



## Press Release

### **J.D. Power and Associates Reports:**

#### **Pulte Homes Ranks Highest in Overall Customer Satisfaction among New-Home Builders in Houston**

[Centex Homes Ranks Highest in New-Home Quality Study; Village Builders Ranks Highest in New-Home Design Study; Pulte Mortgage Ranks Highest in Builder Mortgage Originator Study](#)

**WESTLAKE VILLAGE, Calif.: 12 September 2007** — Pulte Homes ranks highest in customer satisfaction with new home builders in the Houston, Texas, market, according to the J.D. Power and Associates 2007 New-Home Builder Customer Satisfaction Study<sup>SM</sup> released today. In addition, among three inaugural studies also released today, Centex Homes ranks highest in the New-Home Quality Study while Village Builders, headquartered in Houston, ranks highest in the New-Home Design Study. Pulte Mortgage (serving Pulte Homes) earns the highest rank in the New-Home Builder Mortgage Originator Study.

“The downturn in the housing market over the past year has presented numerous challenges to home builders, some of whom have had to curtail building as sales have slowed,” said Paula Sonkin, vice president of the real estate and construction industries practice at J.D. Power and Associates. “As a result, the new-home selling environment has changed dramatically, and new-home builders must now increase their focus on providing buyers with a satisfying purchase experience—which is a shift from the order-taking mode that was common in the industry until recently. Builders that consistently perform well in customer satisfaction, such as Pulte Homes, tend to integrate processes across multiple aspects of the customer experience that provide buyers with not only an excellent product, but also superior service.”

### **Overall Customer Satisfaction**

The New-Home Builder Customer Satisfaction Study, now in its 11<sup>th</sup> year, includes satisfaction ratings of builders in [34 of the largest U.S. home-building markets](#). Nine factors drive overall customer satisfaction with home builders (listed in order of importance): builder’s warranty/customer service (16%); construction manager (15%); builder’s sales staff (13%); home readiness (13%); price/value (12%); workmanship/materials (10%); recreational facilities (8%); builder’s design center (7%); and location (5%).

Pulte Homes performs particularly well in the Houston market in seven of the nine factors: builder’s warranty/customer service; construction manager; builder’s sales staff; home readiness; price/value; workmanship/materials; and builder’s design center. Following Pulte Homes in the market rankings are Village Builders and Centex Homes, respectively.

The average customer satisfaction index score in Houston is 111—equal to the 34-market average.

“In times like these, as builders attempt to attract customers and close sales in the midst of tightening credit and weakening demand, differentiation through customer satisfaction, new-home quality, design and mortgage origination become especially important,” said Sonkin. “On the other hand, there are still some markets where housing sales are healthy. Keeping satisfaction levels high in these aspects, which are of primary importance to potential buyers, will be critical to remaining competitive.”

### **2007 New-Home Quality Study**

The inaugural J.D. Power and Associates New-Home Quality Study<sup>SM</sup> measures the occurrence and impact of construction problems experienced by new-home owners in [34 markets](#). The study uses an index that takes into

account the number of problems that occur, the severity of problems and size of the home, and covers 48 different problem categories for the following areas (listed in order of importance): home exterior (28%); flooring/stairs (20%); kitchen (11%); drywall (10%); windows/doors (9%); electrical/appliances (8%); bathroom (6%); interior paint (6%); and other significant problems (2%).

Centex Homes ranks highest in new-home quality in the Houston market, followed by Brighton and David Weekley Homes, respectively.

The study results include the following key findings:

- Overall, home quality has improved since 2006. The typical new-home buyer reports 13 problems with their new home in 2007, a 7 percent decrease from 2006.
- New-home buyers in Minneapolis report the highest new-home quality levels—averaging 7 problems per home—while new-home buyers in Washington D.C. report the lowest quality with 19 problems per home, on average.
- The four problem areas that detract most from home buyer satisfaction are: sidewalk, driveway and foundation cracks; crooked walls; visible carpet seams; and landscaping.

### **2007 New-Home Design Study**

The inaugural J.D. Power and Associates New Home Design Study<sup>SM</sup>, which includes [31 markets](#), measures customers' experiences in with design and aesthetic aspects of their new homes. Seven factors drive satisfaction with new-home design: flooring (22%); master/primary bathroom (17%); kitchen (14%); interior comfort/environment (13%); exterior architectural design (12%); floor plan/layout (12%); and windows and exterior doors (10%).

Village Builders ranks highest in new-home design in the Houston market, followed by Pulte Homes and Darling, respectively.

The study includes the following additional findings:

- Home buyers report that having a convenient arrangement of bathroom fixtures is more important than the size of a master/primary bathroom.
- The size of the kitchen and the appearance of the sink and faucets are more important to home buyers than a convenient arrangement of kitchen fixtures.

### **2007 Builder Mortgage Originator Study**

The inaugural J.D. Power and Associates Builder Mortgage Originator Study<sup>SM</sup> measures the experience of new-home owners in [17 markets](#) who used a builder-owned mortgage company to originate a home loan. Three factors drive satisfaction with builder mortgage origination (listed in order of importance): loan officer/representative (40%); closing (33%); and application/approval process (27%).

Pulte Mortgage (serving Pulte Homes) ranks highest in builder mortgage origination in the Houston market, followed by Universal American Mortgage Co. (serving Lennar Homes) and MTH (serving Meritage Homes), respectively.

“When offered, a majority of new-home buyers take advantage of mortgage origination services offered by their new-home builder,” said Sonkin. “For more and more buyers, securing financing in this way adds a degree of convenience to what can be a complex and overwhelming process.”

The study results include the following key findings:

- The vast majority of new-home buyers take advantage of mortgage origination services when offered by their home builder due to competitive rates, and easier and more seamless processes.
- Home builders have traditionally offered price reductions or lower interest rates to new-home buyers as sales incentives, but builders are also offering more unusual incentives such as waiving homeowners association fees for a limited time or providing golf club memberships.

To be included in the studies, Houston-area builders must have closed 150 or more homes in the market in 2006. The new homes are located in the following counties: Brazoria, Ft. Bend, Galveston, Harris and Montgomery.

These studies are based on responses from 50,401 buyers of newly built single-family homes who provided feedback after living in their homes an average of four to 18 months. There were 3,583 respondents in the Houston market. For more comprehensive builder rankings for all 34 U.S. markets, visit [www.jdpower.com/homes](http://www.jdpower.com/homes).

#### **About J.D. Power and Associates**

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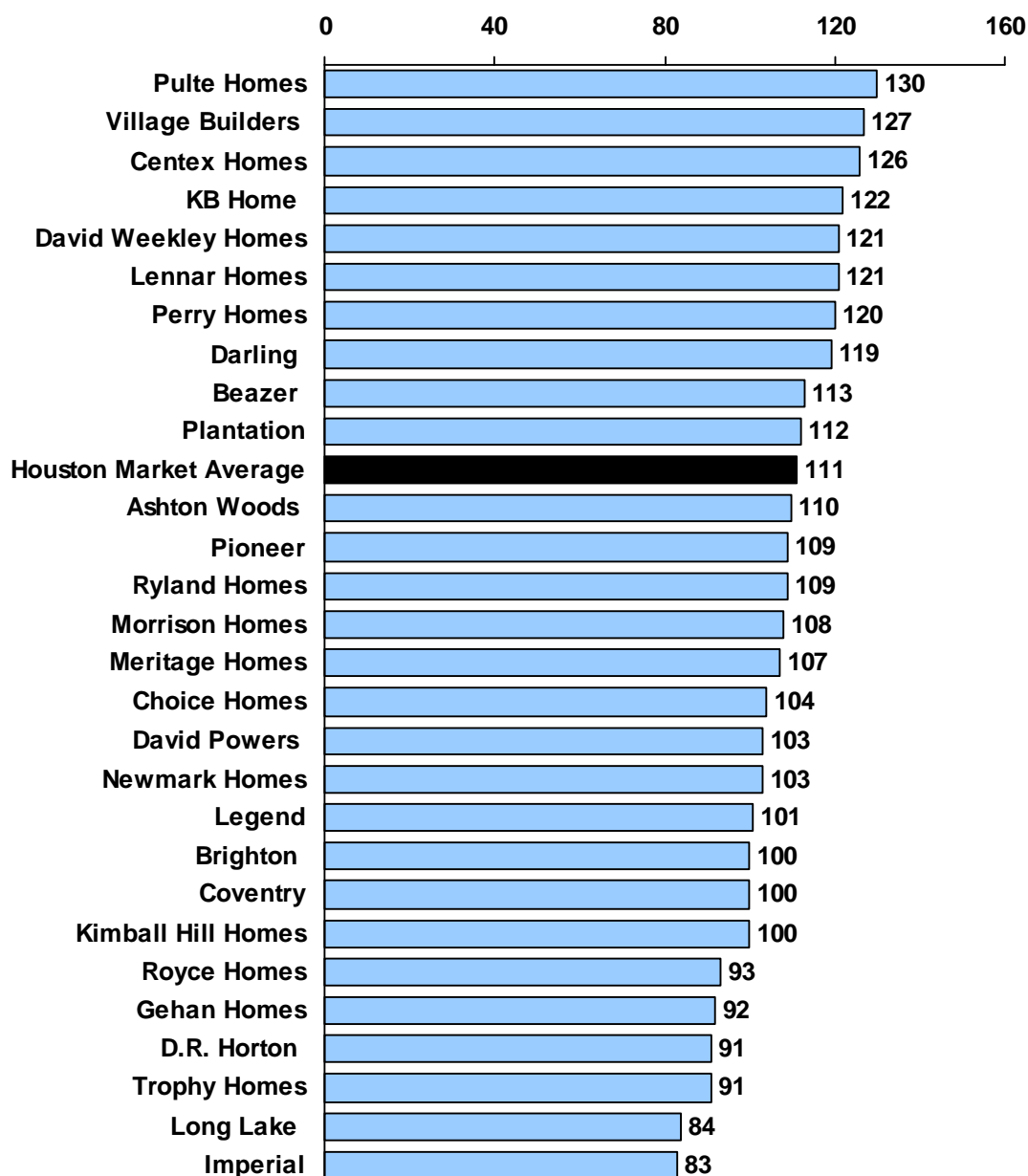
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NOTE: Four charts follow.

# J.D. Power and Associates 2007 New-Home Builder Customer Satisfaction Study<sup>SM</sup>

## Overall Satisfaction Index Scores *Houston*



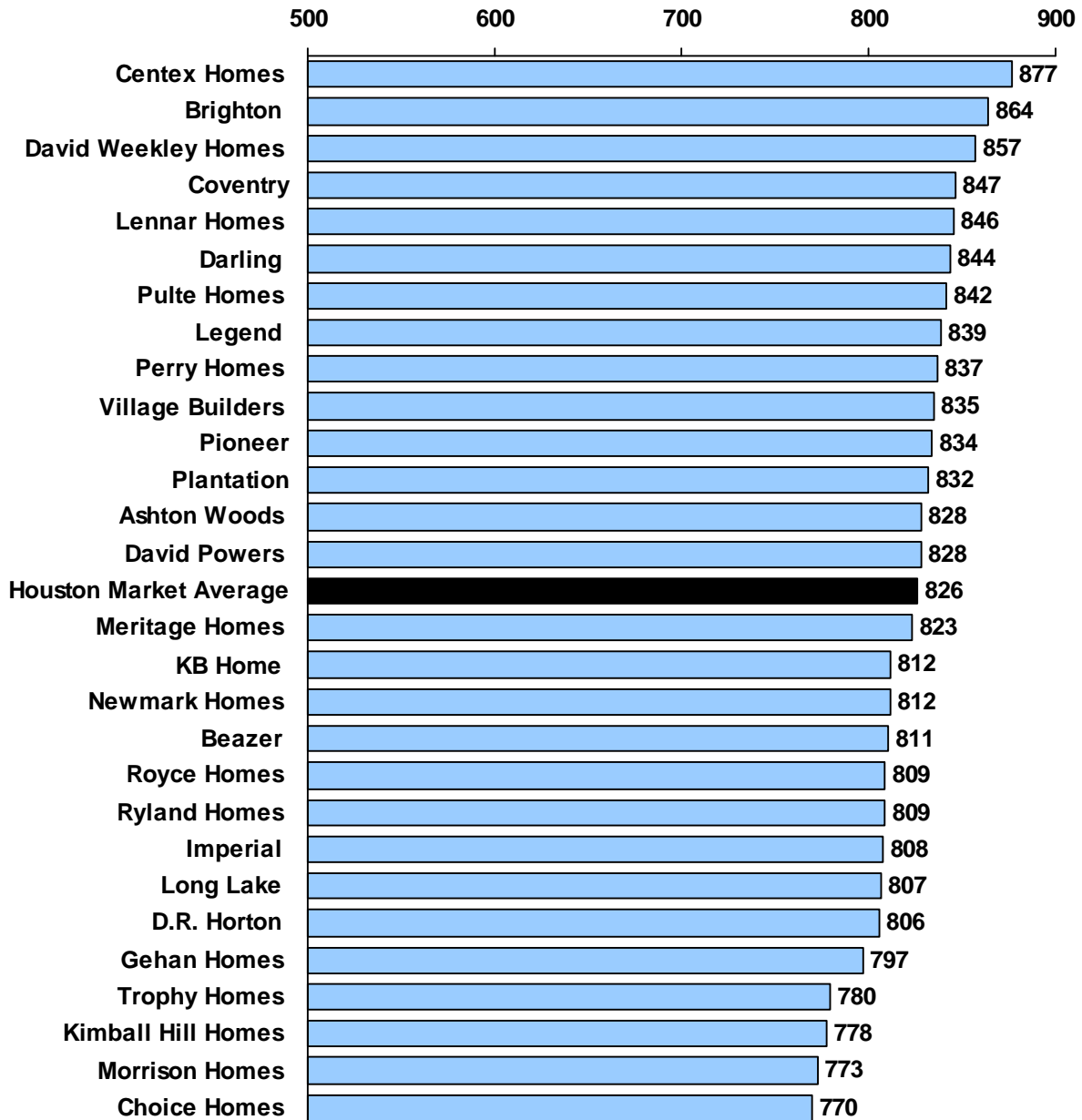
*NOTE: This study is measured using an index score that originally set the market average in 2001 at 100 points, which allows for comparisons to year-over-year results.*

*Source: J.D. Power and Associates 2007 New-Home Builder Customer Satisfaction Study<sup>SM</sup>*

*Charts and graphs extracted from this press release must be accompanied by a statement identifying J.D. Power and Associates as the publisher and the J.D. Power and Associates 2007 New-Home Builder Customer Satisfaction Study<sup>SM</sup> as the source. Rankings are based on numerical scores, and not necessarily on statistical significance. No advertising or other promotional use can be made of the information in this release or J.D. Power and Associates study results without the express prior written consent of J.D. Power and Associates.*

# J.D. Power and Associates 2007 New-Home Quality Study<sup>SM</sup>

## Overall Satisfaction Index Scores (Based on a 1,000-point scale) **Houston**



Source: J.D. Power and Associates 2007 New-Home Quality Study<sup>SM</sup>

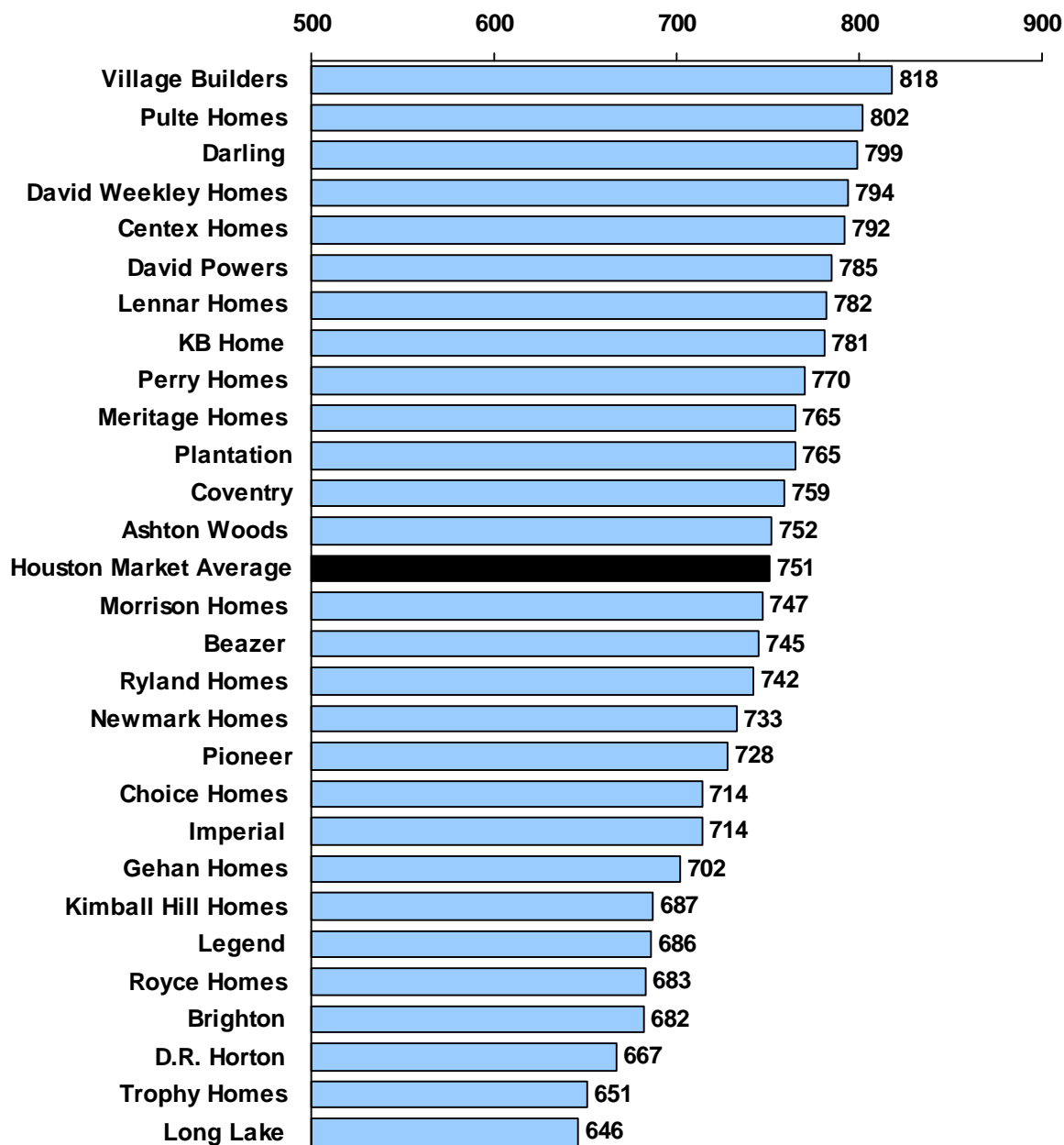
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# J.D. Power and Associates 2007 New-Home Design Study<sup>SM</sup>

## Overall Satisfaction Index Scores

(Based on a 1,000-point scale)

### Houston



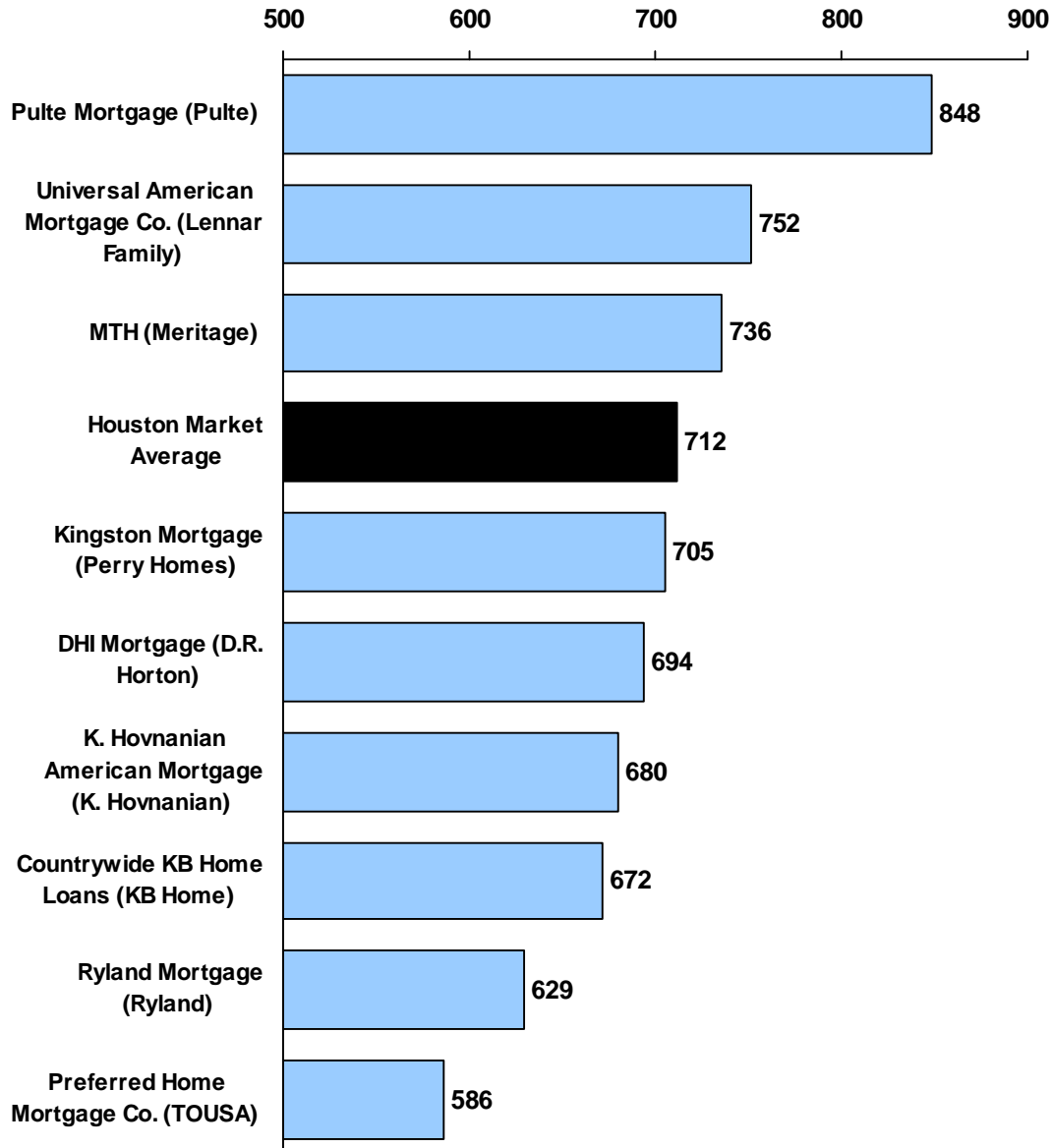
Source: J.D. Power and Associates 2007 New-Home Design Study<sup>SM</sup>

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# J.D. Power and Associates 2007 New-Home Builder Mortgage Originator Study<sup>SM</sup>

Overall Satisfaction Index Scores  
(Based on a 1,000-point scale)

## Houston



Source: J.D. Power and Associates 2007 New-Home Builder Mortgage Originator Study<sup>SM</sup>

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