

Charleston Daily Mail

Putnam housing market booming

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For the Daily Mail

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WINFIELD -- Putnam County's housing market is booming, with 15 major subdivisions approved last year and developers showing no signs of letting up this year.

"There has been a tremendous increase in preliminary plat (lot) approvals," County Planner Sandy Mellert said.

The 15 major subdivisions approved last year is an 88 percent jump over the year before, when eight subdivisions received the go-ahead for development, Mellert said.

Eight of the subdivisions are in Scott Depot, Mellert's report said. Five are in Hurricane, while others are in Winfield, Culloden and Poca.

The 15 new subdivisions meant the creation of 349 new housing lots in Putnam County last year.

"That represents an increase of 184 percent over the 123 lots created in 2003," Mellert told county commissioners on Tuesday.

The last time Putnam County housing development reached this level of intensity was in 1996. Since then an additional 4,000 people have moved into the county, according to Mellert's figures. The creation of plats of land in major subdivisions actually outstripped the previous record year of 1996.

The largest single subdivision created last year was Cobblestone in Scott Depot, with a total of 77 lots.

Mellert believes 2005 will surpass last year's figures, if the trend continues.

"We've already received application for 106 housing permits in one month this year," Mellert told the commissioners.

Commercial and industrial development has remained at a steady level, she said. New commercial or industrial permits totaled 29 during last year, compared to 30 permits being issued in 2003.

The permits covered businesses such as a theater, an office park, a gun range, a church, several retail stores, offices and two warehouse additions.

Following the pattern, zoning issues also increased by 62 percent, Mellert said.

She said county planners also serve as the official planning commissions for the municipalities of Poca and Buffalo.

The 15 appointed members of the Putnam Planning Commission are responsible for overseeing development in the county. They deal with rezoning, temporary zoning permits, subdivisions, flood plain management and general land use issues.

In other activity, the county commissioners approved Hurricane's request to annex a section of land at the Wave Pool.

The 11 acres, known as "The Good Property," were purchased by the Parks Commission for expansion.

"It even has a house on it," Commissioner Jim Caruthers said. "It could provide a caretaker's house."

Also, acting on a motion by Commissioner Joe Haynes, the commissioners denied a request for a 30-day extension of the contract to complete the Fisher Ridge Waterline Extension.

County Administrator Brian Donat said the engineers supervising the two-mile waterline project "believe the request is unjustified."

The commissioners also received a briefing on the countywide mapping project from Frank Chapman, Putnam County director of emergency services.

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