

Builders from page 1F

looked on as the latest greatest thing to come down the pike."

Anthony Scaccia, a principal of Scaccia Builders in Rochester, said building across county lines and in far-flung communities is good business.

"It's difficult to do, but you've got to build where people are buying," Scaccia said. "You've got to differentiate — different areas appeal to different types of buyers."

Scaccia Builders has built in Rochester Hills, Farmington Hills and Troy in Oakland County and Sterling Heights and Shelby and Clinton townships in Macomb County.

Expansion at stake

To expand, builders have to go farther afield. That creates all kinds of management headaches

that the small builder doesn't have to be concerned with.

"Most builders aren't interested in expanding," he said. "We do it to keep busy."

"We're not extremely busy in any of our five communities, but if we count all of our projects together, we have about 25 homes under construction," he said.

At the same time, running a business across such a broad area can be difficult.

Permit applications, approvals, daily meetings and supervising contractors keeps a builder running from site to site even when each site has a top notch construction supervisor, he said. He added that the job might be impossible without good people.

Steve Taglione, of B.B.C. Group in Farmington Hills, said

one of the biggest reasons builders give for staying in one community — varying restrictions and building codes — isn't nearly as hard to overcome as many builders think.

B.B.C. is one of the most ambitious of the area's builders with projects in Oakland, Macomb, Wayne and Washtenaw counties.

"I don't know why builders are so parochial," he said. "Overcoming the obstacles of building over large areas requires sound business planning, but it's easier after a builder works in several markets."

For example, Taglione said one home will sell in different markets. "While we definitely tailor

certain floor plans to a certain market, our goal is to be in as many markets as possible."

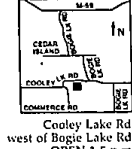
That means a basic, but flexible floor plan will often meet the needs of several communities. Most changes are cosmetic, rather than structural, he said, and can be accomplished to meet the needs of different buyers.

"It's not unusual for us to sell the same house in different areas — of course, we have to make allowances for different window specifications, floor space and increase the number of selections and options for the buyer, but we've learned how to do that."

Taglione also stressed a builder needs to know his or her particular niche.

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