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## Housing includes duplexes, single-family homes

By ROBERT PIERCE

• Leader & Times

Two Liberal residents, along with a Garden City business and engineer, are helping alleviate local housing issues.

Roger Crossman and Cliff Abbott of Liberal, Garrett Wright of D&H Homes in Garden City and engineer Gerald Edwards recently joined forces to form Southwest Housing LLC, and Crossman said the aim of the group is to build houses in Liberal.

“The project, it’s about 63 lots that were owned by the county,” he said. “We were able to get

those bought from the county.”

Crossman said many of the houses that will be built are duplexes with separate utilities. He said D&H Homes plans to put some single family homes in the midst of the property in south Liberal.

“It’s south of Liberal Kenworth, south of Jewell, south of Charles Street over there on the side,” he said. “It’ll actually be Hickory. Hickory will be the first street we put in. It’ll run all the way from Country Estates all the way over to Warren Street, behind the Hampton Inn.”

The timeline for starting the project, Crossman said, is the beginning of June.

“We’re wanting to start putting roads and stuff in,” he said.

The project is part of a Rural Housing Incentive District, and Southwest Housing members are wanting to sell bonds to pay back much of the cost of the lot purchase, something Crossman said the group is having trouble with at this point.

“Once we sell those bonds, the tax incremental difference of the property tax will pay it back,” he said.

Crossman added D&H Homes can get the homes built quickly.

“They’re all built indoors,” he said. “They’re able to haul them down from up in Nebraska. They’re built to the current code of the city they’re going into. The codes, they will get those from the City of Liberal before they start to build them.”

Crossman said this plants D&H Homes in the town of Liberal, and he said Guymon, Okla., has likewise contacted the company about housing for that community.

“They want 60 houses built down there as well,” he said. “Garrett Wright’s trying to plant his business here and open up his own shop here. He wants to move not the main office of D&H Homes, but at least create a satellite office here.”

Crossman said this then allows Liberal to take advantage of sales tax the city collects from Guymon, something Southwest Housing would like to see.

“We want to grow our business here and grow housing here,” he said. “This is kind of tackling, hopefully, two birds with one stone.”

Crossman said the group plans to do landscaping and new roads in the project area.

“All curb gutter, all the utilities will be brand new,” he said. “We’re looking to grow the tax base here and have the ability to put more as we try to develop in the other parts of our community.”

Crossman said there are basically two price ranges on the housing units.

“If we do three bedrooms, one bath, with a basement, we’re going to be around \$210,000 for a duplex,” he said. “If we do it just on a slab with no basement and two bedrooms with one bath, it’ll be \$188,000.”

Crossman said the duplexes will be sold to community investors.

“We’ve got a huge demand for temporary housing, which would be rental, and we’re going to try to do that,” he said. “They can make a pretty good rate of return on that. They will have single car garages on them.”

Crossman said the property had been on Seward County's books for about 18 years, and this meant county officials had to reestablish the property, leaving some hurdles to jump over before the project could actually begin.

"The legal mess that we were running into was just trying to get it all positioned correctly, trying to figure out the right verbiage so that we could get a title policy for everything," he said. "Once we got the title policy on it, we were good. We could resell them and not have any problems."

Southwest Housing recently signed a contract with Seward County which calls for 12 houses to be built within two years.

"They're about 1,200 to 1,400 square feet on each side depending on if you go two bedroom, three bedroom and if you put in a basement or not," Crossman said.

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