

By Sarah Cox

It has not been a matter of cutting the land to suit the design of homes, but rather the opposite at Mt. Tabor Meadows in Blacksburg. This way of building is part of the EarthCraft-certified approach, which includes an emphasis on environmentally friendly standards, whether that be constructing with an eye to waste reduction, incorporating energy-efficiency design and HVAC systems, or reducing environmental impact on the land.

The development, about 1/2 mile from North Main Street on the corner of Happy Hollow and Mt. Tabor roads, is situated on former farmland. It has a natural wooded boundary and gentle slopes. The eight home designs have been developed by Jason and Justin Boyle in partnership with Steve Bodtke as 3B Development, LLC, and local architect Peter Ozolins.

The Boyles, who own Green Valley Builders, will be building the homes, which will start in the \$360,000 range and top out at about \$500,000.

Bodtke said the predevelopment phase of the project took more than a year. It involved design as well as taking care of Blacksburg land issues to ensure reduction of run-off water from the construction site. Because the homes must suit the land on which they will be built, not all designs are available for all of the lots, said Justin Boyle.

Another difference in the construction of the Mt. Tabor plan is that sod was laid down at considerable expense, on day two of the construction of the storm



## FITTING THE CURVE

*At the end of the day, recyclable products (above) are taken to the local recycling facility to reduce waste from construction. An old barn (right) on the Mt. Tabor Meadows land has not yet been torn down or moved. 3B Developers are hoping to be able to save it as part of their overall goal to retain the integrity of the land.*



water-retention meadow, pointed out Bodtke.

"There is no dirty water leaving this site. The sod is acting as a filter," he explained.

In an effort to avoid disturbing the land as little as possible, a former farmhouse

has been completely renovated for use as an office on the site, rather than razing it and starting over.

In addition, at the end of each day a load of recyclable material leaves the site to be turned into the local facility.

"Why not recycle?"

asked Jason Boyle. Dirt is not hauled in or hauled off, but put to good use on this 20 acres, he added.

Bodtke said he believes the New River Valley is ready for this kind of movement. In the long run, the homes in Mt. Tabor Meadows

will be more cost effective, both from sustainability and energy standpoints.

"Energy efficiency is just one step," said Justin.

In fact, according to the EarthCraft Website, benefits of an EarthCraft-certified home are far reaching and include savings on operating, health and repair costs, conservation of resources and reduced environmental impact, improved air and water quality, durable construction and greater comfort. Green Valley Builders is striving to have Mt. Tabor Homes become EarthCraft-certified.

The designs will appeal to more than one market said Bodtke, who, in addition to being a partner in the development company, is a broker with Long & Foster Blacksburg. Some will have main floor bedrooms, some second-floor bedrooms. Open-floor plans mixed with formal floor plans, casual spaces, open kitchens and wrap-around porches are some of the features that will be integrated into the eight designs.

The drive time to Virginia Tech's campus is about five minutes. And there will be common greenspace, which is a design issue of growing popularity.

A total of 49 lots will be sold — 30 in the first phase, 19 in the second. Bodtke said marketing has not formally begun because the road is not in yet, but 3B Development should be ready to introduce the project at the end of the month, Bodtke said.

"Its marketability comes from the quality of the homes and the other thing is that ... it's just the right thing to do," said Bodtke. "This will be the standard in 10 to 20 years."