

Building outside the box



Amanda Mims

Photo by

MC of Florida is putting the finishing touches on a prototype wind- and fire-resistant home in Bushnell.

By Amanda Mims

A local builder wants potential homebuyers to think outside the box – literally. MC of Florida is putting the finishing touches on a prototype wind- and fire-resistant home on West Dade Avenue in Bushnell. Round walls are what make the home unique and give it strength. The main part of the house is a cylinder 36 feet in diameter attached to a rectangular garage, outside stairway, and second floor deck.

“We’ve done (the home in) complete concrete, including the roof,” said David Moffitt, MC of Florida president. On the inside of the walls is a layer of Styrofoam for insulation. The roof is a “green roof,” which will hold a layer of soil with grass and plants and is designed to collect water. The water is stored in a tank to be used for toilets and irrigation, and the soil and plants on the roof are intended to further insulate the home and conserve energy. Access to the roof is through a staircase on the deck.

The model home is 2,000 square feet, 1,000 downstairs and 1,000 upstairs, without the one-car garage and deck. It has three bedrooms, an office, two bathrooms, a media room, living room, kitchen, dining room, and utility room.

The design, for which the company has a patent pending, will be sold under the brand name Armour Homes. This is MC of Florida’s first home of its kind in the U.S., but they’ve recently built similar structures on islands in the Caribbean. Moffitt’s goal is to license other builders to use the design, which took about five years to create.

The design was a collaborative effort between MC of Florida, retired contractor Bil Spaude, and John Provance, executive director of United Way of Lake and Sumter Counties. Springstead Engineering and Beverly Cunningham, of Nick Jones Architects, did structural engineering and design work for the project.

Moffitt said the most difficult part was coming up with a design with the features they wanted that would also be affordable.

The Armour home will cost between \$85 and \$95 per square foot, about the same as other new homes.

“If people can’t afford it, it doesn’t do much good,” he said.

Moffitt expects the home to save residents 50 to 60 percent in water and electricity costs. Tests and computer modeling indicate the home will withstand hurricane winds and rain, he said.

Moffitt is so confident in the design that his goal is to guarantee these homes and repair “any structural damage from a hurricane or tornado.”
“That’s what we’re trying to sell. It’s something that we can confidently stand behind.”
Moffitt plans to have an open house within the next month. The model home is expected to be raffled off to benefit local charities, though details have not been announced.