Some areas drop

Analyst predicts new housing boom

Housing starts in 1979 in the seven-county southeast Michigan area are expected to be down some 8 percent compared to 1978. But the decline will occur only in scattered communities.

In fact, 20 of the active-building communites along eight growth corridors around Detroit actually will have increased building activity. Only 15 will have less.

That's the prediction of Bruce W. Robinson, nationally known analyst specializing in housing trends. He said BASM members should not "psych" themselves into excessive caution "because the buyers are out there" and ready and able to be sold.

Robinson cited a national study which showed five Michigan communities out of the top 25 in the nation in general affluence. These were Saginaw, Flint, Ann Arbor, Detroit and Lansing in that order.

Robinson's company, Robinson Reports, of Southfield, surveys and analyzes buyer desire and areas supplied with lots for building, along with economic factors, to arrive at projections which have been surprisingly accurate in the past.

The principal growth corridors, he said, are along I-94 to St. Clair; M-53 Detroit to Utica; I-75 Detroit to Flint; M-59; I-696 Detroit to Lansing; M-14; I-94 Detroit to Ann Arbor and I-75 Detroit to Toledo.

Of a projected home-start total of 21,200, 5,125 are expected to occur in the Detroit-Lansing corridor.

He included in this corridor Southfield, Farmington Hills, West Bloomfield, Bloomfield Township, Novi, Wixom, Milford and Brighton. Southfield, with 1,000 starts vs. 939 in 1978; Farmington Hills with 1,750 compared to 1,400; and Novi, with 750 vs. 576, will show rises while the rest will have slight declines.

Second hottest building corridor, Robinson said, will be the Detroit-Ann Arbor sector, with 4,000 of the total. More than 1,750 of these will be located in Canton, up from 1,600 in 1978.

The Ann Arbor area will build 1,000 units, up from 721 last year. Romulus, Van Buren, Ypsilanti, erior and Pittsfield all will show increases to put all seven communities listed on the plus side.

Robinson predicts the Detroit-Utica area to be third in activity with Warren expected to build 1,000 units for a large gain over the 476 in 1978; Sterling Heights, 1,500 compared to 1,612 in 1978; Shelby, 500 vs. 332 last year; and Washington, 250 new units or more than double 1978's 113. Total for area will be 3,250, Robinson added.

The fourth most active strip will be Detroit-St. Clair. Chesterfield, with 400 for 1979 vs. 379 in 1978 is expected to be the only community listed to show a gain.

The others are Roseville, (1979 vs. 1978 totals) 450 vs. 474; Fraser, 300, down from 362; Clinton, still strong at 1,250 but down from last year's 1,481; Harrison, 250 vs. 315; Macomb, 500 vs. 53. Total for the corridor will be 3,150.

Fifth in building strength will be the Detroit-Flint corridor where 2,450 units are expected to be built. Included active communites are Troy, (1978 vs. 1979 totals) 750 vs. 1,013; Avon, 1,250 vs. 1,370; Independence, 250 vs. 244 and Orion, 200 vs. 182.

Only the last two will show gains.

Sixth showing will be made along M-59, with 1,325 units projected in five communities. Only three reflect gains over 1978: White Lake, 200 vs. 195 last year; Highland, 200 vs. 172; Waterford, 500 vs. 652; Commerce, even at 225 and 225; and Hartland, 200, up from 139.

Seventh in activity will be along M-14, where Livonia will build 300 vs. 402; Plymouth 500 vs. 289; Northville 250 vs. 163 and Salem, 100 vs. 39.

Thus only Livonia will show a lag as these com-

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