

Press Release

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DEER TRACKS LOG CABIN COMMUNITY

The landscape is changing on Highway 76 between Rossville and Effigy Mounds with the 2005 introduction of the Deer Tracks Log Cabin Community. Passersby are seeing a new concept in log homes evolving in these picturesque hills of Allamakee County.

For most people, a log cabin represents a simpler time. A log cabin life style generates an image where you can ease back on the accelerator of today's fast paced lifestyles and enjoy the natural world around you. In your mind's eye... you can picture families spending time together around an evening campfire - or playing board games next to a wood burning rustic stove, while big snow flakes apply a layer of frosting on the winter landscape outside.

As the developer of Deer Tracks Log Cabin Community, Jim O'Connor believes there is an ideal location to bring these images to life – right here in Allamakee County." In the near future he sees 32 rustic log homes, as the base for creating memories that will last its residents and families for generations to come.

In the fall of 2004 O'Connor, a resident of Oconomowoc, Wisconsin learned about a piece of land for sale in this area. "We contacted Marvin Roe and met at the Old Rossville Store". Marvin owned the property with his son Josh and friend Dave Meyer. "We drove out to tour the property and I found a beautiful setting nestled in amongst the hills and valleys. Within fifteen minutes, I knew I wanted to buy this land. Marvin has a sincere passion for this land. As we drove through it, he gave me some great ideas on how to share this land with others in a manner that maintains the integrity of this rural landscape. With an agreement and a handshake, the deal was done."

"I had never done anything like this before," O'Connor continued, " I had developed and owned a few conventional residential sites, but this was something new. Marvin's help has been a terrific asset. I am so appreciative for his assistance that I named one of the streets after him, calling it 'Marvin's Park Lane'. The other owners Josh and Dave have become valued friends, and in many ways, have truly helped to make this development what it is today. In fact, we tell people that our second office would be at Josh's Old Rossville Store."

In February of 2005, O'Connor invited his brother Jerry and his wife Amy to visit the property. They own a vacation home near Prairie du Chien and have vacationed in this area for the past thirty years. "They saw what I wanted to create- a perfect setting for a log cabin development. As we progressed through 2005, I invited them to become more and more involved. We have a common vision for the development and have come to enjoy a great working relationship." Jerry designs cabins and manages the legal and marketing issues while Amy is the Interior Decorator.

As we developed our community concept for a log cabin development, we made a decision to offer complete turnkey cabins, in every sense of the phrase. O'Connor explained, "our cabins are built on lots ranging in size from about 3-10 acres. All of the utilities are installed to include electricity, water, septic, phones and landscaping. On the inside, these cabins are fully furnished with TV's/DVD players, appliances, furniture, lodge-style decorations, candles on the coffee tables and even the bedding. We also have J.C. Kelley cut and deliver the first load of firewood." We tell visitors that "you can buy today and move in tonight", O'Connor noted. It is this turnkey feature that makes this development unique.

From the beginning we had a commitment to use local contractors to perform the work we needed accompanied by a policy of not cutting corners. "If a real estate development is created with quality in mind, then the project will sell itself." We have discovered that our Allamakee County contractors are our Public Relations department.

According to O'Connor, "we have received back more than we could have hoped for. Contractors and families like those of: Rod Adam, Allamakee-Clayton County Electric, the Allamakee County Government staff

we work with, Doug Sires with Ace Communications, Dave Cota, Attorney Jim Garrett, Keith Grady, Ron Hein, Jim's Appliance, Danny Kruse, Don McCormick, Bill Moody, Bob Oden, Nick Jones, Wayne Mielke, Roger Mohn, Terry Oesterle, Joe Palmer, Attorney Bill Shafer, Shawver Well, and Matt Troendel - just to name a few, have been an absolute pleasure to work with."

Amish craftsmen, located in the nearby Sherman Ridge area and others in neighboring states, build the cabins and all of the wood furniture used for furnishings. "We could spend hours sharing stories of what a wonderful time we have experienced with these Amish craftsman and their families. We have come to truly appreciate both the character and quality this group of people- along with the value they have brought to this enterprise."

As a result of these relationships, we have become some of Allamakee County's biggest supporters. As with any project, "it is only as good as the people involved". When you visit Deer Tracks you will find a large sign next to the office where sign maker, Steve Oden, designed a sign to publicly thank the many friends and businesses of Allamakee County for their involvement in this project. With the backing of these various contractors, we are able provide our homeowners with a 12 month unlimited builder's warranty.

"Phase One was started on April 21st of 2005 and completed in 121 days, in time for the Grand Opening on Labor Day weekend. This included roads, water, sewer, electricity, and eight turnkey cabins. "Looking back, it is amazing what was accomplished in such a short period of time," O'Connor said. "This challenge grew even steeper because realistically- we knew that our 2005 sales season would last no more than 45-60 days. We had high hopes but didn't fully know what to expect".

The Grand Opening attracted more than 650 visitors. Since then more than 3,000 have come to see this new turnkey concept for a log cabin community. Six cabins were sold last fall to parties from McGregor to Dubuque, Ames and Waverly. "What a great group of people," O'Connor said. "One of the owners lives here throughout the year and the other owners could be found snuggled in their cabins throughout the winter- except for one who finds that Florida has a preferred winter climate. If you really want to know what you will find at Deer Tracks, we think our best advertising will come directly from our new property owners."

What about plans for 2006? O'Connor reports that, "By mid April we will have six finished cabins available for sale- with two more scheduled to begin thereafter. Then we will move on to our next phase."

Deer Tracks is finishing construction of a three acre lake to be located in the center of the property. O'Connor stated, "shortly, we will have Tom O'Neill, a local landscaper, begin building a waterfall and lighted aerator/fountain to be placed in the middle of the lake. This is another amenity that will make Deer Tracks special for our property owners."

Deer Tracks hosts an Open House every Saturday and Sunday from 10:00 to 4:00. "Almost everyone likes to tour log cabins and that is certainly true with Deer Tracks. We invite people to stop in and meet my brother Jerry and me. Between the two of us and our Open House tour guide, Bob Oden, we would love to share with you the many things that makes Deer Tracks special."

"For me," O'Connor noted, "the thrill of "Deer Tracks" is the opportunity to share the beauty of Allamakee County, and this beautiful piece of ground that God created, with 32 other families." I would have to add, "what God created, the Amish craftsmen and contractors of Allamakee County who, as our team members and friends, have improved to create a unique place we call the Deer Tracks Log Cabin Community."

If you would like to learn more about Deer Tracks, you can log on to www.thedeertracks.com, or call 563-535-0000.