



Business

Inland rents rise, vacancies decline

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Inland rents continue to trend upward as the region's vacancy rate remains low, according to a report released Wednesday.

The average rent in Riverside and San Bernardino counties was \$1,153 for the second quarter, according to RealFacts, a Novato-based research firm. That makes the area's rent the ninth highest of 25 areas in California that RealFacts studies.

The average rent in San Bernardino County has gone up 23.4 percent since 2003, to its current \$1,168, RealFacts reports. In Riverside County, the average rent is \$1,137, a 22 percent increase since 2003.

Chapman University chief economist Esmael Adibi said rents will continue to rise, creeping up initially as property owners rent out dwellings they'd planned to sell for a quick profit before the housing market slowed. Rents will increase in the long term as mortgages become more difficult to obtain due to tighter lending standards, he said.

Adibi said rents were stagnant between 2002 and 2005, when many renters became homeowners and rental-vacancy rates went up.

Now, the RealFacts report says, occupancy rates are at least 91.5 percent in all the major markets it tracks. The second-quarter occupancy rates for San Bernardino and Riverside counties were 94 percent and 91.6 percent, respectively.

Among Inland cities with at least five apartment communities, Indio and Palm Springs had the lowest average rents at \$812 and \$869 a month, respectively. Chino Hills rents were the highest, at \$1,556.

Inland rents still shape up as a bargain compared with Southern California's coastal counties. In Los Angeles and Orange counties, the average rent was \$1,607, the highest in the state. The San Diego area placed sixth at \$1,345.

Among Inland cities, Ontario had the greatest increase in average rent, 9.9 percent to \$1,258, while Highland rents fell 1.8 percent to \$865.

Adibi said low vacancy rates will continue for the future, as builders have slowed their completion of new inventory and new units get absorbed quickly.

Occupancy rates for Inland cities ranged from 75.9 percent in Murrieta to 97.3 percent in

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For rent

Average apartment costs for selected Inland cities:

Indio

\$812

Highland

\$865

Palm Springs

\$869

Hemet

\$871

Colton

\$898

San Bernardino:

\$973

Fontana

\$995

Rialto

\$1,006

Palm Desert

\$1,056

Redlands

\$1,126

Moreno Valley

\$1,162

Riverside

\$1,164

Temecula

\$1,183

Corona

\$1,216

Murrieta

\$1,253

Rancho Cucamonga

\$1,381

SOURCE: RealFacts
