

# Homes going up at The Oaks at Lake Keowee

Subdivision was first in Oconee to begin construction since recession

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SENECA — Ground was broken recently for the first homes at the first new lakefront subdivision in Oconee since the Great Recession, another major step in the recovery of the county's housing market.

Construction is underway on two homes at The Oaks at Lake Keowee, with two more nearing approval to begin soon.

Broker Luke Edwards said not only have early sales been strong for The Oaks, but Lake Keowee home sales overall are on track for "the strongest year since the recession."

Following the bursting of the housing bubble in mid-2007, the United States entered a severe recession, and the U.S. entered 2008 during a housing market cor-

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rection and a subprime mortgage crisis.

Burnt Tanyard Phase II was midway through the approval process in 2007-08, and no lakefront subdivision had been approved by the county since then.

The Oaks was the first to get preliminary approval to begin construction, but Peninsula Pointe in West Union actually received final approval in October 2014, while The Oaks did not technically receive that until January, according to county officials.

Peninsula Pointe Phase II and three others have gotten preliminary approval since.

The Oaks is located about 4.5 miles down Keowee School Road just outside Seneca.

Edwards said for all of Lake Keowee, there had been 44 lakefront lots that have sold this year, with 12 more lot sales pending, and 38 lakefront home sales, with 14 more pending.



Edwards said he and Anderson-based developer Thom Craft had made an effort to keep the lots affordable with prices starting in the \$700,000s — for lots, homes, docks and any other costs — ranging to more than \$2 million.

Craft said the minimum home size is 2,200 square feet, which helped keep costs of construction down, and noted he had builders available to build the houses, too.

"What we wanted to do is take the subdivisions on

the north end of the lake and how nice it is," Craft said, "and I wanted to take (the style) up at The Cliffs and The Reserve and all the nice communities that have that rustic, craftsman-style look, and take that and bring it here."

Craft said he felt the style was unique to the south end of Keowee, where older homes built with brick were more the norm.

On the flip side, Craft believes The Oaks offers something potential buyers can't find on the north



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Lots are still available at The Oaks on Lake Keowee.

end of the lake, which is proximity to the cities of Seneca and Clemson.

"It's five minutes from the hospital and Lowe's and Chick-fil-A and all that," he said. "That's very important. Nobody's really done that."

Craft said six of the development's 20 lots had already been sold, which represented six out of only 17 lots that had been sold on the south end of the lake this year, and Edwards said the lots are expected to sell out by the end of the year.

The gated community

features oversized lots — most more than an acre — and Craft said he made it a point to avoid high homeowners association fees, which he said would be "\$800-plus" a year.

"We're having walking trails all over the rest of the 25 acres we've got," he said. "There's no interior lots, so that's what's taking up that (space) would be the walking trails."

The prices for property begin in the \$180,000 range for a private lot with at least an acre.

Two houses are already

under construction in the subdivision, with two more set to start soon.

The development also has Fort Hill natural gas throughout the community, as well as AT&T U-Verse cable and high-speed Internet available.

And while the community has all the amenities and conveniences of living in town, Craft said most people want privacy associated with lakefront living, and The Oaks provides that as well.

"You can build your house on a lot and not see your neighbor hardly because the lots are so big and they're all wooded," he said. "It's a very private setting, and we're leaving it all natural."

Those interested in more information on the development can reach Edwards at (864) 760-3060 or Craft at (864) 933-9000 or by email at thomcraft.tc@gmail.com. More information is also available online at emupstate.com/oaks.