

03/16/2008

Sanctuary shows off unique living in Erie County

By RICHARD PAYERCHIN, Sandusky Bureau Chief

HURON TOWNSHIP - Two new housing developments are on the cutting edge of blending a place to live with amenities that add value to the location.

The Sanctuary at Plum Brook, 2900 Windsor Bridge Circle, Huron Township, is on almost 55 acres south of Hull Road and across the street from Plum Brook Country Club. Down the road is the Erie MetroParks' Osborn Park and minutes away is the US 250 retail corridor and an SR 2 interchange.



Rob and Shelly Routh in the clubhouse at The Sanctuary at Plum Brook development in Huron Township.

The Sanctuary entrance has two ponds with lighted fountains and a bridge.

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"The best marketing is the entrance," said Sally Routh, co-developer of the new condominiums with husband Rob Routh. "We get so many drive bys and there are actually people purchasing because they drove by."

The clubhouse features a pool table, fireplace, television, fitness room, kitchenette and room for up to 200 people.

"Our beautiful clubhouse and sales center and showcase homes help the future homeowners to envision living here," Mrs. Routh said. "In fact many of our future homeowners are already using our fitness facility and are joining us for Sunday football games on our wide screen TV in our clubhouse. Having a lot of excitement around the sales center really helps the selling process and makes it fun."

The development has built 24 buildings, each with four units, and the clubhouse. It uses two main designs featuring two bedrooms and two bathrooms

each.

The Canterbury includes a den that can be customized to become a third bedroom. The unit has 1,880 square feet, the Abbey is the smaller unit with 1,760 square feet. Both feature a gas fireplace and a four-season room.

"Our homes cater to most people's needs," Mrs. Routh said. "Our pinwheel configuration gives the feel of a single family home but still meets the needs of those looking for a carefree lifestyle averaging less than \$250,000."

The design allows flow between the rooms and the floor plan is handicap-accessible.

"The nice thing about this is it probably equates to a 2,000-square-foot condominium because you don't have hallways," Routh said. "In a typical condo, you lose square footage because of hallways."

The units also are built using Energy Star technology to cut down on energy use when appliances are plugged in but turned off.

"Our homes are extremely energy efficient because of our energy start program and we'll be guaranteeing low energy bills," Routh said.

The first residents, Don and Pat Petersen, moved in Oct. 18, 2007. So far, they love it.

"This is great," said Don Petersen. "We're living like we never lived before."

For more information, visit <http://www.thesanctuaryatplumbrook.com/>.

While the Sanctuary already is up and running, another residential development is in the works with high-rise condominiums planned near Sandusky Mall.

Centurion Development Group of New Albany is planning to break ground for Ashford Park on a 91-acre parcel south of Perkins Avenue,

near the existing Cinemaworld movie theater and Clarion Inn Sandusky, near the Sandusky Mall.

The project would bring 804 condos, 98 townhouses, 103 single-family patio homes and more than 2,300 total parking spaces around the site. The project, a new community in four buildings named and modeled after Ashford Castle in Ireland and covered with Erie County's native limestone.

The high-rise buildings are planned to be about 140 feet tall, but will not look like a tower in a conventional sense, said Centurion Development Group Chief Executive Officer Ryan Goldberg, developer of the project. Cities around Michigan already are attracting baby boomers who tried moving to Florida or Arizona but who, in a "boomerang effect," are returning to the Midwest around the Great Lakes, Goldberg said.

"We felt that there was a good opportunity to try to bring people back to this market," Goldberg said.

Sandusky and southern neighbor Perkins Township has a good combination of assets - nicer weather than Michigan, more activities, lower cost of living and higher quality of life - to attract people age 55 or older, Goldberg said.

"It just made a whole lot of sense to create a community in an area that complemented our business plan," Goldberg said.

The buildings would have mixed uses with restaurants, drug store, express doctors offices, a bank branch and post office. The buildings use new urbanized planning strategies that allow residents to walk to accomplish tasks of daily living.

Along with economic benefits, Goldberg touted green technology, such as windmills, geothermal energy and tiles that convert sunlight to solar energy.

"Ashford Park is a sustainable community," Goldberg said. "The idea of sustainability is freeing us from supply and demand curves that you can't win. For us sustainability is two things: One, it's being economically feasible, and two, it's being environmentally feasible."

With environmentally friendly building, a 3,500-square-foot unit could have utility bills of \$35 to \$40 a month, Goldberg said.

"I think, honestly, we are going to change Erie County," Goldberg said. "All we're asking you is to give up your high-priced utility bills to go with us."

For more information, visit www.ashfordparkohio.com.

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