

YOUR Home



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DECEMBER 30, 2006

YOURHOMES.NWITIMES.COM

ADVERTISING SECTION I

YOUR OPEN HOUSE



VanDerNoord Homes

MODELS OPEN TODAY

Renaissance | St. John
9561 Renaissance Drive

DIRECTIONS: From US Hwy. 30 in Merrillville, take Burr St. south to 93rd, go west to Renaissance Dr. From US 41, take 93rd Ave. east to subdivision on right.

Schmidt Farms | Crown Point
12692 Pennsylvania Place

DIRECTIONS: Take I-65 to U.S. 231 West. Turn left onto 231 and proceed to Delaware St. Turn left onto Delaware and continue to entrance.

HOURS: Mon.-Thurs. 12-5; Friday & Saturday 10-4. For more info, visit vdnhomes.com

More TOP BUILDERS at homes.nwintimes.com



ROBERT WRAY | THE TIMES

YOUR OPEN HOUSE



Beauty Creek | Valparaiso
3018 Kickbush Drive

DIRECTIONS: From US 30 take 250 North to 130. 130 East to 400 N (Stay left at Y in road). 400 N will T into Froberg. 400 N turns into Vale Park Rd, take Vale Park to Kickbush Dr. and go North.

Double Tree West | Winfield
7404 East 103rd

DIRECTIONS: From US 30 take Randolph St. South to 104th and follow signs to the model.

MORE INFO:
Henderlong Homes
219-662-2064
Visit us at www.henderlonghomes.com

More TOP BUILDERS at homes.nwintimes.com

YOUR OPEN HOUSE



Schmidt Farms / Crown Point
12682 Pennsylvania Place

DIRECTIONS: Take I-65 to U.S. 231 West. Turn left onto 231 and proceed to Delaware St. turn left on Delaware St. and continue to main entrance.

Prairie Village of Zandstra Farms/ Highland
2141 Zandstra Court

DIRECTIONS: From U.S. 30 take U.S. 41 north to 45th Street. Turn left on 45th Street and continue to Prairie Avenue. Turn left on Prairie Ave. continue to Zandstra Ct. Right on Zandstra Ct. to model home.

HOURS: Monday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday 12-5

FOR MORE INFO: Visit www.ebihomes.com or call 219-322-0906

More TOP BUILDERS at homes.nwintimes.com

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION TOP PRIORITY

Your lot or theirs, Cook Builders focuses on your dream

BY MICHELLE KRUEGER

In any service-based business, the primary measure of success is customer referral. When new customers call because they have done their homework and want to meet with you, it's the ultimate compliment.

"We're in the very fortunate position to have new customers contact us after they have done some research, whether they already own a lot or are interested in one of ours," said Brad Ericks, director of operations for Crown Point-based Cook Builders. "We do a considerable amount of advertising, but it is without a doubt the word-of-mouth customer referrals and recommendations from people in the trades that have contributed to this company's success for over 30 years."

Because a custom home is an extension of every homeowner's personality and taste, it's important to determine from the beginning what a customer is seeking in a home, according to Richard Cook, president of the family-owned and operated business.

From palatial showplaces to strategically designed spaces for family entertaining, Cook Builders can tailor-make adjustments to existing plans or start from scratch with an original plan. Either way, the result is not accomplished until Cook has designed the home of customers' dreams.

"It's all about the people, and there is a great sense of satisfaction in what we do," he said. "When you enjoy working with people to build their dream home, you go to work looking forward to getting them one step closer to moving into that home. We go beyond needing to do a great job to maintain our reputation. We want to do a great job for them."

Currently building five homes in various prestigious Northwest Indiana locations, Cook Builders is working with three customers who purchased their own lots and two who chose to build on one of Cook's sites.

You can see these homes in progress in Crown Point's Ellendale Farms, White Hawk Country Club and Feather Rock; and in St. John's Lake Hills and Weston Ridge. Cook also plans to have a few homes in Crown Point's Brydridge Valley soon. Two of the four homes that will be starting in the

next eight to 10 weeks will be located there.

Because Cook has been building an average of 12 homes, ranging from \$300,000 to \$1 million and up each year, the company seldom has an available model. As a result, potential customers often visit their homes under construction where they can see the kind of quality work that is going on behind the drywall and also have the opportunity to meet some of Cook's preferred subcontractors.

"Our customers love the fact that they have so many options when they build with us. Our number-one priority is to work with them every step of the way throughout the entire custom home building process."

— Brad Ericks, director of operations for Cook Builders

Committed to meeting the individual needs of customers, Cook Builders works with them, not just for them, according to Ericks.

"Our customers love the fact that they have so many options when they build with us," he said. "Our number-one priority is to work with them every step of the way throughout the entire custom home building process. Our services can start as early as lot selection and range from securing lot loans and construction financing to full-service blue print consulting and selections assistance. About the only thing they need to do on their own is find an end loan."

For example, a customer came to Cook

Builders with a plan for a lot the client owned. The customer had experienced some difficulty communicating with an architect, but was ready to proceed with the original design. According to Ericks, Cook Builders identified one major problem right away — the home was not going to fit the lot shape.

"We spent a considerable amount of time getting to know this family and then redrew the plans," he said. "When we presented the plan, which now fit their lot and was designed to take advantage of the amazing view, they were very pleased. In fact, they said that this was the home they originally wanted, but that the previous architect just didn't listen to them."

Another recent example of Cook Builders creating a unique plan that works well for both the family and the lot includes a 3,000-square-foot, 1.5-story that seamlessly blends multiple generations in one home. The grandparents in this case will be living in a custom-finished, walk-out basement with their own complete and private living quarters.

"It's kind of eerie how the homes actually take on the personality of the people we are building them for," Ericks said. "A more down-to-earth customer will have a very cozy home, while a business-oriented, executive-type customer will end up with a more formal environment. Personal style is reflected in every aspect of our homes, from the style and design right through to the color palette and finishes."

While many of Cook Builders customers either already own a lot or have a location in mind and are looking for assistance with the process of acquiring it, more and more people are coming in search of the perfect home site. That's why Cook recently acquired a few select lots such developments as Feather Rock and Lake Hills.

"When we're selecting lots, we look for the premium lots in the best possible locations of Northwest Indiana," Cook said. "For example, most people are looking for forests, lakes and ponds in their backyards, not neighbors."

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information on Cook Builders and its available lots, log on to www.cookbuilders.com. Send e-mail to Brad@CookBuilders.com, or call the office at (219) 322-3303.

To inquire about having your company profile appear on this page, contact Jim Barrett at 219.933.3214

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