



Close to Home: Military, tech jobs help Huntsville, Ala.

By [Christine Dugas](#), USA TODAY

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Home sales may be down in Huntsville, Ala., but don't be fooled: It is still one of the healthiest markets in the nation.

"Huntsville is in a world of its own," says Cindy Henson Allen, president of the Huntsville Area Association of Realtors. Its world is bolstered by the high-tech and aerospace industries.

Among the local businesses are Boeing and PPG Aerospace. And it is home to [NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center](#). The area also will greatly benefit from the military base realignment that will relocate about 4,700 military jobs to the Army's Redstone Arsenal over the next two years.

Still, unemployment has gone up slightly, says Ahmad Ijaz, economic analyst at the University of Alabama's Center for Business and Economic Research. And the recession has caused fear and anxiety. Consumer spending has declined, and home sales fell 22.7% in May in Huntsville, compared with the same month last year. Fewer multiple offers are being seen this year than in 2008.

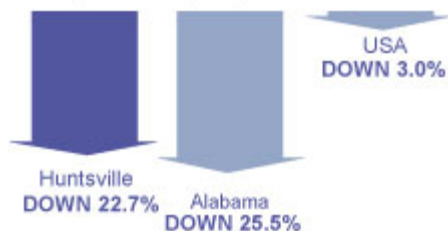
But homes are still selling, especially those priced at \$300,000 and less. Slower-selling high-end homes are maintaining prices. In the past, the housing market has been resilient.

"Huntsville always has been very diverse and transient," Allen says. Even though sales are down, that is not Allen's major concern. "I'm worried that we're not going to have enough home inventory when a lot of people are moving here for the ... realignment. With all of the people we're expecting, that's a huge possibility."

Location Huntsville, Ala.

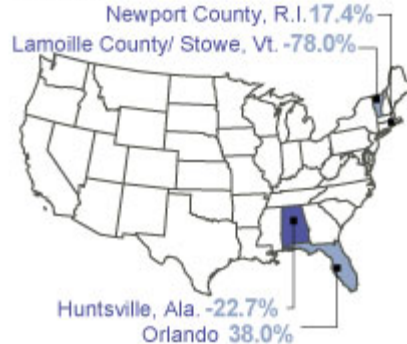
Monthly sales volume

Change from one year ago:



Comparing sales volume

The four most-recent cities in the USA TODAY Close to Home series and their one-year change in monthly sales volume when originally published:



Median home price

Change from one year ago:



Sources: Alabama Center for Real Estate at the University of Alabama, National Association of Realtors.

The most expensive



Daniel Klibanoff is selling a contemporary home patterned after Frank Lloyd Wright designs atop Monte Sano Mountain with panoramic views.

Price: \$11.9 million

Bedrooms: 6

Bathrooms: 7 full, 1 three-quarter and 2 half-baths

Size: 17,000 square feet

Features: Sound-proof media room, infinity pool and pool house, library, wine cellar with custom inventory system, three gas-log fireplaces, smart house technology, historic refurbished caboose on property, three-car garage.

Median-price home



This ranch home is on the market.

Price: \$157,000

Bedrooms: 3

Bathrooms: 2 full baths

Size: 1,348 square feet

Features: Dining area with bay window, large great room, patio off master bedroom and great room, two-car garage.