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DFW Tour of Homes Features New Categories

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Adjusting to the toll the recession has had on the local home-building industry, the Greater Fort Worth Builders Association Spring Tour of New Homes, which starts this week, will feature two dozen homes for their remodeling projects and unique concepts.

One highlight is a "zero-energy" house built along a 90-foot bluff at Eagle Mountain Lake by Fort Worth's Ferrier Custom Homes.

The association added the categories in response to continued weakness in housing starts, said Jay Brown, owner of Tahoe Custom Builders in Keller and chairman of this year's tour.

But "We're very encouraged," he said. "People are still interested in seeing houses."

The number of new homes on the tour has dropped to 53, down 20 from 2009. But 77 homes in all can be viewed in Tarrant, Parker, Johnson, Hood and Somervell counties, Brown said.

The home prices range from \$118,000 to more than \$2 million and are primarily by local builders. Two of the million-dollar properties are condos at Villa De Leon, on the eastern edge of downtown Fort Worth.

The tour is in its 19th year. The event starts Friday and runs for three weekends.

Builders started the event as a way to pool marketing resources and sell homes in a down economy. About 100 builders entered homes for the first tour in 1991, but the show has had more than 300.

The zero-energy home, at 9245 Westview Road in Fort Worth, features all the latest energy efficiencies, including a wind turbine. *Zero energy* means the home produces at least as much energy as it uses. It is not for sale.

Don Ferrier, Ferrier Custom Homes owner, said the home was built for an Arlington couple as a weekend lake cabin. Lumber from an 80-year-old barn was salvaged and used to make the 1,015-square-foot house.

"The homeowners wanted to make it look like it's been here 150 years," Ferrier said. "As far as the details, this is very unique."