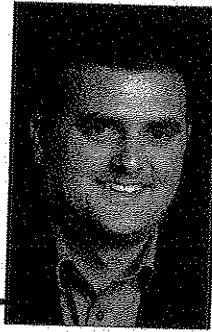


# Clouds clear for new home builders as consumer confidence grows

by Jill Hansen

The market for new homes in the Greater Omaha area shows signs of improving substantially as homeowners regain confidence in the traditional belief that the value of their investment will be maintained or improve over time.

"It's becoming a nearly 100 percent seller's market," said Dave Vogtman, president of The Home Company. "There are fewer existing homes on the market. Sellers sometimes get the full asking price and sell in a couple of weeks." The company was founded one-and-



Vogtman



McGuire

a-half years ago because "we saw a need in the market for customizable, affordable housing in the \$200,000 to \$350,000 range," he said.

In 2012, the builder had 54 job starts and projects 85 starts in 2013, he said.

"Home values are definitely on an upward swing as owners become increasingly confident that their homes will appreciate in value,

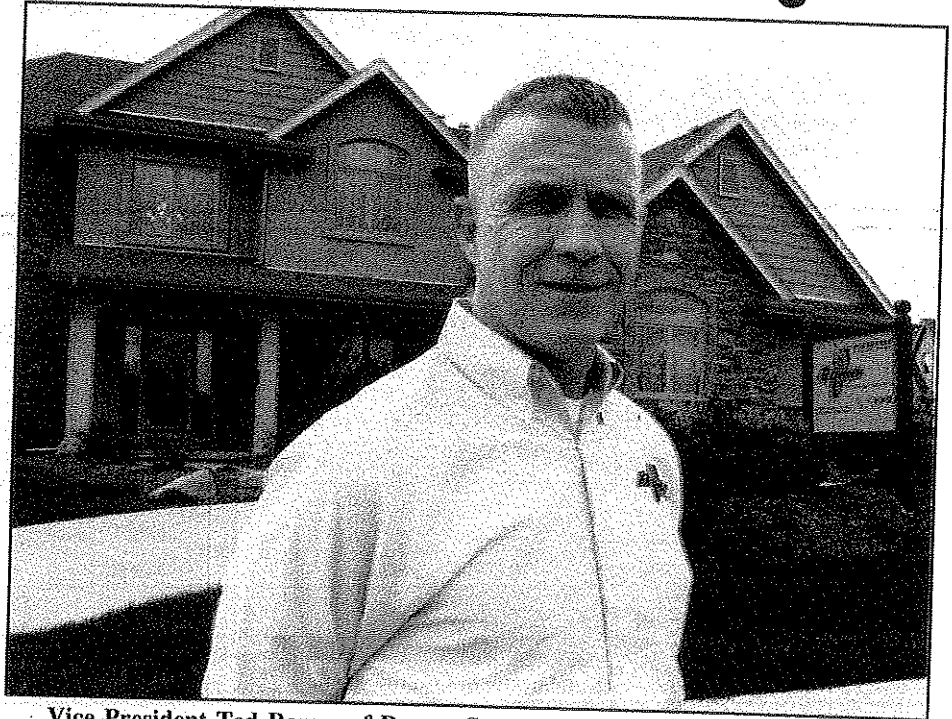
a confidence that was lacking during the worst of the recession," said Shawn McGuire, broker and sales manager at Celebrity Homes.

Low mortgage rates help make a home purchase "a smart financial move. People may pay less monthly for a home than to lease a two-bedroom apartment," he said.

The company builds single-family homes, town homes and villas costing from around \$140,000 to the high \$200,000s, he said.

Homebuyers are "a smorgasbord of first-time home buyers, move-up buyers and empty nesters who want to downsize," he said.

On the lower end of Celebrity's price range, home buyers are looking for "energy efficiency, two-car garages and appliances and window blinds included in the cost," McGuire said.



Vice President Ted Ramm of Ramm Construction at a model home near 192nd and Maple.

"In the upper \$200,000 price range we're seeing a lot of repeat customers, families that are getting bigger and leaving entry level homes for larger homes that are smartly laid out," he said. "They want more of a great room concept, as opposed to the days of a formal living room and separate dining room they use four times a year."

Large master bedrooms, especially in two-story three-to-four bedroom homes,

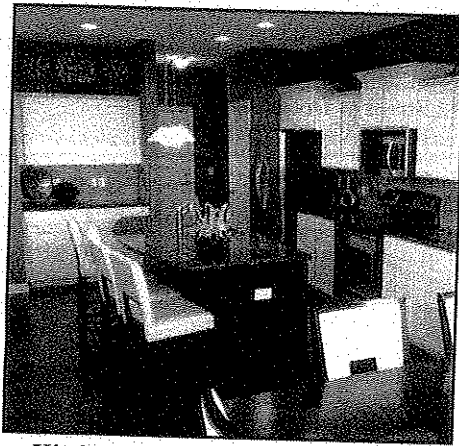
are a high priority, McGuire said.

"The parents need a place to retreat," he said.

Proximity to schools and recreation areas like parks and walking trails are also paramount, McGuire said.

"This is as busy as we have ever been," said Ted Ramm, vice president of Ramm Construction. "We were able to get enough

Continued on next page.



Kitchen design by Celebrity Homes.