

Instant housing cuts costs

RALPH JACKSON decided two months ago on a floor plan for a \$49,900 split-entry ranch home.

It arrived Monday in two modules and was placed on the foundation on his lot in Sberaden.

The proud owner hopes to move into his manufactured house on Berry Street by the first week in June.

The "instant house building" involved two firms. Danaco Builders of Bethel Park, the general contractor, built and prepared the foundation. Strattan Homes Inc. in Strattanville, Clarion County, manufactured the house in assembly-line style.

Although the two modules are in place, the work continues. Once they are attached together and nailed to the foundation, the house is in almost move-in condition. Work to be accomplished includes raising the roof; hooking up to gas, electricity and water; laying carpets; painting the interior; and connecting lighting fixtures.

Jackson, who has about seven years experience with modular homes, had been considering a double-width mobile home before he decided on the ranch home. Yet, he decided on the latter for economic reasons.

"By the time I would have had the foundation done (a 3-foot crawl space) and the plumbing done, it would have cost just as much as or more than the split-entry ranch-style house."

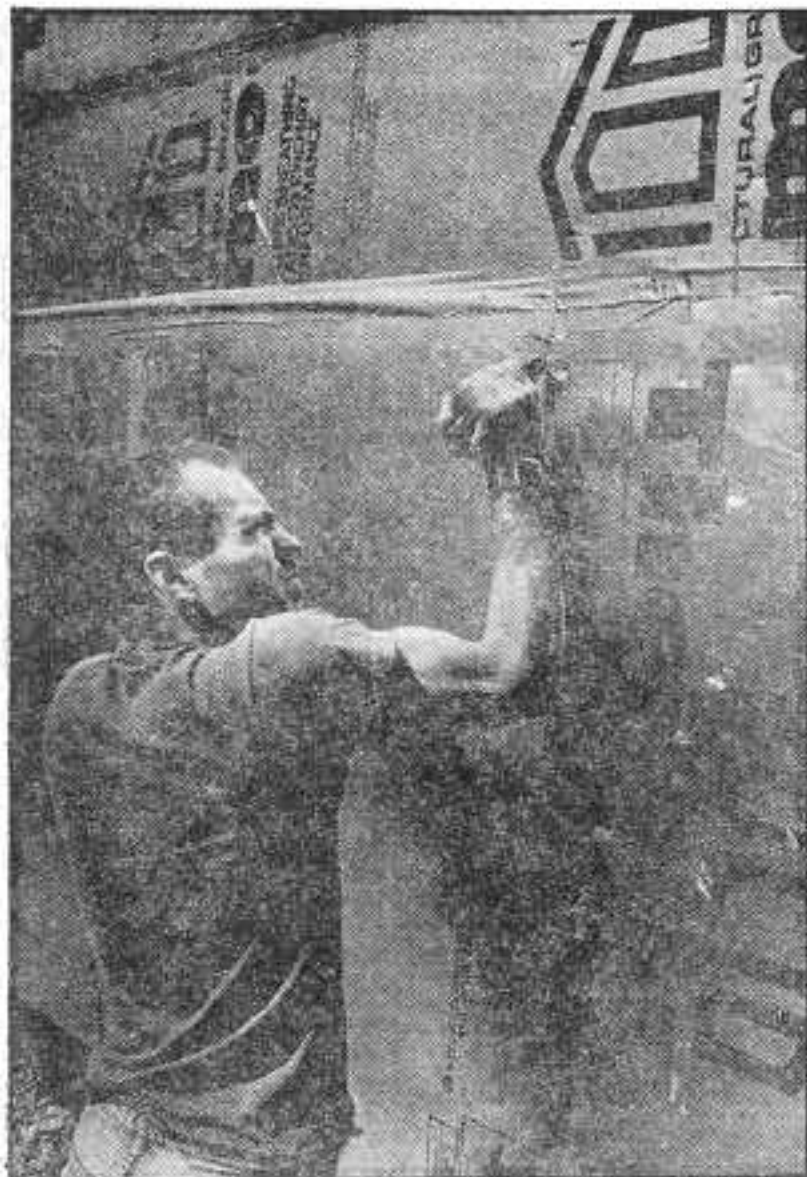
Ted Kaczorowski, owner of Danaco Builders and a Merrill Lynch Realty associate broker, said many people mistakenly believe that all manufactured housing are mobile homes.

"They are not built the same as a definite manufactured house."

Merrill Lynch Realty, the marketing representative for the manufactured-house package, has 10 proposed manufactured-house contracts and plans to produce between 20 and 40 houses this year, Kaczorowski said.

Danaco uses the same construction materials as other contractors to "stick build" (build on site) houses, Kaczorowski said.

"We're dealing with 2-inch by 4-inch construction, R-13 insulation in the walls, and R-30 in the ceilings. We even insulate the floors, which is not customary for stick-built houses. For a very minor cost, we can make 6 inches of wall space and put R19 in the walls and 2-inch by 6-inch studs instead of 2-inch by 4-



Pete Diana for The Pittsburgh Press

Mark Lewis cuts the stapled sheathing insulation to create open doorways when the two halves of the house come together. Below, he pulls the sheathing out.



Pete Diana for The Pittsburgh Press

Rock Barton drills a 1-foot piece from the top of the foundation so that he can pull cables out after the module is laid down. Below, he makes sure that half of the module rests precisely on a chalk marking, allowing enough space for the other half.

