

Ribbon Finally Cut For Augusta Woods

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The ribbon cutting was years in the making, but more than a decade of design, redesign and renegotiation has paid off for Augusta Woods. The huge manufactured home park is finally open and county officials say it offers much-needed affordable housing.

The first hurdle for Augusta Woods was just getting to the development. The property is bordered by the CSX rail line and two interstate highways. Developer Raymond Eavers vowed it was worth the challenge to create what he calls a completely different kind of manufactured home park. "I went so far, I hate to give it up," said Eavers. "I reckon I'm a stubborn person, so that's the reason it's the way it is."

Raymond Eavers started building Augusta Woods off Jefferson Highway near Staunton, on 100 acres of land already zoned for a manufactured home park. But the trouble started right away. "We had already built the infrastructure for 60 homes with underground utilities, before the railroad stopped us from crossing," recalled Jeanie Eavers, Raymond's wife and head of marketing.

The Eavers family finally got state approval for a new entrance road through the property of the Frontier Culture Museum, and under I-81. Then Augusta Woods needed to widen roads inside the park for fire and rescue vehicles, and come up with plan B when school buses would not fit.

"There are 40 spots down here that are paved, and a pavilion, for the school bus to pick the children up," Jeanie Eavers explained.

The Eavers aim to welcome children and families with playgrounds, basketball courts, picnic shelters and streetlights. The homes themselves range from three to four bedrooms, some more than 2,000 square feet, but all selling under \$100,000. County supervisors say they meet a long-time need for affordable housing.

"We have a variety of people, so you need a variety of different type of homes, and affordable homes," said Supervisor Dave Beyeler.

With all state and county approvals in hand, Augusta Woods is finally welcoming homeowners; 11 have already moved in. When all phases of this home park are built out, it will handle 240 homes.

Reported by Ken Slack