

Lincoln builder chosen to build pioneer affordable housing

By Matt Olberding, *Lincoln Journal Star*

January 14, 2006

A Lincoln homebuilder has been chosen to build a one-of-a-kind home in Omaha.

Brighton Construction will build the first-ever "concept home" through the Partnership for Advancing Technology in Housing, a public-private arm of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

The partnership describes the concept home as a "home of the future" with flexible floor plans that can change as the owner's life changes and with new technologies and production efficiencies to make homebuilding more affordable.

The partnership intends the house to become a national model for affordable homebuilding and hopes it will be a model for rebuilding the areas of the Gulf Coast destroyed by Hurricane Katrina last year, said Liza Bowles, the project manager for the partnership.

"The concept home demonstration will show both builders and consumers where homebuilding is headed," said James Lyons, senior engineer with project manager Newport Partners LLC, in a prepared statement.

Bowles said the group chose to build the house in Omaha because they felt it could be done quickly and more affordably there than in a larger city.

It also helped that Brighton Construction, which is building 16 homes and two duplexes in a PATH project called Liberty Village at 24th and Vine streets in Lincoln, was nearby.

Bowles said Brighton was chosen in part because of that relationship but also because of President Fernando Pages' "reputation for innovative building."

Pages builds mostly affordable housing and wrote a popular how-to book called "Building an Affordable House: Trade Secrets to High-Value, Low-Cost Construction."

In an interview, he said the Omaha house will feature some techniques and innovations that have not been used before.

"The concept house is very similar to the idea of a concept car," Pages said.

The three-bedroom Omaha home will be 1,500-2,000 square feet with three bedrooms and will sell for about \$150,000, Bowles said. It will be built near Creighton University. She said the partnership hopes it will be completed before the end of the year.