

Land Development

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF HOME BUILDERS

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**A "Monster Home"
by Any Other Name
is Home**

**Where Will the Eminent
Domain Debate End
This Time?**

**When to Use Mezzanine
Financing**

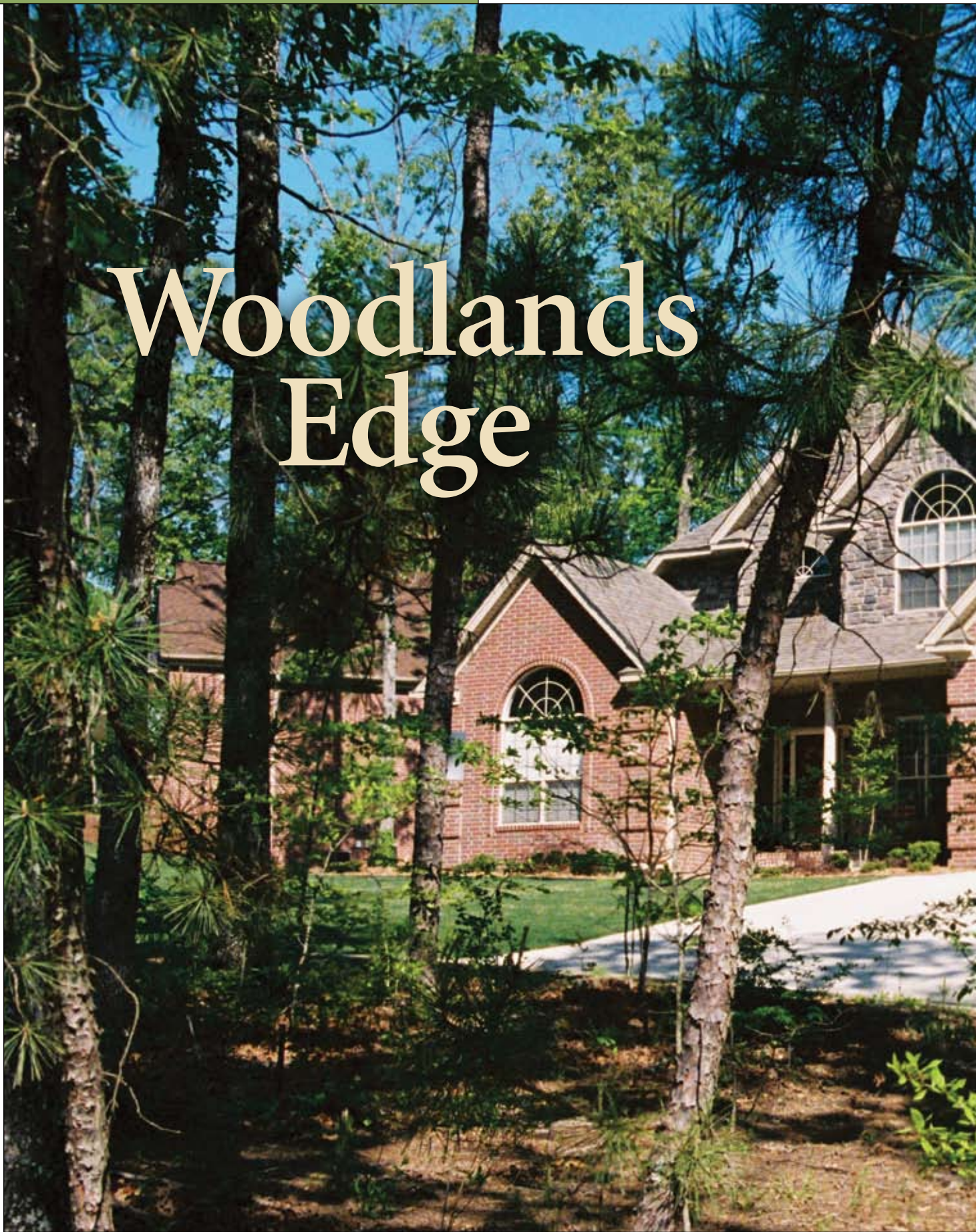
**IRS Modifies Tax
Accounting Rules**

**Brownfields
Redevelopment Green
Building Opportunity**

Woodlands Edge

LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS

Woodlands Edge





WOODLANDS EDGE

Little Rock, Arkansas

DEVELOPER

Rocket Properties, LLC
Little Rock, Arkansas

BUILDERS

Various Home Builders

LAND PLANNER/LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT

Tyne & Associates
Little Rock, Arkansas

ARCHITECTURE

Stocks-Mann Architects, PLC

ENGINEERS

The Mehlburger Firm, PLLC
Little Rock, Arkansas



ROCKET PROPERTIES, LLC—the developers of Woodlands Edge—is committed to environmental stewardship. The firm realizes that building an attractive community does not necessitate destruction of the land and environment. In fact, Rocket Properties recognizes the considerable value that benefits everyone when nature is left undisturbed.

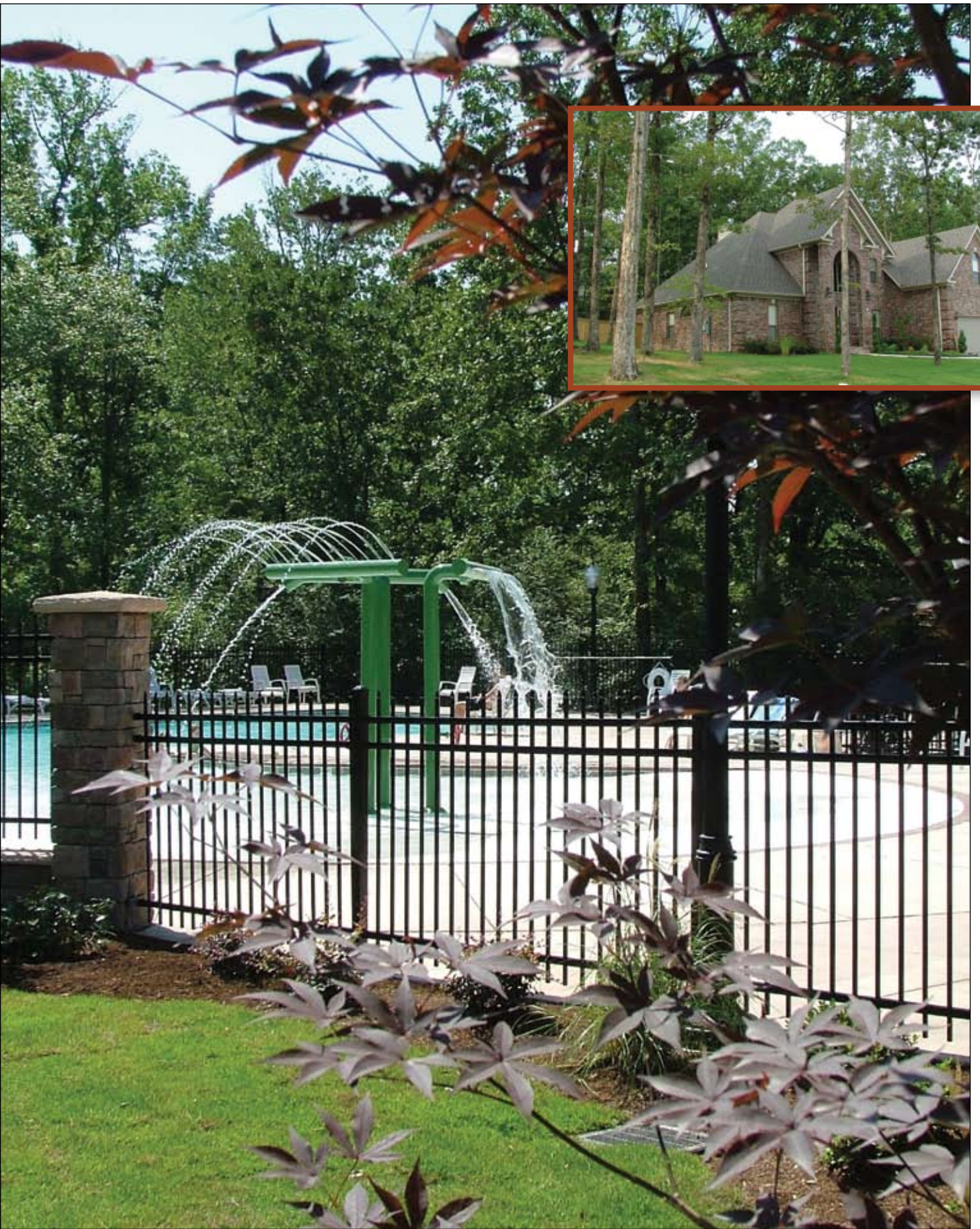
Woodlands Edge in Little Rock, Arkansas, exemplifies the developer’s vision. A 95 percent forested, 800-acre development, the community features a common forested greenbelt that connects to the back yards of almost every home. Designed to preserve natural vegetation, slopes, and waterways, buffer areas contain a mix of hardwoods and pine. Plantings use predominantly native trees and vegetation.

Rocket Properties, LLC, is a development group composed of environmentally knowledgeable and sensitive investors. The focus of the land plan for Woodland’s Edge is on the unspoiled natu-

ral environment. With its reliance on low-impact development techniques and adherence to sustainable site design principles, Woodlands Edge is molded to rather than forced on the land.

From the beginning, the planning and development of Woodlands Edge has focused on preserving more than 40 percent of the land as undisturbed forest and meadow. The green space accentuates the scenic views throughout the neighborhood providing homeowners with a strong connection to nature. The developer kept to a minimum site disturbances such as excavation, filling, disruption of natural water courses, and removal of vegetation.

In 2001, Rocket Properties purchased 56 acres in west Little Rock with an option to purchase an additional 170 acres. The first home at Woodlands Edge was completed and sold in January 2003. During the development’s first year, Rocket Properties sold nearly 100 home sites and new-home sales were so strong that the developer exercised its option on the 170 additional acres. Since





that time, nearly 400 home sites have been developed or are currently under development now in seven different phases.

Rocket Properties plans, develops, and sells home sites to qualified builders and enforces architectural requirements through plan review. Currently, more than 40 home builders are building in Woodlands Edge. Nearly 300 homes have already been built or are under construction, with approximately half presold. Rocket Properties has purchased an additional 560 acres to expand Woodlands Edge to almost 800 acres at buildout. Upon completion, Woodlands Edge is planned for approximately 800 homes interwoven with 300 acres of heavily forested green space traversed by miles of hiking and nature trails. A six-acre family recreation center has been sensitively designed and built with pool, spray

area, community room, and changing area; a playground, picnic areas, and tennis courts will be completed this year.

Tree preservation and conservation is central to Rocket Properties' philosophy—so much so that Woodland's Edge construction contractors and engineers attend tree preservation training sessions before construction even begins.

While several new-home markets are planned for Woodlands Edge, Rocket Properties is currently focusing on two distinct markets. Meadows Edge consists of home sites approximately 80 feet by 120 feet, in size with new homes ranging from 2,200 to 3,200 square feet. Lots sell from the low \$40,000s to the mid \$50,000s and homes sell from around \$250,000 to over \$350,000. Woodgate consists of home sites ranging from approximately 100 to 120 feet wide by 120 feet deep with lots selling from the low \$50,000s to the high \$60,000s. Homes range from 2,600 to over 4,000 square feet and sell from the low \$300,000s to around \$500,000.

In addition, Rocket Properties is planning neighborhoods of patio/garden homes, acreage (estate) home sites, and some limited areas for neighborhood commercial/office development.

One of the many features of Woodlands Edge was the execution of the developer's plan to reduce traffic and thus enhance safety. The land plan called for controlled entries to the neighborhoods and a collector street system with no lot frontage coupled with traffic circles to slow traffic. The collector street system is buffered with green space that slows traffic and fosters a strong park-like ambience. The city allowed a reduction in street width, granted various waivers for horizontal and vertical



alignment, and reduced rights-of-way allowing the developer to save trees closer to the roadway and thus reduce traffic speed. All of the low-impact development techniques employed in the development and planning of Woodlands Edge have helped to reduce cost while adding great value to the community.

Some of the natural features at Woodlands Edge include:

- Entryways and buffer areas that have been carefully designed, sited, and landscaped to preserve strategic natural vegetation and the scenic views;
- More than 3,000 native trees already planted in Woodlands Edge by Rocket Properties;
- Several training sessions for project engineers and contractors;
- Root pruning operations that minimize impacts on the critical root zones of trees selected for retention;
- Erection of protection fencing around trees in sensitive areas to avoid further impact;
- On-site chipping of trees removed from the street and utility easements providing natural material for trail building, tree protection, landscaping, and covering damaged areas; and
- Use of native plant and vegetation for landscaping.

All areas that are identified for preservation at Woodlands Edge are surveyed and then protected during construction with flagging, fencing, and signage. A tree expert has been on call at all times during construction to make adjustments in plans and help save native trees and vegetation.

Woodlands Edge has won several awards for nature preservation, including: a 2005 Building *With Trees* Award of Excellence from The National Arbor Day Foundation and NAHB; a 2004 Landscape Award from the Little Rock City Beautiful Commission; 2003 recognition for environmental stewardship by The National Arbor Day Foundation and the NAHB; and the 2002 Outstanding Developer by the Arkansas Urban Forestry Council. **LD**



Caption for the road shots showing the natural site and the planted site in different seasons



