

B U S I N E S S



The Esperanza Mission will mark the entry to the master-planned community.

Esperanza's Mission aims to raise the bar in Boerne

The Lookout Development Group is putting the finishing touches on the Esperanza Mission at the entrance to the new Master Planned Community just east of Boerne on Highway 46.

Esperanza is Spanish for the word "Hope," making the Mission a fitting symbol. Esperanza has had a controversial past, with false starts and broken promises from the previous owners of the 1240-acre site.

"We have stepped up and made good on all financial promises to the city by the previous owners which included seven-figure payments for Herff Road, a wastewater treatment plant, fire station, fire truck and water reservation fees," Jim Plasek, executive vp of community development and project manager of Esperanza, said.

In total the group is contributing more than \$8 million to the city to settle the inherited financial obligations.

"We're very pleased with the cooperative approach that was taken since day one with the Lookout Group. It's going to result in a great development for Boerne, and it's going to be very good for the city as well," Deputy City Manager Jeff Thompson said.

Lookout plans to deliver something not found in Boerne to date - a true master planned community.

"Our slogan for Esperanza is 'The Lifestyle You've Hoped For,'" Plasek said. Esperanza will have two onsite schools, 25 percent open

space, playful amenities and handcrafted elements throughout the neighborhood, all delivered in a more artful manner than most other area subdivisions.

The homes are also a step above the typical with 100 percent masonry requirements, low pitched roofs, and Texas Living Fences. Initial builders in Esperanza are Scott Felder, Sitterle, and Monticello and model homes are nearing completion for an early 2016 opening date.

Homes will be priced from the low \$300's up to \$1 million.

The Mission was the brainchild of Bill Hinckley, president of the Lookout Group. The day they bought the property on the courthouse steps, Hinckley stumbled on the breathtaking St. Peter's Catholic Church in Boerne.

"I knew the moment I saw it that Esperanza must pay homage to the culture and history of the setting, a sense of place as they say."

Using the church as the "go by" the developers meticulously hand-gathered old 1850's fieldstone from pasture walls on the ranch to serve as the main building material for the Mission.

"It makes us feel honored that the sweat put into these old walls over 150 years ago by the hardscrabble German settlers in the area is being respected with this lasting, architectural tribute," Hinckley added. "It's been fun to build."

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