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# Naperville Sun

## It's all about location - Showcase will encourage visitors to c'mon downtown

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Naperville's corporate boundaries enclose 35-plus square miles, but the people planning to shine a spotlight on a handful of handsome homes later this month are focusing on just a portion of it.

"I think one of the highlights of our tour is location. We keep it pretty tight to downtown Naperville," said Brad Drendel, president of the Live Downtown Naperville Partnership. "Our downtown is different from anything else out there. We're very proud of it, and all the amenities it has to offer."

The organization is finalizing plans for its second annual custom home tour, set for 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sept. 18-20 and 25-27. This year's event will aid NCO Youth and Family Services, which provides relief for homeless teens and young adults.

Defined by the neighborhoods that lie between 75th Street, Ogden Avenue, Diehl Road and Naper Boulevard, the tour will feature nine residences, not all of them freshly built.

"Obviously the residential market is different this year, so we've added some remodelers to our tour," Drendel said.

One of them is both builder and homeowner. Interior designer Debra Lellbach and her home remodeling contractor husband Doug will open the door to their recently renovated home in the Cress Creek neighborhood for the two-weekend event.

After buying the house four years ago, the pair decided it had a good foundation for a reconfiguration - and with their sons headed off to college, Lellbach said, it felt like a good time to make some changes. Now that it's finished, the house is a better fit for her downsized family. The main-floor master suite anticipates mobility limitations that may arise for the couple as the years pass, and the layout is more conducive to the entertaining the family likes to do.

But there are other solid reasons, Lellbach said, to improve rather than move.

"If you love your neighborhood and you're happy with where you are, that's No. 1. That's why you move or don't move, a lot of times," she said.

An upgrade also can be far more affordable than a whole-house move, she said. And calling in an outside set of eyes or two can generate potential that's hard to see when you're living within the four walls in question every day.

"Working with different contractors or builders enables you to see things you might not normally see," Lellbach said.

The tour also will showcase several just-built structures, including two situated on lots where previous houses were razed and now being finished up by high-end builder Huber Homes.

The 5,500-square-foot house on Wellner Road, one of four tour destinations in the southeastern part of the downtown area, draws on Victorian inspiration throughout its five bedrooms, five full baths and two half-baths.

"It's got Santos mahogany wood floors, also a four-story staircase from the basement to the third floor that's Santos mahogany," said company owner David Huber.

Also worth a look is the 1,100-square-foot master bath suite, accented by a two-person shower featuring travertine stone and a glass wall.

"I know everybody says this, but it'll take your breath away," said Huber, whose company has been working in downtown Naperville for the past seven years and specializes in houses priced at \$1 million to \$3 million.

The builder's other home on the tour, on Webster Street near the Fifth Avenue train station, comes with a master bath suite that has plenty of bells and whistles as well. Creature comforts are in, Huber said.

"What sells houses anymore are kitchen-family room combinations, and master bedroom suites," he said.