

Housing

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Capaldi predicted in January that housing starts this year would approach 13,000 in an area more compact than that surveyed by U.S. Housing Markets.

It's still do-able, he said, even though some would-be buyers are hedging their bet.

"It seems to me to be a little bit of cautiousness," Capaldi said. "Maybe they're concerned about what the tax law might do, what the direction of the economy might be. People are very interested. They're getting all their numbers together, thinking."

"I don't know what it's going to take to make up their minds." Southeast Michigan fared better than some of its Midwest counterparts, worse than others in the first quarter survey.

Chicago, with 5,944 single family permits issued, increased by 11 percent over first quarter 1992 activity, U.S. Housing Markets reported.

Others:

- Pittsburgh, 1,109 permits, 7 percent increase.
- Cleveland, 1,459 permits, 4 percent increase.
- Columbus, 1,571, 4 percent increase.
- Cincinnati, 1,865, 3 percent increase.
- Milwaukee/Racine, 967, no change.
- Indianapolis, 1,756, 6 percent decrease.
- Kansas City, 1,809, 9 percent decrease.
- St. Louis, 1,988, 10 percent decrease.
- Minneapolis-St. Paul, 2,854, 11 percent decrease.

Last year, some 14,500 residential building permits were issued in southeast Michigan, U.S. Housing Markets reported. The count by quarters was 2,580, 4,679, 4,327 and 3,116.

Deer Creek

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"I think it's a winner," said Jim Reed, land development coordinator for Real Estate Interstate. "Obviously, it's a plus for the subdivision. Visually, it's very acceptable, more than acceptable. We think it's a lot better."

On a per-unit basis, 32 smaller units would be more profitable than 20 larger ones, Steiner said.

"You manufacture them quicker, turn them quicker, because you're appealing to a broader base. Dollars cost dollars," he said.

The Woodlands at Deer Creek, the third and final phase of the subdivision, has begun under construction now for about a year. Steiner and Bond built 30 houses in the first two phases of the Deer Creek Sub.

"We had a great interest in the (condo) property from the start," Steiner said. "Take a look out there. That, in essence, is a virgin strand of timber. It would have been a crime to go in there and tear it out. It affords people on the perimeter a one-of-a-kind situation."

The couple lives in one condo, two others are occupied and seven additional sites have been sold.

A variety of factors including the woods drew Marla Buhl and her fiance, Joe Sayles, to the site.

"The density played a factor, the fact it's in back of a very upscale neighborhood," Buhl said. "We were driving around looking at various places. A lot of condo complexes put a lot of people together where they maybe share a wall."

"A detached condo is almost like a home and we're both at a point where we don't want to do yard work," Buhl said.

Susan and Bob Mortimer already are living in their new condo.

"The number one thing on our list was being able to look outside of our home into the woods and knowing they wouldn't be built upon," she said.

"Our objective was a detached home. I'm a gardener and especially when you're putting this much money in a home, I don't want to be attached to anything," Mortimer said.

Bond had a lot to do with the design.

"We wanted to open the back with glass," she said while showing off the Sayles/Buhl

house under construction. "We have glass across the great room, dining room, nook and master suite."

All residents in the Deer Creek Subdivision, who pay an association or homeowners fee, will have access to the woods.

The woods and lower density of units have proven to be good selling points, said K.C. Mueller, an associate broker with Remerica Hometown Realtors.

"Normally, you have condos at the front of the sub to serve as a buffer," she said. "Here, we have the premier location."

"I don't think anyone who purchased out there would have considered attached condos."

Who's buying? "We're discovering they're people in the late 40s or early to mid 50s with no children or proverbial empty-nesters," Steiner said. "Each unit has a first floor master bedroom so there's no more running down stairs."

"They talk about downsizing, but they're not," he said. "The smallest is 2,200 square feet, but most approach 3,000 square feet."

Put damper on irritating house dust

House dust is a major cause of allergic disease with symptoms ranging from mild irritation to severe breathing problems.

Of all the house dust components, notes American Health magazine, microscopic mites are the biggest problem. They thrive in hot weather.

"Dust mites are probably the most important allergen in the world," says Dr. Michael Kaliner, head of the allergy disease section of the National Institute of Aller-

gy and Infectious Diseases in Bethesda, Md. "All temperate regions are afflicted with the pests, which live in carpeting, mattresses, pillows and upholstery."

Since the tiny insects can't survive when the relative humidity is below 50 percent, arid areas are spared.

Following are some of Kaliner's suggestions:

- Keep carpets out of the bed-

room. They trap dust — particularly shag rugs, the worst type for a dust-sensitive person.

■ Use products known as acaricides that kill dust mites. They are available in drugstores and can help control mites in carpets, mattresses and sofas.

■ Encase the bed's box springs, mattress and pillows in dust-proof zippered covers.

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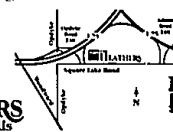
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