

STATE

Resort growth a boon

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■ The development of the Greenbrier Sporting Club is proving economically beneficial to a variety of nearby businesses.

WHITE SULPHUR SPRINGS, (AP) — Decorators, contractors, artisans, seamstresses and others are prospering from spinoff business related to development of the swank Greenbrier Sporting Club.

In the four years since the development was announced, nearly 300 sites have been sold at a cost of \$400,000 to \$1 million and 111 houses have either been built or are under construction at a cost of \$1.75 million to \$5.8 million. Plans call for 500 homes to be built in 17 "neighborhoods" on 6,500 acres. The Greenbrier Sporting Club is being developed by CSX, which owns The Greenbrier resort, and Dolan, Pollack & Schram Development Co.

For many sporting club members, this is their third home, said John Klemish, director of sales. The average age of homeowners is 48; their average stay is 40 days a year.

Thirty West Virginians own homes there, giving West Virginia and Virginia the highest percentage of homeowners. Klemish said the sporting club also draws from Ohio, Maryland, New York and Florida.

Construction began this month on the most recent neighborhood on top of Greenbrier Mountain, where building sites will range from \$750,000 to \$1 million.

Interior designer Lesia Campbell said her White Sulphur Springs business has at least tripled in two years. One of the 20 projects her firm is now involved in is a 5,000-square-foot stone and cedar two-story home owned by a Pennsylvania company. "They use it for conferences and to entertain clients," she said.

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Campbell picked the apple green paint for the walls. She chose the geranium-print wallpaper for the mud room. She ordered the furniture. She selected all the rugs, pillows, towels and sheets for the house.

She made sure the kitchen was well-stocked with pots, pans, dishes, glassware, placemats and all the appliances. And in the process, she's passed on a lot of work to area artists, craftsmen and other businesses.

The ogee edge of the granite countertop in the kitchen was done by Campbell Tile in Oak Hill, which also cut the tile and granite for all the baths in the house.

The window treatments, including turquoise silk drapes in the upstairs balcony study and pleated and buttoned valance for a bathroom, were constructed and sewn by Virgil Ivy of National Drapery Work Rooms in Scarbro, Fayette County.

Frank Hedgecock of Beckley created the wrought-iron fireplace screen.

The pull knobs on drawers in the kitchen and bath were hand-painted by local artist Monnie Bare, as were several mirrors and pieces of furniture. The ceiling medallion in the master bedroom was painted onto canvas by Bare, then installed.

A watercolor of a big bug is by Sita L. Stedding, a Lewisburg artist who has other paintings hanging in the house.

"I try to use as many local people as I can," Campbell said.

Campbell also employs three people full-time and two part-time, and plans to add another of each.

Her work at the sporting club has helped her nationally as well, she said. "If people tend to like and trust you, they take you with them to their other homes." Campbell has worked for the same company on a condominium in the Ritz-Carlton and a beach house on Florida's Amelia Island.

Once homes are done, they are kept up by Resort Home Services, started by Rebecca Winebrenner and her husband. Before an owner arrives for a visit, they spruce up the home, stock the refrigerator and do "all the things that we would love to have done for ourselves. We make sure it really

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LESIA CAMPBELL

is a vacation for our clients," she said.

Businesses as far away as Charleston and Huntington also are benefitting. The owner of Creative Kitchens, which operates in both cities, says his firm has done or is doing work in 21 homes in the sporting club.

Robb Stepp said some days there are 40 people on site working on a new house. "Ninety percent of them are West Virginia craftsmen."

Stepp added eight employees since he began installing cabinetry, countertops and custom built-ins at the development. And the additional work has enabled him to make capital improvements at his Huntington facility.

Greg Thaxton of Sunset Structures in Charleston provided the exposed timber beams for the sporting club's lodge and for half a dozen houses. He said that less than 15 percent of his work used to be done in-state. He expects that percentage to at least double in the next couple of years because so many of the upper-end houses in the sporting club will use the kiln-dried Douglas Fir that Sunset Structures provides.

Tom Cullen and Paul Loos, stonemason partners from Frankfort and Alderson, financed and built their own spec house, a 5,200-square-foot home on Tyler's Ridge. A month after they broke ground last spring it was sold to a New Jersey couple.

Once that house is finished, they will tackle another one already under design.

"We're bringing people on and can give them steady work," Cullen said. "Quite frankly, it is the single biggest impact on our business in over a decade."