



Contributed photo

A local house shines in the sun. The area has experienced a large drop off of home construction.

HOUSING

From 6

add 4,000 new homes and a turnpike exit with the addition of Hills of Minneola, a new subdivision. Two other developments are also being planned in Leesburg, Renaissance Trails and Secret Promise, which would add over 9,000 new homes.

In August, Leesburg was asked to annex more than 5,000 acres for new subdivisions. If completely built out, the new area, mostly south of the city along the turnpike, could result in close to 20,000 new homes, more than doubling Leesburg's size.

Planning director Laura McElhanon said she did not receive any large scale annexation requests during the first 2007 deadline on Jan. 15.

Even so, Deputy City Manager Jay

Evans said permitting was beginning to even out after a number of years of jumps.

"(Fiscal Year) 2006 saw a dramatic jump in the number of permits issued in January, February, and March," Evans said, adding that it may be largely due to construction at Arlington Ridge and Overlook at Lake Griffin. During that time over 500 permits were issued per month.

The rest of 2006 saw numbers return to the 200 to 400 range, and so far in 2007 the numbers have remained steady.

"We're a little above the 2005 trendline," he said, "Perhaps indicating that some normalcy has returned to our permitting."

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