

Let the Parade of Homes Begin...

Builders have their best on display for annual event

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Pictured here is Kenley Design & Construction's four-bedroom home in Havana totals 3,221 square feet and features a long list of amenities. It is located at 866 Frances Drive.

Tallahassee homebuilders will introduce their finest work today as the annual Parade of Homes begins for the first of its two-weekend schedule.

The event is a project of the Tallahassee Builders Association and there are 33 entries to see, reflecting homes of all sizes, layouts and price ranges.

There's a definite focus on craftsmanship, even if the days of the huge floorplan and big construction budget are largely past.

And while there is no "typical" buyer, they all tend to want some basics. "They are looking for quality and how their home works for them, not them working hard for their home," said Kristina Petrandis, manager of sales, marketing and design for Premier Construction & Development Inc., which has six entries in the parade.

Kenley Design & Construction LLC's entry in Havana is at 866 Frances Drive. It's a custom home situated on 5.25 acres and has all the amenities — from a gourmet kitchen to natural red oak flooring and all-brick exterior. The home totals 3,211 square feet.

Kenley owner Anthony Swinson said the buyers wanted that array of features, plus the craftsmanship. "It's got a lot of the old charm you see from earlier times," Swinson said. Visitors during the parade will see the attention to detail, from crown moldings and central vacuum system to custom cabinets and built-ins.

All the builders hope the parade will keep up the momentum that segments of the local market seem to be enjoying. Swinson echoed other firms in describing his workload now and the number of inquiries he's getting lately.

"We're optimistic," he added. "Calls have been coming in. People are finally not so scared of remodeling or adding on or building a new home."

Another dimension of the event is an increasing focus on energy usage and how best to keep that cost down for the homeowner. Builders now make efficiency a part of their basic home design philosophy and that's reflected in the choice of materials, appliances and construction methods.

Today from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sunday from noon to 5 p.m. the Capitol Green Building Group will have a display of green home features at 5623 Jacksons Gap Road.

Jane Bixler Conn, a green-home certification specialist, said the free exhibit shows one home partially finished so visitors can see what's behind the drywall and in the attic that insulates the structure and lowers energy costs.

The second home has testing equipment in it to show what measurements are taken to verify a home's energy performance.

"It's a little way to further educate consumers and show what the builders go through to achieve these certifications," she said.



Many of the parade homes, like Kenley Design & Construction's four-bedroom home in Havana, are fully decorated to highlight interior spaces and decorating styles.