



Arizona Daily Star

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ANALYSIS

Obama pulled out stops on Iran deal

Success in blocking GOP seemed unlikely

By Erica Werner and Julie Pace

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — A lame-duck president, an empowered opposition, a looming election: They're hardly the ingredients for a resounding White House triumph.

Yet President Obama clinched a huge victory on the Iran nuclear deal in Congress this past week when Senate Democrats blocked GOP attempts to get a disapproval resolution to his desk and frustrated House Republicans settled for passing two related measures destined to go nowhere.

The outcome was especially notable for a White House with a history of bungling legislative initiatives on Capitol Hill and a president known for a hands-off relationship with lawmakers, even his own Democrats.

This time was different, according to administration officials and lawmakers of both parties. The reasons involved policy, politics and a president looking for one last big success to burnish his foreign policy legacy.

Obama threw everything into uniting Democrats behind the accord, writing letters and flying lawmakers on Air Force One with him to Africa. House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., gave the White House the names of 57 House Democrats to call in August; Obama called each one.

"The White House gets great credit for this. This is the crowning jewel achievement in foreign policy of the White House,"

See IRAN DEAL, A8



PHOTOS COURTESY OF LONG REALTY

The first half of 2015 saw a sharp rise in the sale of Tucson homes priced \$800,000 and higher, and the number of unsold luxury homes declined.

Million-dollar home market roars back to life in Tucson

By Gabriela Rico
ARIZONA DAILY STAR

After a tough few years, Tucson's luxury housing market is on the rebound.

For the first half of this year, sales of homes priced \$800,000-plus were up 7 percent compared to the same period in 2014. At the same time, the number of unsold luxury homes languishing on the market was down 6 percent from last year — and down 19 percent from January.

The Residences at The Ritz-Carlton, Dove Mountain has sold nine properties totaling \$18 million so far this year. Each one sold for \$1 million to \$3.4 million.

"With another couple of sales

by year's end, it will be our best year ever," said Rich Oosterhuis, director of sales and marketing for Dove Mountain Realty LLC.

Things are going so well that the company is building spec homes that will be available this fall.

The rebound in luxury sales is due to several factors: "an improvement in consumer

See LUXURY HOMES, A6
Builders targeting northeast side / D1

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Want some sports cars under your chandelier? There's a house for you.



COURTESY OF LONG REALTY

The Tucson luxury market has shifted a little from the Foothills to the northwest side.



COURTESY OF LONG REALTY

With luxury markets in Phoenix and Scottsdale well into recovery, buyers are turning to Tucson.

LUXURY HOMES

Continued from Page A1

confidence and the economy, growth in housing overall and the fact that affluent buyers are watching the Tucson market,” Long Realty CEO **Rosey Koberlein** and vice president of marketing and technology **Kevin Kaplan** said in a joint email.

Because luxury markets in Phoenix and Scottsdale are well into recovery, buyers find Tucson prices more attractive, they said.

“There is still a sensitivity here to pricing in the luxury segment,” Koberlein and Kaplan said.

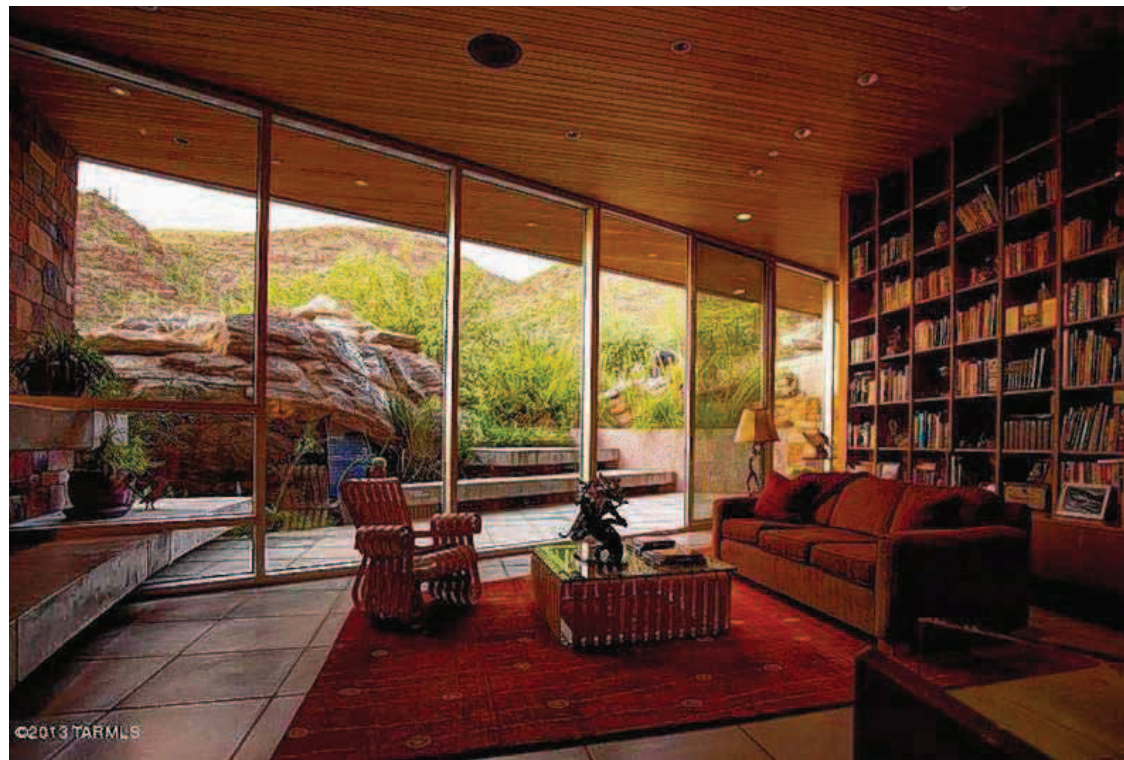
The overall housing market continues a steady improvement with median home prices up 16 percent since 2011, data from the Tucson Association of Realtor shows.

Traditionally, the luxury market has been concentrated in the Foothills, but now about one-third of those sales are on the northwest side, such as the Residences at The Ritz. Since opening for sales in 2009, the development has sold 40 homes for \$70 million. In addition to custom homesites, buyers can choose from eight customizable floor plans.

Among the amenities, residents have access to The Ritz-Carlton Dove Mountain resort, which earlier this year received a five-star rating from Forbes Travel Guide.

Buyers are a mix of people, Oosterhuis said.

“We have high-end executives buying second homes, newly retired couples and, recently, we have had two families with children in junior high who view the Residences as the best place to raise a family,” he said. “Our owners love the fact that our project is



COURTESY OF LONG REALTY

Several factors are cited for the rebound in luxury sales, including an improvement in consumer confidence.



RON MEDVESCEK / ARIZONA DAILY STAR

Purchasing a property in the Residences at The Ritz Carlton, Dove Mountain in Marana, such as this partially furnished resale home priced at \$2,295,000, gives the buyer full resort membership.

TOP PROPERTIES

Visit Tucson.com to see a slide show of some of the priciest homes on the market right now.

Coming at the end of September, we'll feature the top-dollar homes sold each month.

Special thanks for Long Realty's assistance with this project.

debt-free, and all the amenities are in and available for them to enjoy right now?”

In 2010, Google executive **Ray Sidney** poured an undisclosed amount of cash into The Residences at The Ritz-Carlton to clear the developer's debt. Local developer **David Mehl** said Sidney's investment was crucial to moving the project forward at a time when many projects were stalled because of the housing downturn.

Increased sales in the community prove “that people want the perfect blend of homeownership with the resort-style of living that The Residences provides,” Mehl said. “The recent accolade from Forbes Travel Guide is another strong validation of our guest and owner experiences.”

The community is in the Tortolita Mountain Foothills, and a full resort membership is included with each home purchase. That gives residents access to the Ritz-Carlton hotel and spa, a 45,000 square-foot clubhouse, 27 holes of Jack Nicklaus Signature Golf, an Olympic-size swimming pool and more than 25 miles of hiking, biking and horseback riding trails.

Homes range in size from 1,668 square feet to 5,400 square feet. Custom lots are one to seven acres.

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