

Williston's 1Q Building Permits Soar, Subdivisions Ready for Nearly 6,000 Housing Units

Williston Economic Development

By Barb Peterson

Multifamily homes are driving the construction boom in Williston during the first quarter of 2013.

Through March, Williston has racked up nearly \$72 million worth of building permits – more than two times the \$33.5 million during the same period in 2012.

During the first quarter, seven apartment buildings were permitted for a total value of nearly \$48 million while only seven new single family homes were permitted.

"That's all anybody wants to build is apartments," says Williston Building Department building official Bill Tracy.

Tracy expects another seven apartments will come through his department in April as the spring construction season hits high gear.

"It started out really slow but it picked up last month (March) and now I am getting buried in plans," says Tracy.

Williston Economic Development (WED) officials seem confident construction of single family homes will pick up quickly and come on very strong this year as well.

"Housing development will follow a process towards community sustainability, which I believe we are seeing," says WED assistant director Shawn Wenko. "First it was crew camps, then hotels and now multi-family. Single family dwellings are sure to follow suit."

Several new subdivisions are getting ready to launch construction on all types of residential housing. The Williston Planning and Zoning Department says due to the annexations the City will be able to handle a population of 70,000-75,000, depending on the density of the housing.

The Williston Planning director says entitlement processes for numerous subdivisions were completed in 2012. These new developments will house approximately 5,200 multifamily units and over 700 single family homes.

"Entitlements and infrastructure have been going into place for several residential and commercial developments," says Kent Jarcik. "It is anticipated that a substantial amount of development will occur throughout 2013 and into 2014 with the preparations that have already occurred."

"Planning and Zoning approval and infrastructure in several large subdivisions last fall are sure to see single family construction this year," adds Wenko.

[The Meadows](#) began selling lots in its community on Monday, April 8. The subdivision overlooks the Eagle Ridge Golf Course. The 106 lots range in size from 8,500 to more than 17,000 square feet.

"Our whole objective is to create a family oriented community," says Patrick McCourt. "The intriguing thing is we will not have any duplexes, apartments or crew camp housing."

[The Ridge at Harvest Hills](#) expects to break ground on the first phase of its 163 acre residential subdivision in May. Initially developers will build eight apartment buildings with 330 units. The first phase will also feature town homes, duplexes and single family homes as well as 18 acres of open space for trails, parks and soccer fields. Investors hope the apartments will be ready for occupancy in September.

"We feel it is a community that is a mix of single family homes, apartments and townhomes. We will offer all of the different types of residential homes," says Mike Anderson, Development Associate for Continuum Partners. Anderson says they are eager to be a part of the housing buildup in Williston.

"It's crazy from our view," says Anderson. "It's a great thing and I think the city has made a great plan with sustainability."

The [Elk Ridge Subdivision](#) located 12 miles south of Williston will begin selling its lots on Thursday, April 11. The 150 acre development is a mixed-use residential and commercial subdivision with shovel-ready building sites. The White Dog Development Group says the residential sites range in size from 1-5 acres and prices start at \$39,000 per acre.

Meanwhile, [Fendee Estates](#), which is located about just north of Williston, is gearing up for the construction season. The Fendee development is located on 147 acres. It has 703 lots starting at \$27,950. Construction is expected to begin on residential housing as soon as weather permits.

In an effort to keep up with all of the development Tracy is in the process of adding more staff and seeking larger office space.

"When I started in January we had five people in our department and by the end of next month we will have nine," he says.

Tracy has also received permission from the Williston City Commission to move his growing staff out of the MDU building and into a new location.

"We are going to lease a temporary triple wide trailer for the staff," says Tracy.

The trailer will be located next to the site for a new proposed office building that will house the Williston Building, Planning and Zoning, and Engineering departments.