

# HOME SALES NEAR 1,100

*River Islands marks first three years*

By: Dennis Wyatt



The largest planned community in the Northern San Joaquin Valley has surpassed 1,000 sold homes.

River Islands at Lathrop builders have now sold 1,094 homes in the three years since the first foundation was poured for the 11,000-home planned community.

As of Monday, 847 families have moved into River Islands.

“People have said they are moving here because of the lifestyle,” said Susan Dell’Osso who serves as project manager for the Cambay Group project.

That’s a major departure from the 1990s when real estate and new home builders said the majority of buyers were selecting homes in either Tracy, Lathrop, Manteca, or Stockton’s Weston Ranch because they were the closest they could afford to buy to the Altamont Pass and their jobs in the Bay Area.

Underscoring that are homebuyers selling their homes in Tracy and Mountain House and moving eastward into the heart of the valley to access River Islands’ lifestyle.

River Islands also is snagging buyers that look at Del Webb at Woodbridge resales in Manteca. The latest trend attributable to the lifestyle is a small but growing number of Sacramento buyers who are buying homes in one of the nine neighborhoods now under construction.

The community’s location near the junction of Interstate 5 and Interstate 205 that connects to Bay Area freeways is essentially equal distance from San Jose, San Francisco, and Sacramento.

River Islands — more than 20 years in the making — was painstakingly designed as a lifestyle community and not simply a series of housing subdivisions.

Cambay Group bankrolled the first school in advance that was ready to accept students even before the first home was built — a rarity in California. When an issue came up with the status for the popular and successful River Islands Tech Academy with the Banta School District, Cambay Group invested \$8 million in an all-new campus.

River Islands has community event coordinators in place that organize a variety of activities such as neighborhood gatherings and farmers markets to make sure the community has touches one would have expected to enjoy if you were living in traditional small town.

They are also in the process of putting the finishing touches on a lighted baseball stadium as well as a soccer complex designed not just for use by youth on River Islands but those throughout the region.

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Ultimately there will only be three access points to the island to enhance security and to reduce issues with through traffic. What commercial will be allowed is more village-style than in chain stores or traditional shopping centers.

When completed, there will be an 18-miles continuous riverside trail encircling River Islands as part of a perimeter green belt park overlooking the San Joaquin River, the Old River, and Paradise Cut. At the few spots where a road may have to be crossed, trail bridges are being built across the street. Access to the greenbelt is universal. Such access along a river is unprecedented in the San Joaquin Valley.

There are also a series of lakes within the River Islands project that is protected by 300-foot wide super levees.