

Business

CITRUS COUNTY CHRONICLE

Sprouting up green



MATTHEW BECK/Chronicle

Marietta Reyes' new home affords her and her husband views of the Ozeo backwaters from every direction of the home.

Local builders dedicated to eco-friendly living

CHRIS VAN ORMER
cvanormer@chronicleonline.com
Chronicle

Green is the way to go for builders, a Citrus County construction company avers.

"Green is not trendy," said Kathy Foulkes, vice president, operations, for Gold Crest Homes. "It's serious and takes dedication for people who want to live in an environmentally friendly home."

"It takes planning and work," said Linda Homewood, contract coordinator for Gold Crest.

The custom builder just received certification from the Florida Green Building Coalition for building the county's first officially designated "green" home. The recently completed house at the end of Ozeo Trail was given points for energy efficiency, resource conservation, health awareness and durable products.

With a green home, a customer can expect high durability, carbon dioxide detectors, low maintenance and low-flowing water, among many other features.

Foulkes said Gold Crest, which started building in the county in 1992, was the first builder in the county to introduce tankless water heaters as standard in 2001 and solar water heaters in 2007.

Walt Stachowicz is the only certified green professional in the county who can evaluate a home for its green certification.

"In 2000, Florida Green Building Coalition was an independent group trying to push green building as a volunteer measure,"

Stachowicz said. "It now has 1,000 members and is doubling every year."

The coalition set up the standards for every type of building for homes, business, developments and low-cost housing, Stachowicz said. When the buildings meet the standards, they gain certification.

"It's all done by a certifying agent who has the training and experience in the field," he said.

Stachowicz has been approved as a certifier with the coalition, having completed its Green Home course, passed the exam and registered with the coalition as a certi-



The Reyes' home utilizes light-colored paint on the walls and light wood flooring to conserve energy. The reflective qualities each possess require less electricity to light the room.

fyng agent.

On Dec. 11, Gold Crest received the certificate from the coalition. Foulkes said the builder has been the first to use some new, green technologies as standard features in construction; some have been in use as early as 2001. These technologies are:

■ UV germicidal lights in heating, ventilating and air condition-

ing systems for healthier air.

■ AQS (Air Quality Services) fresh air intake system.

■ KVAR energy controllers that reduce the amount of non-productive current in the electric system.

■ TechShield radiant barrier roof sheathing insulation.

■ Energy efficient lighting.

■ Non-metallic water systems.

See GREEN/Page D3

GREEN

Continued from Page D1

- Tankless water heaters.
- Solar drainback water heaters.

- Insulated low-e glass windows and sliding glass doors.

Stachowicz had high praise for Gold Crest's president Greg Conard.

"Greg was one of the first builders to join the Green Building Program," he said.

The program is part of the National Association of Home Builders, which is trying to move the practice of green building into the mainstream. It assists with green educational offerings, advocacy on green building issues and tools and resources for builder associations whose members want to go green.

Stachowicz said Conard looked at the plans for the house Gold Crest was to build in Ozello and decided it would meet the standards for green certifications.

"It starts with the plans," Homewood said. "Walt and I worked together and he was guiding me in the right direction."

Going green does not have to be more expensive, she said. In fact, when requested, suppliers responded well to green alternatives for their equipment.

"All I had to do was ask," she said.

She looks for materials that use no petrochemicals or use recycled materials in such furnishings as carpet.

"It's important for things you don't see, like insulation," she said. "We've done

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Gold Crest Homes, Inc. has constructed several homes in the Ozello area.

a lot of research about suppliers."

"Two other homes in the county are now trying to get certified," Stachowicz said.

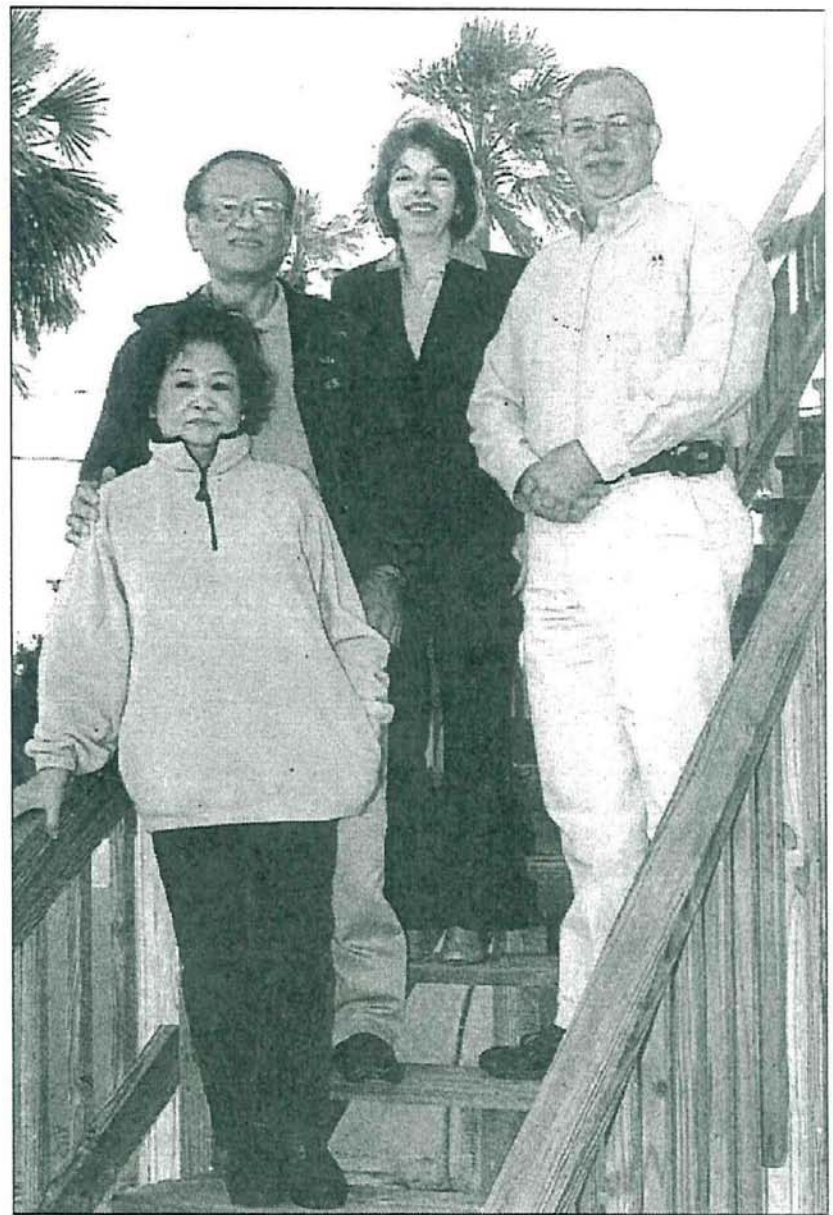
The first certified green home belongs to Marcello and Marietta Reyes, who have lived in the county on and off from Michigan since 1998. Their stilt home features Energy Star appliances, endless hot water, fluorescent

lights and a skylight in the bathroom to cut down on energy use. The glass in their windows is 150-mile wind resistant, a good idea for coastal living.

"We like the rural area," said Marcello Reyes, an architect by profession. "This is a nice neighborhood."

The site offers waterscape views in every direction.

"We breathe better out here," Marietta Reyes said. "It's nice to be so close to nature and the fresh air."



Marcelo Reyes Jr. and his wife Marietta, left, are pictured above with Golf Crest Homes Inc. owner Greg Conard and Linda Homewood, Golf Crest Homes, Inc contract coordinator.