



Press Release

J.D. Power and Associates Reports:

Darling Homes Ranks Highest for a Second Consecutive Year in Overall Customer Satisfaction among New-Home Builders in Dallas/Ft. Worth; Ashton Woods Ranks Highest in New-Home Quality

WESTLAKE VILLAGE, Calif.: 15 September 2009 — Darling Homes ranks highest in customer satisfaction with new-home builders in the Dallas/Ft. Worth, Texas, market, according to the J.D. Power and Associates 2009 New-Home Builder Customer Satisfaction StudySM released today. In addition, Ashton Woods ranks highest in the New-Home Quality Study also released today.

“The tough new-home market has created a fiercely competitive environment in which only the strongest companies have survived,” said Paula Sonkin, vice president of the real estate and construction industries practice at J.D. Power and Associates. “Fortunately for buyers, this has resulted in notable improvements in customer satisfaction with home builders and new-home quality overall. This is great news for new-home buyers—particularly first-time buyers—since builders are offering unprecedented high levels of quality, value and service at relatively low prices.”

Overall Customer Satisfaction

The New-Home Builder Customer Satisfaction Study, now in its 13th year, includes [satisfaction rankings for builders in 24 markets](#). Nine factors drive overall customer satisfaction with home builders: builder’s sales staff; builder’s warranty/customer service staff; workmanship/materials; price/value; home readiness; construction manager; recreational facilities provided by the builder; builder’s design center; and location.

Darling Homes achieves a score of 876 on a 1,000-point scale in 2009 and performs particularly well in the [Dallas/Ft. Worth market](#) in four of nine factors: construction manager; workmanship/materials; home readiness; and location. Following Darling Homes in the market rankings are Drees Custom (865) and Ashton Woods (864).

The average customer satisfaction index score in the Dallas/Ft. Worth market is 809—two points below the 24-market average of 811. However, satisfaction has improved substantially in the Dallas/Ft. Worth market in 2009—up 26 points from 2008.

2009 New-Home Quality Study

The J.D. Power and Associates New-Home Quality Study,SM now in its third year, measures the [occurrence and impact of construction problems experienced by new-home owners in 24 markets](#). The study utilizes an index that examines the number of problems that occur, the severity of problems and the size of the home, and covers 41 different problem categories for the following areas: bathroom; drywall; electrical/appliances; flooring/stairs; home exterior; interior paint; kitchen; windows/doors; and other significant problems.

Ashton Woods ranks highest in [new-home quality in the Dallas/Ft. Worth market](#), followed by Darling Homes and Standard Pacific Homes, respectively.

Home quality in the Dallas/Ft. Worth market has improved considerably from 2008, averaging 829 in 2009—up by 24 points from the previous year.

The rate of customer-reported problems in the Dallas/Ft. Worth market has improved to an average of 10 problems per home in 2009—down by two problems per home from 2008. The problems reported most often in

the market include landscaping issues; heating and air conditioning problems; plumbing problems; appliance problems; and wall/ceiling cracks.

“Green” Home Findings

Approximately 37 percent of new-home owners in the Dallas/Ft. Worth market perceive their home to be environmentally friendly, but a majority of these owners—54 percent—say that their home builder did not identify the home as “green.”

“Builders that neglect to point out environmentally friendly home features to buyers are missing out on a very important opportunity,” said Sonkin. “New-home buyers are increasingly seeking out green home features and the benefits they bring in terms of energy and cost savings.”

Home owners in the Dallas/Ft. Worth market indicate that the top five features a green home should have are:

- Energy efficient heating/air conditioning units
- Energy efficient home appliances
- Energy efficient insulation
- Water-saving systems (such as faucets, dual flush toilets, and sprinklers)
- Energy-saving lighting such as compact fluorescent bulbs

To be included in the studies, Dallas/Ft. Worth-area builders must have closed 150 or more homes in the market in 2008. The new homes are located in the following counties: Collin, Dallas, Denton, Grayson, Kaufman, Rockwall and Tarrant.

These two studies are based on responses from 26,231 buyers of newly built single-family homes who provided feedback after living in their homes from four to 18 months, on average. There were 2,302 respondents in the Dallas/Ft. Worth market. For more comprehensive builder rankings for all 24 U.S. markets, visit www.jdpower.com/homes.

For more information, read an [article](#) or view [new-home builder customer satisfaction ratings](#) and [new-home builder quality ratings](#) on [JDPower.com](#).

About J.D. Power and Associates

Headquartered in Westlake Village, Calif., J.D. Power and Associates is a global marketing information services company operating in key business sectors including market research, forecasting, performance improvement, Web intelligence and customer satisfaction. The company’s quality and satisfaction measurements are based on responses from millions of consumers annually. For more information on [home building and home improvement](#), [car reviews and ratings](#), [car insurance](#), [health insurance](#), [cell phone ratings](#), and more, please visit [JDPower.com](#). J.D. Power and Associates is a business unit of The McGraw-Hill Companies.

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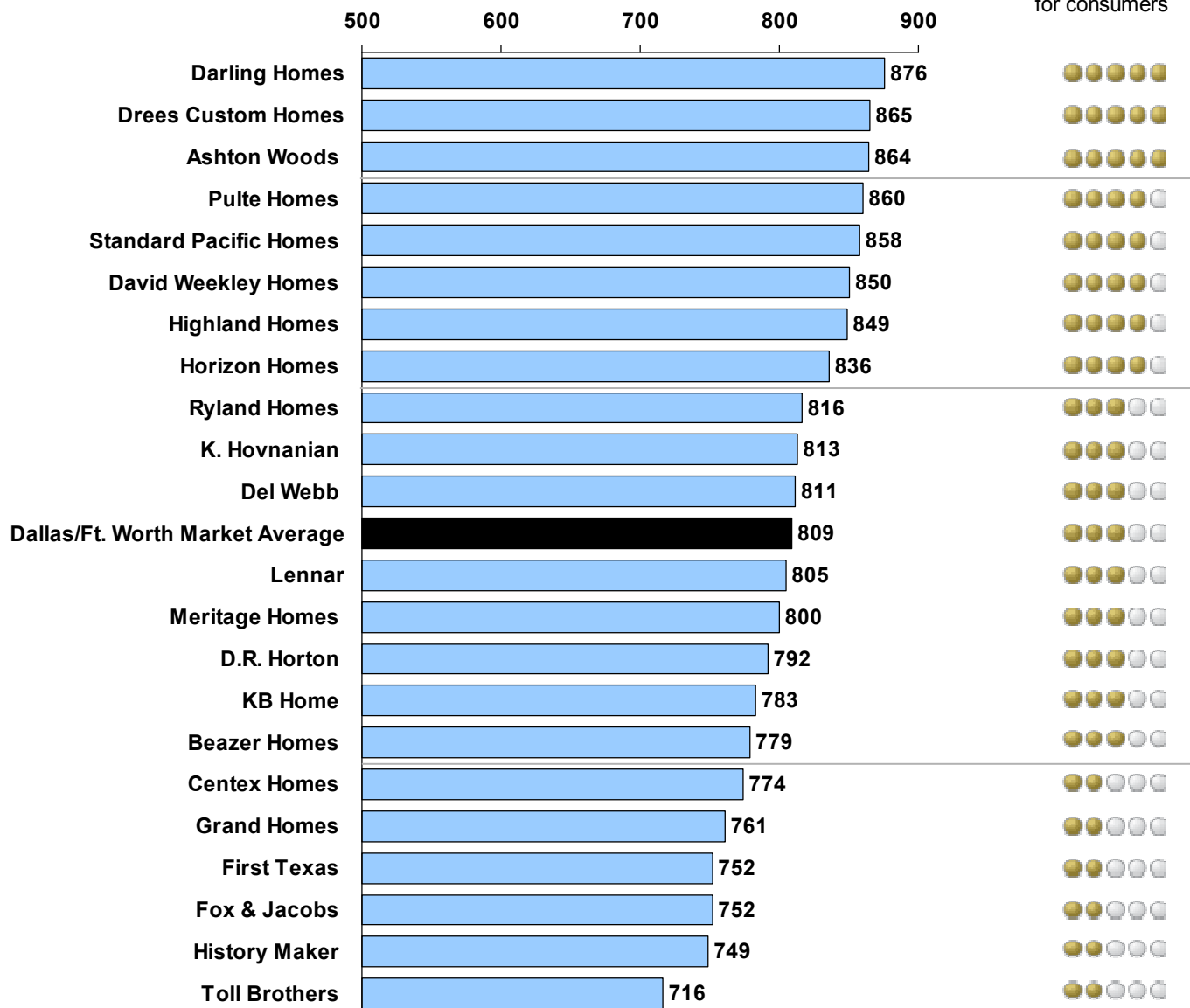
NOTE: Two charts follow.

J.D. Power and Associates 2009 New-Home Builder Customer Satisfaction StudySM

Overall Satisfaction Index Scores Dallas/Ft. Worth, Texas

(Based on a 1,000-point scale)

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Power Circle Ratings Legend

- Among the best
- Better than most
- About average
- The rest

Source: J.D. Power and Associates 2009 New-Home Builder Customer Satisfaction StudySM

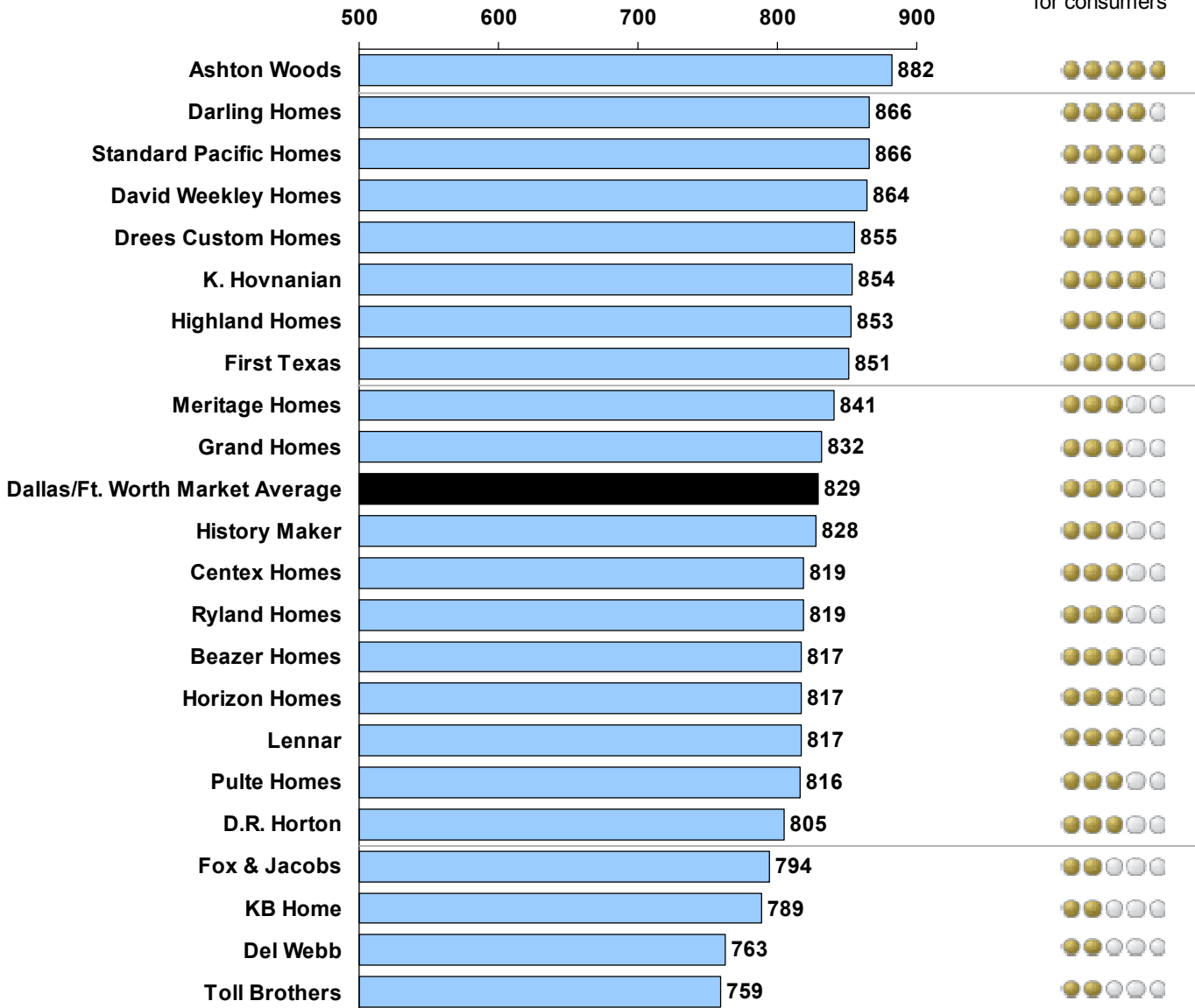
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J.D. Power and Associates 2009 New-Home Quality StudySM

Overall Satisfaction Index Scores *Dallas/Ft. Worth, Texas*

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