

Scaled-back homes still offer many ideas at Parade of Homes & Condos

Parade of Homes houses not as big as in past

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GRAND CHUTE — Craig and Jeanne O'Connor took advantage of Sunday's mild weather to get some ideas for the home they plan to build someday. The couple from Green Bay was among a steady stream of people who passed through the doors of 1065 W. Willis Way, one of 33 featured homes in this summer's Parade of Homes & Condos.

Craig O'Connor was struck by the spaciousness as well, a product of the 9-foot ceilings, light hickory floors and open concept that admits light from every direction. He said the couple takes ideas from their visits to help put together plans.

Jeanne O'Connor noted that the master bedroom, measuring 13-by-15 feet, is hardly large in comparison to some of the gargantuan ones that went into huge homes in the not so distant past. But the spacious master bath situated alongside with two walk-in closets at either end helped compensate.

Dwellings in this year's show are scattered far and wide in the Fox Valley — from New London, Hortonville and Town of Neenah and Neenah-Menasha, to Greenville, Appleton, Kimberly and Combined Locks.

Assuming buyer income sources are steady and credit ratings stand up to bank scrutiny, lower

Onlookers came and went and when the weekend premiere was finished, a few hundred had taken a close up look at the 1,767-square-foot three-bedroom home with two baths and boasting a craftsman-inspired design.

Landmark Real Estate & Development was asking \$199,900 for the home in the town's Butterfly Fields subdivision.

Jeanne O'Connor found much to be enthused about.

She found the openness of the design appealing.

"It's not a huge home. But my husband and I have gatherings every Christmas of about 40 or 50 people and it would be easy to get them upstairs," she said while inspecting the cavernous basement. "It's an easy fit. And even down here to set it up it would be easy."

mortgage interest rates likely will help spark consumers to seek new dwellings.

"Most of the buyers we have now are first-time buyers," said Keith Garot, [broker](#)/owner of Landmark Real Estate & Development, De Pere, which was showing the Willis Way home. "With these low interest rates you can buy a \$180,000 home with a 5 or 10 percent down payment. Your total payments are less than what you're paying for rent."

A lot of buyers are moving down from larger homes, fueling the market further for dwellings in the 1,500- to 1,800-square-foot range.

"There's a lot of that," Garot said. "And they're [energy efficient](#) and maintenance free."

Only five homes on the tour were smaller than the Willis Way home at 1,767 square feet.

Garot said about 250 inspected the home Saturday and more than 100 had been through by noon Sunday.