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Prairie: Stresses efficiency

Continued from Page 1

Prairie Crossing stresses efficiency

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Prairie Crossing in Grayslake is an innovative neighborhood aimed at energy efficiency.

"This community is unique for the Chicagoland area, and in fact, is one of the few subdivisions of its kind in the country," says Jack Sanderson, an agent with Coldwell Banker in Vernon Hills.

The homes of Prairie Crossing were designed for maximum heating and air conditioning retention, thus significantly reducing home energy costs. Innovative framing and insulation has resulted in thicker exterior walls and greatly reduced air flow from the interior of the house. Windows have also been designed with high performance glazing and leak-proof frames.

"This is the new generation of home construction," Sanderson says.

See PRAIRIE on PAGE 6

"This neighborhood was designed and built by Building Science Consortium in conjunction with the architects, engineers, and building material suppliers of Building America. This is one of the first times that homes of this type have been done on a large scale, with every home in the neighborhood completely energy efficient."

Prairie Crossing is situated on 667 acres of rolling hills with large stands of mature trees, prairies, marshes, lakes and farm gardens. Approximately 350 acres of the land has been set aside to be left in its natural state.

The neighborhood has a number of walking, biking and horseback riding trails for residents to use. There is also a community-based co-op stable for residents.

"This is a great place for anybody who might be interested in the outdoors or in recreation," Sanderson says. "Residents have their own private beach, a sizable lake, tennis courts, numerous playgrounds and lovely parks. There is a community garden farmed by residents with a weekly farmers market during the growing season."

The garden is a membership organization with graduated fees of \$200,

\$300, \$400 and \$500 that go toward buying seeds and supplies. In return, members also get farmstand credit for produce throughout the growing season.

There is a formal neighborhood association with a quarterly fee of \$195 per household. The association helps pay costs of the recreational facilities as well as maintenance of the common areas.

A typical home in Prairie Crossing is the Olmsted, a traditional two-story, cedar-sided model with four bedrooms, 2½ baths, an attached two-car garage and a full finished or unfinished basement.

The first floor contains a large family room with an optional fireplace, formal dining room with a bay window, a formal living room with a fireplace and a cozy den.

The island kitchen has a built-in planning desk and butler's pantry, hardwood cabinets and an adjacent breakfast room with an optional screened porch or patio. A utility room offers bonus storage and interior garage access.

The second floor has a master suite with a dual walk in closet and a dressing area.

The luxury master bath has a corner tub, dual sinks and a separate shower.

"These homes are traditional, yet unique," Sanderson says. "It's the perfect neighborhood for residents who are environmentally conscious, who are concerned about energy costs, who enjoy the outdoors and who enjoy cutting-edge home technology."

Homeowners are move-up buyers from the Grayslake area and surrounding suburbs, as well as transferencees from out of state.

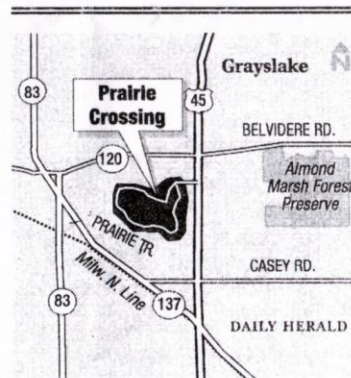
Many have been attracted to the neighborhood by the wide variety of floor plans, the recreational opportunities within the neighborhood and the school system.

Prairie Crossing is located within walking distance of the Liberty/Prairie Metra station and a short drive from the Grayslake station. Many residents of the neighborhood work in the Northwest suburban area.

Those commuting to downtown Chicago by car are near the Tri-State Tollway (I-294).

"This is such a special neighborhood," Sanderson says. "It is friendly and low key."

"There are a lot of old-fashioned family values and overall pride in the community here. It's peaceful and yet convenient. Prairie Crossing is a wonderful, unique place to raise a family."



Price range: \$250,000 to \$600,000

Age of homes: 6 years old and less

Schools: Woodland Elementary and Woodland Junior High schools in Woodland Elementary District 50 and Grayslake High School in Grayslake High School District 127

Parks: Grayslake Park District