

Annual Parade of Homes and Developments June 18 - 26

The 2005 Annual Parade of Homes and Developments promises to be bigger than ever.

Thirty homes will be featured along the parade route, offering guests a unique opportunity to see the latest products and craftsmanship that builders and suppliers have to offer area residents and patrons.

From June 18-26, patrons can browse through a wide variety of palatial estates, technically "smart" homes, country-style cottages and luxurious townhouses. The Parade route is expansive enough to allow patrons an opportunity to experience different locations and neighborhoods.

The parade is a must-see local event. There is always something new to be learned.

"Last year, for instance, one new product featured was siding made out of concrete, instead of vinyl," said Douglas Lape, Chief Executive Officer for the Home Builders Association of the Grand Traverse Area Inc.

To help visitors plan their week, the Traverse City Record Eagle will distribute the 60-page Parade of Homes Book in June to newspaper subscribers. It will also be available to newsstand customers.

"Advance tickets will be sold at numerous outlets listed in the Parade book, or you can purchase a Parade pass at the first home that you visit," Lape said. Passes may also be purchased at the Home Builders Association office, located at 3040 Sunset Lane in Traverse City.

The cost of tickets purchased before June 18 is \$5.50. Admission after that is \$8. A map with a description of every home on the route will be provided.

Patrons will see firsthand different floor plans, popular flooring and counter top options, unique window treatments and cutting-edge kitchen appliances during the event. Homes showcased range in size from 1,500 to 7,000 square-feet and from one to four stories, according to Lape.

"The typical customer can visit the entire route in about seven solid hours," Lape said.

Williamsburg residents, Pat and Jody Herman, will be doing the Parade for the 10th straight year.

"We like to see what's new, as well as getting decorating and home design ideas," Jody said. "And we like to see the newest technology used in the 'smart' homes."

When asked about the most memorable home they visited in the past, the couple agreed it had to be the mansion-like house located at the Lochenheath Golf Club.

"The house was so big we got lost in it," Pat said. "It had an indoor driving range, a circular staircase that led to a rooftop viewing area and a five-car garage."

Besides picking up ideas for their next home, it is also a social event for the couple.

"We usually run into someone that we know along the way and we get their opinions on which ones are a must-see," Jody said.

For the 17th year, profits raised during the week-long event will be donated to local non-profit groups.

Volunteers will be stationed at every home to answer questions and hand out shoe protectors. Visitors are asked not to bring food or beverage into the homes. Smoking is not allowed.

Visitors are encouraged to vote in the People's Choice Award, given to the home that receives the most nominations. This year, the Home Builders Association will also recognize the builder who best incorporates "Green Building" principles into their structure. The home that manages the principles of resource efficiency, energy efficiency and indoor and outdoor environmental quality will earn the recognition.

Only licensed builders are allowed to participate in the Parade of Homes and Developments.

"About half of the homes featured along the route are sold," Lape said. He added that the craftsmanship of these builders and the prod-

ucts used are the best available in keeping with the Code of Ethics required by this trade association.

"Many of those involved in the Home EXPO are also involved in the Parade," said Lape, who encourages everyone to visit both events as there is "something for everyone."

Visit the Home Builders Association of Grand Traverse Area Inc. at for more information.



Parade Homes will range in size, from 1,500 to over 5,000 square feet in size.



The Parade of Homes offers visitors opportunities see the latest in new building techniques.

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