

Builder

COMMUNITY CONNECTOR

A New Standard?

A major U.S. developer will include community intranets in all its projects.

Terrabrook, a nationwide master planned community developer headquartered in Dallas, has committed to putting an intranet in every new community. The first one went live at the Vista Lakes community near Orlando, Fla., on Oct. 15. Six more are planned this year. This level of commitment from a big developer is a big step toward making intranets a staple in master planned communities.

While the technology is being provided by Resident Interactive in Atlanta (www.residentinteractive.com), the intranets will be branded as HomeBand (www.homeband.com), a company Terrabrook created late last year to manage its technology offerings.

HomeBand will market its intranets as something that helps residents free their time by helping them keep track of community events and by easing communication between residents, developers, and builders. HomeBand managing director Garrett Solomon doesn't know what the effect of having an intranet on sales will be, but that's not the point. "You don't know the results of upgrading landscaping either, but as part of a whole amenity package, you know it's important."

One possible benefit to builders could be fewer callbacks. "If buyers don't like the community, they're probably not going to like the homes and the builder," says Ginger Frailey, Terrabrook's vice president for national sales and marketing. "It gets to be an attitude problem." An intranet could reduce such problems by letting the builder and developer respond quickly to customers--if it's properly managed.