

Pete Diara 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.



"They are not that the same as a detrite 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 8-inch studs instead of 2-inch by 4-inch studs, which creates an excellent R-factor (quality of insulation)."

Although Danaco offers standard house packages, variations can be made to almost every aspect of the house — from the floor plan, to the color and style of carpet, to the kitchen cabinets. The firm uses spec houses (those built without a contract) as a model for prospective clients, as well as video tapes of the houses in the manufacturing process.

Danaco has three spec houses built and located in Sheraden. All three models, owned by Ted Kaczorowski, are move-in-condition, split-entry ranch houses that cost \$53,900; \$55,900; and \$57,900.

Kaczorowski said Merrill Lynch Realty meets U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development guidelines for the Joint Venture for Affordable Housing program. Under the federal program, builders and developers reduce housing costs by using innovative land use and land planning, simplifying site-development requirements and using less costly construction methods. HUD, therefore, supports manufactured housing, according to one of its reports.

Purchasing a manufactured home reduces housing costs, said Don Martz, president of Strattan Homes. Trimming the price is achieved by buying land in large volumes, creating a controlled workplace that reduces theft of materials used, using low scrap and producing a quick turnover for the builder.

"The house is built in the factory in three

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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.

