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Centex Builds Homes With Families in Mind

*By Rosalie Rayburn
Journal Staff Writer*

Home builders have long known that the "feel right" factor plays a big role in influencing someone's decision about which home to buy.

That's why Centex Homes regularly conducts customer surveys to hone its design philosophy. The goal is to create floor plans that feel livable the first time you walk through them.

"The thought process is to develop a home where families develop," said Brian Schmidly, the company's marketing director.

Survey information has helped the national home builder target its products to fit customers' family and income demographics and their psychological profiles.

"If you're not listening to the buyer, you're just driving the bus blindly," Schmidly said.

More recently, Centex has started to use customer feedback to pick the most popular emerging trends in home design and incorporate them as standard features in new subdivisions.

Centex Homes is one of eight home builders active in the Cabezon masterplanned community in mid-west Rio Rancho. Its three subdivisions, Toscana, Rancho Plata and Rancho Oro, are designed and priced to appeal to different buyer demographics.

Rancho Plata is designed with a distinctly Southwest flavor and priced to appeal to step-up buyers. It features eight floor plans ranging from 1,250 square feet to 3,019 square feet. Standard prices begin at \$206,000 and top out at around \$275,000. Upgrades such as living room fireplaces, granite countertops and stacked stone exterior accents can raise the final price.

Potential buyers can browse through three model homes, the Torreon (1,616 square feet), the Guaymas (1,988 square feet) and the Eldorado (3,019 square feet). Centex also offers an on-site design center where potential buyers can study options on items like cabinetry, tiles and countertop materials.

Buyers can be overwhelmed by having to make multiple decisions and later regret their choices, Schmidly said. Having the design center located next to the model homes allows buyers to check how color samples look in a real home setting.

The Eldorado model is a two-story home designed to be family friendly. It has four bedrooms, 2 3/4 bathrooms and a spacious upstairs living area.

The ground floor living room in the model home includes a raised hearth kiva-style gas fireplace that is offered as an upgrade. Another upgrade shown in the model is the ground floor bedroom and bathroom suite, which can provide convenient guest quarters.

In the standard floor plan, the first-floor room is offered as a home office, den or game room, without a closet or adjoining bathroom.

Centex has added an unusual decorative touch in the model home with square beam lintels over the hallway entrance and in several openings between the kitchen and living room.

Items that are standard in the Eldorado model are the tile in kitchen and bathroom areas, solid surface kitchen countertops and tongue-and-groove and viga ceiling in the living room.

The kitchen has a spacious pantry closet with built-in shelving. A wet-bar counter offers easy access from kitchen to living room for party occasions. The dining area adjacent to the kitchen provides an option for more formal entertaining.

Based on survey information, Centex included plenty of storage space. There is a large closet beside the staircase, upstairs linen closet and spacious closets in each bedroom.

Centex Homes is a national home builder based in Dallas. The company has been active in the greater Albuquerque metro area for 20 years.

Rancho Plata

The 3,019-square-foot two-story Eldorado model home is the largest of three model homes on display at Centex Homes' Rancho Plata subdivision in the Cabezon masterplanned community.

Features in the model home include: a tongue-and-groove pine ceiling with vigas in the living room, recessed lighting, solid surface countertops in the kitchen and bathrooms, cultured marble vanity countertops in bathrooms, garden tub in master bathroom, second floor game room, ceramic tile in wet areas, two-car garage.

Model price: \$299,000

Estimated monthly payments for 30-year fixed rate mortgage at 6.625 percent interest with 20 percent down: \$1,531.63 (principal and interest).

Source: CTX Mortgage

Home Owners Association Fee: \$87 a year.

Sunday, December 9, 2007

Floor Plan, Features of Guaymas Anticipate Homeowners' Needs

*By Amanda Stevens
Journal Staff Writer*

The "Guaymas" model home by Centex Homes in Rancho Plata at Cabezon is built for comfort.

As you walk into the three-bedroom, 2 1/2-bath home, immediately to the left are a study and powder bathroom.

Walking down the hallway puts you in the carpeted great room, which features an optional vaulted ceiling and gas fireplace. The open room affords plenty of space for entertaining.

To the right is a hallway that leads to two bedrooms, a full bathroom and a laundry room, which leads to the 2 1/2-car garage.

The great room in the front of the house opens to the kitchen, which features a bar and stainless steel appliances, including a microwave above the oven range.

The kitchen has Corian countertops, with the option to upgrade to granite, and features a large walk-in pantry that provides the extra storage space that is always needed in the kitchen.

The kitchen opens to a cozy breakfast nook illuminated by natural light from the window and the sliding glass door that leads to the covered back patio.

The master bedroom is in the back of the home, separated from the other two bedrooms for added privacy. The optional vaulted ceiling continues into the master bedroom, as well as the great room.

The master bathroom features an oversize bathtub with frosted block windows above the tub for a little extra natural light. The vanity has two separate sinks so there is no fighting for bathroom time in the mornings.

A huge walk-in closet lined with wire shelves is connected to the master bathroom.

All bedrooms and living areas are carpeted, while all wet areas of the home have ceramic tile.

All Centex homes feature the Hometeam Pest Defense system, a network of small plastic tubing built into the walls of the home to carry pesticide. The system keeps harmful chemicals away from children and pets.

Centex Homes also offers a \$3,000 Hero discount for all military personnel, educators, law enforcement, firefighters and health care providers.

"It's just the right thing to do," director of marketing Brian Schmidly said. "We appreciate everything public service officers do for our

community and we're just trying to give back. I guess you could say we are a socially responsible company."

At a Glance

STANDARD FEATURES: Corian counter tops, ceramic tile in all wet areas, cultured marble surrounds in all baths, ceiling fan, cable jack and phone jack in every bedroom

HEATING/COOLING: Refrigerated air

PRICE: \$218,000

ESTIMATED 5/8MONTHLY PAYMENTS: 1,988 square feet: \$1,377.91

ASSUMPTIONS: 30-year conventional mortgage, 6.5 percent interest, principal and interest only