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ROBERT WRAY | THE TIMES

Now is the Time to Build the Home of Your Dreams with Cook Builders



BY MICHELLE KRUEGER
Times Correspondent

If you've ever imagined what it would be like to live in a brand new home designed and built just for you in the location of your choice, now is definitely a great time to make your dreams a reality, according to the Brad Ericks, director of operations for Cook Builders.

"Building a new home is never something you should enter into lightly," he says. "It's definitely a huge commitment of both time and money. However, if it is something you've been considering, today's market definitely makes it a whole lot easier. Pricing is attractive and interest rates remain low. We'd love to see people get involved before they both start to creep back up."

There's no doubt that the allure of moving into a home where everything is brand-new and up-to-date has tremendous advantages over buying an existing home. All of the construction materials, mechanicals and appliances will be state-of-the-art, energy-efficient and under original warranty. The home itself will be custom designed for you. It will include all of your personal selections, and the very latest architectural trends will be readily available to meet your individual needs.

"With existing homes, your options are often limited by what's currently available in the marketplace based on how much home you can afford," Ericks says. "For new construction, you can come at it things quite differently. Every client is unique in their own way. Some come to us with land they already own, others have a particular plan and/or location in mind, while many people just have a dream. In any situation, the key to success is working together on a plan with a location that meets all of your needs, including a bottom line that fits well within your comfort zone financially."

Ask anyone who has built a new home, and, along with a great deal of well-intentioned advice, you'll find that when it comes to bringing your plan for building the new home of your dreams to fruition, the most important choice you'll make is undoubtedly the builder or general contractor. Along with overseeing the entire project from start to finish, your chosen builder will hand select the professionals for your job site, including framing carpenters, plumbing contractors, electricians, roofers, drywall installers, painters and landscapers.

"Life is too short not to go with a good builder," Ericks says. "The best advice we can give prospective home builders is to speak with recent new home buyers. We're extremely fortunate in the fact that the majority of our clients welcome the opportunity to show off their new homes."

Family owned and operated since 1974, Cook Builders has built some of the finest custom homes in many of Northwest Indiana's most desirable neighborhoods. Led by founder Richard Cook, former president of the Building Industries Association of Northwest Indiana (BIA),



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BRAD ERICKS,
DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS FOR COOK BUILDERS

Cook Builders got its start in the region doing a considerable amount of referral home remodeling and commercial work. Over time, the company's focus turned to residential building, and for the last 10 years Cook Builders has created an impressive portfolio of custom-built homes, with a good number of highlights available for you to preview at CookBuilders.com.

"As a true custom home builder, we go the extra mile to meet the unique needs of our individual clients," Brad Ericks, director of operations for Cook Builders, said. "Whether they are looking to create an original design or tailor-make adjustments to an existing plan, we're there to work with them every step of the way."

Ranging in price from the \$200s to well over \$1 million, every home built by Cook Builders is a one-of-a-kind project from start to finish. The same attention to detail, quality products and experienced group of hand-selected subcontractors comes together to make your dream a reality.

"We sit down with every homeowner and go over plans to find out exactly what they want in a home," Ericks, who has been with the company over 5 years and works closely with each and every client alongside Rich Cook and project manager Wade Cunha, says. "Throughout the entire process, we are the point people when it comes to customer service. A lot of people tell us that it's very rare for the builder to be so attentive to their needs. We like to give people old-fashioned personal attention."

In fact, Cook Builders' most recent client, who is preparing to move into his new home, took a moment from his busy schedule to reflect on the experience.

"Cook Builders' reputation was key for us," he says. "When we found out that Cook owned the lot we wanted, it was perfect. We've seen their homes and knew other people they built for. There's never been a complaint from us or anyone we know. As a custom builder, whatever you ask them to do, they deliver. There was never a question in my mind. For example, when I described the kind of fireplace and mantle I wanted, they made it happen for a lot less than I expected."

Steadfast in their commitment to build homes that are beautiful, solid and efficient, Cook Builders routinely includes custom design and 3D rendering for their homeowners along with standard features such as Andersen Low-E windows, 2 x 6 exterior wall construction, blown-in cellulose R-21 insulation in exterior walls and highly-efficient furnaces.

"We build thicker exterior walls, which allows us to use more of our green-friendly insulation, making the home even more energy efficient," Ericks says. "Because of our energy-conscious building practices, ENERGY STAR® has recognized us for building 100% of our homes in the past two years with 5-Star or 5-Star Plus ratings. These are the highest ratings possible and will result in measurable savings for our homeowners in gas and electric consumption."

FOR MORE INFO

For more information on how Cook Builders can build the new home of your dreams on the lot of your choice, including one of theirs currently available in Lake Hills, Crown Point's White Hawk Country Club or Feather Rock and Dyer's Emerald Crossing, contact Brad Ericks of Cook Builders at (219) 322-3303 or e-mail Brad@CookBuilders.com.