

Business results at Lake Chapin Shores buck nationwide trend

Second-home buyers purchase a third of lots in just over a year

BERRIEN SPRINGS, Mich. — Lake Chapin Shores — one of southwest Michigan's newest vacation-home developments — has attracted second-home buyers despite the general economy and slowdown in real estate activity locally and across the country. The 21-home community on Lake Chapin is now one third sold, in sharp contrast to many home development properties the past two years.

Managing partner Steve Sprengel said, "It's been a little nerve-testing at times, but I think our decision to 'build it and they will come' was the right one."

He's referring to the two model homes they built and sold last year.

"2009 was our first full season and we've already sold seven sites," he said.

Buyers have 12 designs to choose from if they select their own lakefront, lakeview or forested site in the development, but the models speed up the process, so buyers can start using their new home right away.

"Once we saw the community, the lake and the homes, we were sold," said Grant Armstrong, who purchased one of the model homes this past spring. "We talked about choosing a lot and a



Some homes at Lake Chapin Shores in southwest Michigan have lakefront views, and some have lake and woods views, but all have access to the community's common areas, which include a heated pool, waterfront and private piers.

home design and picking out our own finishes, but in the end we were so anxious to get an extra summer on the lake, we decided to buy the model. We realized their designer had selected most of the same things we would have chosen ourselves, and it saved us a five-

or six-month wait."

Another one was sold a couple of months later, and the developer's decision appeared to have been a good one. Two more models are under construction now, to be available this spring.

Originally from the Chicago area,

three of the four partners have strong networks of contacts and recognize that most second-home buyers in Southwest Michigan want an easy, convenient drive to their property. Lake Chapin Shores offers a 90-minute drive from the Chicago Loop to a week-

end getaway surrounded by old growth oaks, maples, black walnuts and more. It is set on rolling terrain leading down to the waterfront of one of the largest all-sports lakes in Southwest Michigan.

"Families enjoy taking their boats on long rides to just sightsee," Sprengel said. "Or if the kids can hold on, they can take one of the longest waterskiing rides on some of the calmest waters anywhere."

A stretch of approximately 11 miles between the end of the lake at Berrien Springs and the next dam on the connected St. Joe River offers not only great boating, but some of the area's best fishing, stocked with 250,000 steelhead every year.

Lake Chapin Shores is minutes from the regionally popular Harbor Country and famous Lake Michigan beaches. Homes are built on ½- to 1-acre lots, with wooded sites from the low \$400,000s, and lakeview and waterfront homes from the mid-\$500,000s. Ten homes will have lake frontage, offering private lake access and spectacular views. Others will have lake views or secluded wooded settings, all with access to a heated pool, waterfront, and private piers.

Through Oct. 30, Lake Chapin Shores is hosting open houses and tours of its model homes Saturdays and Sundays, from noon to 4 p.m., and by appointment. Call 888-TO-MICHIGAN (888-866-4244) or visit the Web site at www.LakeChapinShores.com.

For more information, visit [Lake Chapin Shores](http://www.LakeChapinShores.com)
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