

# HOUSTON BUSINESS JOURNAL

From the September 20, 2002 print edition

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## Communities get private intranets

Thora Qaddumi Houston Business Journal

Two national developers with projects in Houston have introduced private intranets in their communities to foster community activities and communication.

Dallas-based Terrabrook has launched an intranet in its Eagle Springs Community in northeast Houston, and La Jolla, Calif.-based Newland Communities has established an intranet at Summerwood at Beltway 8 at West Lake Houston Parkway.

Both represent steps in the developers' plans to establish intranets in more communities.

For Terrabrook, creating an intranet for Eagle Springs was a logical next step in its corporate philosophy of "community creation," according to Ted Nelson, general manager of Terrabrook's Houston division.

Public spaces such as greenbelts, parks and recreation centers can go a long way toward fostering a sense of community in a development where everyone is a new homeowner, and Terrabrook developers are considering the intranet a virtual public space, according to Nelson.

Terrabrook envisions the Intranet as a high-tech tool that will promote person-to-person interaction in more traditional venues throughout the community, he says. In particular, the developer envisions the Intranet as a tool that will help residents plan youth sports events and other activities at the Eagle Springs Athletic Club, the community's flagship amenity.

Newland Communities reports that, within the first two weeks of the establishment of Summerwood's site earlier this year, about 40 special interest and hobby-oriented groups were formed within the community. The site also has group and community-wide calendars, and there is a bulletin board where residents can look for baby sitters, lost pets, etc. The site allows the developer to get urgent messages to the homeowner through a ticker tape display.

Newland has hired full-time on-site personnel to monitor the site and facilitate residents' use of it. Technology for Terrabrook intranets is being provided by Resident Interactive in Atlanta. The intranets will be branded as HomeBand, a company Terrabrook created late last year to manage its technology offerings.

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