

Dormant subdivisions' future stands at mercy of economy

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action again," said Rick Lampi, Farmington Hills city planner. "It's pure guesswork but that's the figure I've heard more than any other."

One of Anson's far-flung Farmington Ridge neighbors is Connie Clark, who bought one of three model homes on Hollyhead, which can be seen from Halsted Road.

WHILE IT LOOKS lonely in such an undeveloped subdivision, Clark said it's probably a blessing in these slow building times that more homes weren't built on speculation.

"You see a lot of other subdivisions built recently with a lot of empty homes," she said. "There may be more demand in those areas."

Her home and the two next to her were built by Republic Development Co., which is still in business.

"We're hoping things pick up — everybody does," said Clark. "We'll just wait and see."

One builder who is bucking the wait-and-see trend is Rossi and Sons Builders, who are developing the Heritage Village subdivision north of Nine Mile, west of Halsted, and Farmington Square subdivision, just to the east.

Close to 50 homes have been sold in three years in the 215 lot Farmington Square subdivision, according to Antonia Rossi, who, with her son Claudio, is an equal partner in the family business. Things have been slow in Heritage Village, she said, but five houses sold in one year, which is better than most builders can say.

"We just closed on one house in the first week of September," Mrs. Rossi said. "I'm getting very good (potential home buyer) traffic now. We've got about three deposits on homes in the last two weeks. I just hope the mortgage goes through. That's the only part I'm not sure about."

INSTEAD OF being even more cautious, the Rossis are planning to build another model home banking on the belief that real estate business will improve in the spring. It will be a 2,900-square-foot home with a price tag of about \$170,000.

"We tell the customer if they can't afford the 2,900-square-foot-home we've got a 2,500-square-foot home. But, no, they like the big house to look at," Rossi said.

Mortgage rates of 14 percent don't look so bad when buyers can remember recent rates as high as 17.5 percent, Rossi said. But because mortgage rates remain steep, she said, they are now offering a \$101,000 home as their low-end offering.

Talking the day after Thanksgiving, Rossi said it's tough to be encouraged by the economy but gives thanks for her family's good health and relative prosperity.

"We've been able to get food on the table up to now but, it's really discouraging," she said. "Every time you pick up the paper or hear the news on television you hear how bad it is. It's bad but they exaggerate."

"As long as they're working with the car factories I think we should see some activity this spring."

The fate of the undeveloped subdivisions doesn't concern Hal Rowe, zoning director of Farmington Hills.

"We're not concerned, we know it's going to go. It's just a matter of time," he said.

Other subdivisions in similar limbo status include the 194-lot Farmington Hills Hunt Club subdivision, south of 11 Mile, east of Halsted. Robert Binder of the Binder Building Co. was forced to default on the land almost a year ago. The account has been turned over to Standard Federal Savings of Troy.

Development in the Barbizon subdivision (70 lots total) is virtually at a standstill, according to city planners, as are smaller subdivisions such as Acorn Valley and Bridle Hill.

Barbizon is located between Orchard Lake Road and Middlebelt, north of Ten Mile. The developer of record is Frank Winton.

Acorn Valley (30 lots total) is located west of Inkerat at 10 1/2 Mile. The developer is Manny Dembs.

Bridle Hill Estates (60 lots total) is located west of Inkerat at 9 1/2 Mile. The developer of record is Paramount Homes.



RANDY BOHST/staff photographer

Determined to survive the economic downturn in the housing industry is Antonia Rossi, of Rossi & Sons Builders who stands in front of a model

home that's just been sold in the Heritage Village subdivision.

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