that were sold during the event would be released at a later date.

Both Geiring and Laundroche said having the event coincide with the WelcomeHomeDearborn.com campaign, a Web site that touts the community, added to the success of both the Web campaign and the Big Open House.

"We started the WelcomeHomeDearborn.com campaign about seven weeks ago, so there were people at (the Community Expo) who knew about the campaign and some of the things (the city) have to offer," Laundroche said.

"The Big Open House was a great way to show people why Dearborn is a great place to live, work and play."

In Dearborn Heights, The Big Open House attracted hundreds of potential homebuyers to the area on Sunday, and local Realtors are already buzzing about what the event could mean for the state's troubled housing market.

"We had a lot of potential homebuyers walk through our doors," said Sam Baydoun of Century 21 Curran & Christie on Ford Road in Dearborn Heights. "I think the marketing campaign was very successful. It got people out there, and it got them looking at what's going on in the market today."

The Big Open House featured more than 114 homes for sale in Dearborn and Dearborn Heights.

"The response we've received so far has been tremendous," said Dana Holben, a Dearborn Heights resident and chief executive officer of the Dearborn Area Board of Realtors. Holben coordinated activities for The Big Open House in both Dearborn and Dearborn Heights.

"Dana deserves a lot of credit for her hard work," said Dearborn Heights City Councilwoman Marge Horvath, who also serves as vice president of the local Chamber of Commerce.

"I think The Big Open House was a great event," she said. "While we weren't as heavily involved as Dearborn, I think people got to see some of the great things our city has to offer."

Dearborn Heights hosted a community expo on Sunday at The Heights Shopping Center on Ford Road. Local businesses were asked to keep their doors open during the event, and members of the Dearborn Heights police and fire departments were also on hand.

"For our first time, I think things went really well," Horvath said. "There were some concerns, such as our proximity to Ford Road, but I thought it was a great event and I would like to see it done on a yearly basis."