

Builder lets buyers finish homes

ISLAND LAKE – Buyers can act as their own contractor and save \$40,000 to \$80,000 on a new home at Prairie Woods. To some people, who are handy with a hammer and a wrench, it sounds like a great idea.

The idea is old and has been part of the new home construction industry for years. It is one way buyers might be able to afford a home in Prairie Woods, a Kenneth James Builders community of single-family homes in Island Lake, with prices beginning at \$280,000.

Carl James, president of Kenneth James Builders is inaugurating a program that enables prospective home buyers to purchase a home at the drywall stage of construction and finish it themselves.

In addition to an immediate close, the main advantage of this innovative program is to create an opportunity to buy a new home and customize the home by selecting materials from any resource available to the buyer.

Unlike buying a home from the builder, there are no restrictions. It's a carte blanche way of building a new house.

"The owner can pride himself in the sweat equity that goes into the home," James said. "By contributing his own labor, the owner is building sweat equity that translates into real dollars saved."

This program is geared towards the do-it-yourselfer, remodeler, builder, or contractor. Such items as kitchens and baths, cabinetry, interior trim, paint, plumbing fixtures, flooring, counters, doors and appliances may be installed by the owner, once the home is purchased.

To aid in the financing, Kenneth James Builders will provide below market financing through Platinum Home Mortgage Corporation.

The Fairfield spec home is ready for the right buyer to finish. The 2,513 square-foot model is a two-story home with four bedrooms, two and one-half baths, and a study.

To the right of the two-story foyer, with its second floor overlook, is a spacious living room and to the left a formal dining room. Both rooms have square pillars welcoming guests. An expansive butler's pantry acts as a serving



Customers are invited to buy a Prairie Woods home at the drywall stage of construction and finish it themselves in a new program by Kenneth James Builders.

area and storage space separating the dining room from the kitchen. Next to the living room is an office with French doors.

A two-story family room has an optional masonry fireplace and a dramatic window wall. Next to the family room is a contemporary kitchen featuring a center island and breakfast area which provides an open space for family activities and casual entertaining.

There is also a dual staircase rising from the kitchen and foyer. Upstairs the 18-foot by 15-foot master bedroom with its coffered ceiling, has a spacious master bath and walk-in closet.

The bathroom has a double bowl vanity, linen closet and whirlpool bath. The other three bedrooms share a full bath. Completing the home is a full basement.

The "Finish your own home program" is also being offered on selected plans and home sites in this community.

Prairie Woods is comprised of two separate sections divided by a large pond and connected via a biking and walking trail. Different types of homes are located in each section.

The northern parcel houses 60 homes completely surrounded by mature trees. Seven

floor plans with 1,968 to 3,220 square feet are being built on one-quarter to one-half acre lots in the Meadow Series with prices starting from \$279,500.

Standard features include full basements, 9-foot first floor ceilings, ceramic tile or hardwood floors in the foyer, 25 year Fiberglass®, and 2-car with 3rd car option garages.

The southern portion of the property is unique because it's heavily wooded and very hilly allowing homes to have look-out or walk-out basements. Many of the homes back up to a nature conservancy providing scenic views from the backyard. The Arbor Series consists of 27 homes priced from \$399,500 that have 3,220 to 3,825 square feet.

A 2,200 square-foot ranch plan also is available. Homes with nine-foot basements sit on one-half to three-fourth acre sites with a three-car garage.

To reach Prairie Woods from Rand Rd. Rt. and 176, go west on Rt. 176 for 1½ miles, then north on Darrell for 2½ miles, then left on Dowell for ½ mile to entrance on the left side. The sales center is open weekdays 10 to 6 p.m., Saturday 10 to 5 p.m. and Sunday 11 to 5 p.m. Call (815) 759-9898.