

# Builder sees bright future for industry

By Jackie Klein  
staff writer

A pent-up demand for new housing, consumer attitude at an all-time high and "stable" interest rates bode well for the southeast Michigan building industry in 1989.

So claimed James Bonadeo, new president of the Builders Association of Southeastern Michigan, at a conference Jan. 4 in Southfield. Bonadeo owns his own building company in Plymouth.

Nationally, however, in the last week of 1988, fixed-rate home mortgages averaged 10.77 percent and were expected to rise to 11.5 percent by mid-1989, according to the Mortgage Bankers' Association.

The past few years have shown healthy activity for new homes in Oakland, Wayne, Macomb, Livingston and Washtenaw counties," Bonadeo said.

BASM estimates a total of 11,500 building permits were issued for single-family houses in the seven-county regional area last year.

New home purchases, according to Bonadeo, remain a solid investment for the future. With an ample supply and variety of new houses in the area, 1989 should be a good time to buy, he added.

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president



dustry show that real estate will keep holding its value and will increase in worth over the long term," Bonadeo said.

"BESIDE THE investment value, the continuing need for shelter and a sense of security will sustain the demand for new homes. Consumer attitude is at an all-time high, and we see in the coming 12 months an excellent opportunity for families to upgrade their standard of living and environment."

Mortgage interest rates are expected to remain in the 10 percent range for fixed loans and in the 8 percent range for adjustable loans, he said.

Continuing efforts by the Michigan Department of Commerce to bring new industry and business to the state also support the demand for new houses, according to Bonadeo.

Growing numbers of families are "trading up" to larger, newer homes. Demand for comforts of modern day

living is evidenced by the increases in household amenities and innovative construction, he said.

"We've had many calls for a built-in ironing board in a cabinet in the wall," he said. "That's about \$350. The new, computerized house will have appliances connected to one plug instead of many."

**ASSOCIATION SECRETARY** Bernard Glibberman of Crosswinds Communities in West Bloomfield said builders must meet with residents of communities considered "hot spots" against development.

"There's a lack of education in slow-growth areas," he said. "Construction is the life blood of communities and the economy. We have to be partners and help educate the population."

Better merchandising and marketing of houses would make them easier to purchase, said association vice president Scott Jacobson of S. R. Development Corp. in Birmingham.

Robert Halperin of the Irvine Group in Farmington Hills, also named vice president, said young couples in apartments want to get into houses. Some homeowners who moved to apartments are going to condominiums.

"December was a great month," he said. "The demand is surprising."



RAHNDY BORST/staff photographer

Bricklayers put the finishing touches to a house on Wilton Court in the new Strathmore subdivision at Haggerty and 13 Mile in northwest Farmington Hills.

## Hills one of 4 biggest growers

By Jackie Klein  
staff writer

Farmington Hills building permits 1988		
	1987	1988
Single family houses	385	442
Multiples	70	89
Offices	19	18
Industrial	15	8
Commercial	3	12

West Bloomfield, Rochester Hills, Troy and Farmington Hills last year pegged the highest residential housing growth among Oakland County communities.

"What we're experiencing in the metro area is sprawl," Farmington Hills city manager William Costick said. "We were next in the progression to develop vacant parcels."

But most of the large vacant parcels in Farmington Hills have been or are being developed. What remains are small parcels, generally squeezed in near developed areas.

In Farmington Hills, 1988 scored big in the number of single-family houses, apartments, condominiums and cluster houses under construction. Last year, 442 permits for single-family houses were issued, compared to 385 in 1987.

IN SOUTHFIELD, which is 80 percent developed, single-family home construction continued its slow pace. The expansion was in multi-family housing with more to come in 1989.

"Location, location, location" attracted 414 families to West Bloomfield in 1988, says Robert Brammer, city assessor.

"Lakes, trees, rolling hills and big, expensive homes bring residents to West Bloomfield," he said. "And we have plenty of room to grow."

"Single-family residents much prefer subdivisions to cluster housing. We have a new cluster ordinance which is more restrictive."

Last year, permits were issued in West Bloomfield for 251 multifamily units.

IN SOUTHFIELD, the 50-home Sussex Woods in the 10 Mile-Inkster Road area is the first subdivision to

be developed in many years. Five houses are completed. Last year, about 12 other houses were built on scattered sites.

"There just aren't many remaining large tracts of land," said Tod Kilroy, acting city planner. "The west portion of Southfield, on Inkster south of 12 Mile, isn't served by sanitary sewers. But the Farmington-Evergreen sewer will soon be installed so residential development can take place."

Developer Robert Rosin is planning 471 units of single-family dwellings, townhouses, condominiums and apartments in the 12 Mile-Franklin Road-Northwestern Highway area. This will occur when roads are constructed, Kilroy said.

Staff writer Joanne Maliszewski contributed to this report.

## 'Friendly' couple killed while living their beliefs

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keeping their baby," said Genzlinger's Parker, who celebrated New Year's Eve with the couple.

Bette was studying for a master's degree in religious education at Orchard Lake Seminary.

St. Agatha parishioners are suffering a deep sense of frustration over the Darnell murders.

"There is nothing we can do. There are no survivors. It's very frustrating not being able to reach out to someone," said Mary Hickey, St. Agatha Christian service director.

Hickey said she received many calls from parishioners, asking how they might help. "They are asking what they can do. Normally, we pull together for the grieving family. You make a hot dish or whatever. With this, there isn't anything that we know of."

ONE OF the ABC partners, Gordon Dye, met with Bill Darnell while on business in Texas in 1986. At the time, Darnell was a computer programming contractor, Baker said.

Darnell and his wife, Bette, were pregnant with their second child — came to Detroit from Houston in October 1988 in search of a new start because "the economy was in the

dumps in Texas," Baker said.

"Bill said a couple of times he wouldn't consider going back to Texas. He liked Michigan very much," added Baker, who said he is "just numb" about the tragedy.

In a strained voice, Ball of ABC talked about Bill and Bette Darnell. They were friendly. That was probably the byword. Bill was open, friendly, outgoing. So was Bette. They were the kind of people you wanted to know."

The Darnells were helpful, caring people who took an interest in others and their problems. The Darnells took in Smith to help her through her pregnancy. "They didn't talk about those things. They just did them quietly," Ball said.

The Darnells were excited and looking forward to the birth of their second child. "She (Bette) was just a very caring person, very much of a mother. She was excited about being pregnant. She didn't want Stephanie to be an only child," Parker said.

ST. AGATHA pastor the Rev. Timothy Scott said the Darnells were a loving couple and remembers seeing them walking hand-in-hand down the aisle to receive communion. He also remembers seeing Stephanie running in the aisles until retrieved by

her parents. "She was a bundle of activity," he said.

They reached out to Alicia Smith "because of their commitment to Christ and because they were committed to the fact that human life begins at conception and not at birth," Scott said.

"They were friendly, a lot of people just because they were so friendly," said Hickey at St. Agatha's. She met Bette Darnell when she volunteered with Hickey to visit the sick and shut-ins. Both Bette, who sang in the church choir, and Bill were eucharistic ministers, authorized to distribute communion to parishioners.

"It's a shocking tragedy even if you don't know the people involved, but it really hits you when it happens to someone you know," Scott said.

"When I first heard about it from Free Press reporter Jack Kresnak, a parishioner at St. Agatha, I reacted with disbelief. Later, when I watched the news on TV, they said the (dead) girl was 6 years old, and I thought I can't be the Darnell family. I kept hoping against hope it wasn't them."

Staff writers Janice Brunson, Bill Casper and Bob Sklar contributed to this report.

## Victims 'were caring people'

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DEGRAVE said the Curallio movement got its name from the Spanish word, which, he said, means, "a short walk with the Lord."

Several parishes in Houston occasionally sponsored Curallio weekends for husbands or wives, during which participants were invited to meditate and "take a short walk with the Lord," DeGrave said.

Bill would often speak at Curallio weekends, DeGrave said, and Bette

sometimes played the guitar. "They seemed to enjoy it."

Darnell converted to Catholicism about four years ago after marrying Bette but still maintained active ties with various Protestant churches, DeGrave said.

"I think they were involved in the Protestant equivalent of the Curallio movement," he said. "They cared that much about people."

Darnell, who had a background in computer science, reportedly worked for the Exxon Corp. in Houston before moving to Detroit. A spokesman for Exxon could not confirm that Darnell was a former employee. "But this is the second telephone call I've had on that," said Les Rogers.

Rogers said Exxon's personnel department was reluctant to comment on Darnell, or release details of his time with the company. "We're concerned about his privacy," Rogers said.

Staff writer Bob Sklar contributed to this report.

## School site considered for nature

Farmington school officials will work with a local developer to help fix drainage problem, while increasing opportunities for outdoor education at a local elementary school.

Developer Frank Milo has requested to buy four-tenths of an acre of property at Longacre Elementary School. He would like to use the site for a retention pond for

his next-door condominium development, which straddles the city boundary lines of Farmington and Farmington Hills.

Newly appointed principal William Smith and the school's science consultant, Doug Cooper, will work out a situation where the developer's needs can be met while considering how the area can be used as an outdoor nature area.



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