

Marching from house to house

Annual Parade of Homes allows builders to showcase innovations

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TAVARES — Lake County residents hopped in their cars and went house-hunting this week.

The Lake-Sumter Parade of Homes showcases the latest new home constructions from area builders and developers.

"The parade is going very well," said Jean Kaminski, the Lake County Home Builders Association's executive director. "There's a renewed interest in new construction, and this may be a good time to buy."

This is the biggest such event in 20 years, said Kaminski. There are more than 70 houses on display this year, twice the amount of last year. She said the reason the event has so many entries this year is because there are more builders and developers in the area, as well as more houses on the market.

The houses on the parade route are scattered throughout Lake County, from Leesburg to Mount Dora to Clermont. The Lake County Home Builders Association puts together a committee to organize the event

each year. It's the committee's job to look for builders to enter their homes and promote the parade.

Builders and developers enter their homes into the parade to be rated by category. The houses range in price from \$200,000 to more than \$2 million. Each house is categorized by price.

The parade is an opportunity for many potential home buyers to see what builders are offering.

One of the most expensive homes in the parade, fetching a price of \$2.5 million, is a premier stop for many participants. "Liebes Nido," named for the German word for "love" and Italian for "nest," is a 10,000-square-foot house on more than three acres in the Windsor Green development in Lady Lake.

The house features a pool, gymnasium, two-story library, wine closet, two-story master closet, six bedrooms, five and half baths, terraces and a recreation room. Throughout the house, the walls and doors are inlaid with custom woodwork design and rails, staircases and fixtures featuring intricate



KERI RASMUSSEN Staff Photographer

The Oklawaha home dining room and kitchen at Etowah in Tavares are shown.

metalwork.

"We've been getting pretty good reviews," said Phil Mastrosimone. "They've (visitors) never seen anything like this in Lake County, not with this much detail."

Mastrosimone said that the house only scratches the surface of what he can do, and he has grander ideas for the next house he plans to build across the street. He said that Liebes Nido has a French eclectic theme.

Steve Longshort and Mary Robertson from Clermont walked through Liebes Nido amazed by the detail of the

design. They've viewed several houses in Lake County and said that this one is the most amazing one they've seen.

"This inspires you," Longshort said. "It's really interesting to see so many upscale homes and see what goes into making them."

The Parade of Homes continues through the week and into the weekend and ending Sunday. The Parade of Homes guide is available from the Home Builders Association office in Tavares, Harbor Federal in Clermont or the Lake County Welcoming Center on U.S. Highway 27.