

Southside going green

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"Green" had more than one meaning Monday when ground was broken on the new Hendley II subdivision at the corner of Fitch Avenue and Laredo Drive in south Odessa.

The 53 homes to be built in the area are expected to bring savings to residents, costing between \$85,000 and \$125,000, which city officials hope will help control the workforce housing crunch.

But the development, being built by Green Eagles Development on a vacant 8.8-acre tract, is being touted as the first totally environmentally friendly subdivision in West Texas. Odessa City Manager Richard Morton said that was something the city wanted when it put the project out for bid.

"I think that's an added benefit," he said. "We're fortunate to find a builder in Green Eagles Development that specializes in building this type of home."

The city is paying Green Eagles \$250,000 as an incentive to build the homes.

Morton said he toured a Green Eagles home in the Dallas area during the summer with Assistant City Manager Michael Marrero.

"We climbed up in the attic and, to our pleasant surprise, the way they built the house, the attic was as cool as the house was," Morton said.

James Gleason, the development's architect, said he uses everything from the direction the homes face to the 100 percent concrete, masonry and stone exteriors to help conserve energy.

"The typical person that buys these homes probably won't have to paint them for 20 to 25 years on the outside of the house," Gleason said.

He added that a family could conserve 10,000 gallons of water a year due to water-saving devices in faucets and toilets.

So far, Morton said four homes have been sold, with six more sales in the works through a mortgage program with First Basin Credit Union.

Mick Ziegler, Green Eagles owner, said work should start by Thanksgiving with a model home opening by January. He hopes to have all 53 homes finished in 2009.

"This project is going to be an example of what can be accomplished with the cooperation of government and private enterprise," he said.

U.S. Rep. Mike Conaway, R-Midland, told those gathered for the ceremony that he was happy the project was being done without federal assistance.

"We've borrowed about all the money my grandchildren are going to have to fix our problems," he said.

After the ceremony, the Rev. Roy Gentry said the new homes should improve property values.

"It's really going to be a shot in the arm for the community," he said. "This is something that is much needed for south Odessa."