

The County Press

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\$14.5M sub planned for Almont Twp.

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ALMONT TWP. — A Macomb County developer is planning Lapeer County's first new subdivision since the recession — an Almont Township project worth an estimated \$14.5 million that could be under construction by the end of summer.

Dorothy Wicks, director of environmental health, Lapeer County, said a request came in

mid-May from a representative of DEI Properties L.L.C. to conduct soil tests for up to 44 new houses. Soil tests are required to determine if the ground is suitable for septic systems.

Chris Cousino, director of real estate development, DEI, confirmed the request and said it would be the second phase of the Pine Crest development at Hough and Van Dyke (M-53) roads in Almont Township.

"We are interested in putting in the next phase later this summer," Cousino told

The County Press.

The Shelby Township address of DEI is the same as a land survey filed for Pine Crest subdivision (Pine Crest Development of Michigan L.L.C.) with the Lapeer County Register of Deeds in 2005.

The survey indicates several phases of development planned within Pine Crest.

Cousino said the next phase is being planned now due to demand.

"We're just about sold out of phase one so we're looking for

additional inventory," he said.

A sign indicating that "only 2 homes remain" in the first phase of Pine Crest states homes are sold in the \$330,000 range.

Cousino wouldn't confirm or deny the estimated value of \$14.5 million based on the number of homes planned and value of homes in the first phase of Pine Crest. He did say "pricing is going to be consis-



Photo by Andrew Dietderich

Robert Hoxha, of F&M Contractors Inc., works on the foundation of a house currently under construction as part of phase one of the Pine Crest subdivision in Almont Township.

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tent with phase one.”

According to its website, “DEI related entities currently hold in excess of a million square feet of industrial and commercial space as well as vacant land available for build-to-suit projects. In 2008, through strategic partnerships, DEI also became one of the largest residential home builders in Michigan providing quality, affordable housing throughout the Metro Detroit area.”

The website also indicates DEI is a sister company to Dan’s Excavating Inc., founded in 1974 and a company focused on the heavy-highway construction industry in Michigan.

The DEI website also has a link to “Residential Building” that includes Lombardo Homes of Southeast Michigan. The sign at the first phase of Pine Crest has contact info for Lombardo.

Cousino said it is currently unknown if Lombardo will be involved in phase two of Pine Crest.

He didn’t want to comment further given the current status of the project.

Wick said her department will soon begin evaluating each of the 44 lots per DEI’s request.

Testing includes soil boring at each site. Other factors considered in the tests for each site, she said, include the number of bedrooms, potential water use, and ensuring septic tanks are planned at least 50 feet from a well that supplies



Photo by Andrew Dietderich

The sign for the Pine Crest subdivision in Almont Township indicates “only 2 homes remain” in phase one of the development. Construction for phase two could begin by the end of summer.

drinking water.

Wicks said preliminary tests conducted by the company indicated that the property “is by and large buildable,” but that her department has the final say.

“We’re in the process of setting up appointments and getting this work done for them,” Wicks said, adding that the job will take “several weeks.”

Wicks said, in general, the majority of sites her department evaluates are approved for building.

She added that the number of requests her department is receiving continues increasing.

In 2012, the department issued 47 permits for the entire year, Wicks said.

In 2016, the department issued 245 permits, but she noted that they were scattered around the country.

“This is the first year

we’ve done anything with a subdivision since the 2008-09 economic downturn,” she said. “It all just came to a screeching halt at that time.”

Ian Kempf, a Lapeer County commissioner whose district includes Almont Township, called the plans “somewhat of a double-edged sword.”

He said it’s a delicate balance between fostering growth of the area’s economy, while maintaining the rural feel that many find appealing about Lapeer County.

However, Kempf said he believes Almont Township officials will do what’s best when it gets to them for approval.

“The people of Lapeer County deserve to know (the project) is well thought out and planned, and the rural way of life is still being given consideration,” he said.

