

BABCOCK RANCH TELEGRAPH

FALL 2017

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INSIDE: A look at some of the models being built and planned here. **A28**



"The whole concept of the town is about front porch living ... Our models were planned to show buyers very livable floor plans that showcase outdoor living — in the front of the home — and back with covered living areas and pools."

— Claudine Léger-Wetzel, vice president of sales and marketing for Stock Development

Welcome home

Babcock Ranch's model homes showcase town's unique lifestyle

BY NANCY THEORET
ntheoret@babcockranchtelegraph.com

FOR THE SEVEN NATIONAL AND REGIONAL BUILDERS at Babcock Ranch, working with respected community developer Kitson & Partners and being part of America's first completely solar-powered new town was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. They shared president and CEO Syd Kitson's vision of sustainability, energy efficiency and a master plan designed with

SEE HOME, A8 ►

Babcock Ranch front porch living keeps residents closer to nature, and each other.

VANDY MAJOR / BABCOCK RANCH TELEGRAPH

Around town

See some of the events you should not miss. **A6 ►**



Social shots

Babcock Telegraph advertisers and Realtors tour Babcock Ranch. **A36 ►**



Learning

A day in the life of Babcock Neighborhood School. **A10 ►**



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Under-construction Wellness Center offers full spectrum of health and wellness services

BY NANCY THEORET

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Future residents of Babcock Ranch will enjoy one of the healthiest lifestyles in Southwest Florida. Not only are yoga and exercise classes part of the town's ongoing weekly schedule that's open to the public, nature trails provide five of 50 planned miles of biking and hiking paths, and paddling options are also available on the community's large lakes. Environmentally friendly homes and a walkable site plan place an even greater emphasis on health and well-being – a way of everyday living that will be enhanced with the opening of the two-story 26,407-square-foot Wellness

Center, expected during spring 2018.

Now under construction in Founder's Square, the facility will complete the first phase of the town center and offer a half-court basketball gym, a weight-lifting room, juice bar and therapy rooms on the ground floor as well as office space for an insurance agency and medical offices staffed by physicians affiliated with Lee Health. The second floor features cardio and Pilates studios and onsite occupational and physical therapy.

Outside, the six-lane saltwater pool will be used for competitive swimming and exercise classes. A zero entry allows for handicap access.

Lee Health Wellness is the center's main tenant, expected to occupy 18,200 square feet on

the first and second floors with an additional 3,469 square feet allocated for its doctors. The Wellness Center will also offer nutrition counseling and other therapeutic services.

Construction is expected to wrap up in early March.

Future residents and the public don't have to wait to enjoy Babcock Ranch's active lifestyle. Activities director Michelle Churchill has introduced several free classes, including strength and conditioning every Tuesday morning, "Run at the Ranch" Wednesdays at 6:30 a.m. for early risers and running enthusiasts, a full-body workout Wednesday evenings in the Founder's Square band shell, and a Saturday morning boot camp. Also Saturday are meditation and yoga classes at the band shell followed by paddleboard yoga.

Ms. Churchill has also scheduled Mom & Me classes (fathers and other family members are also welcome) Tuesday mornings and weekly Aqua Fit sessions in the Lake House pool.

"Working out can and should be something to look forward to – not a chore to be avoided," Ms. Churchill said. "It's not just about healthy living. It's about connections, being part of an experience that builds lasting friendships." ☀



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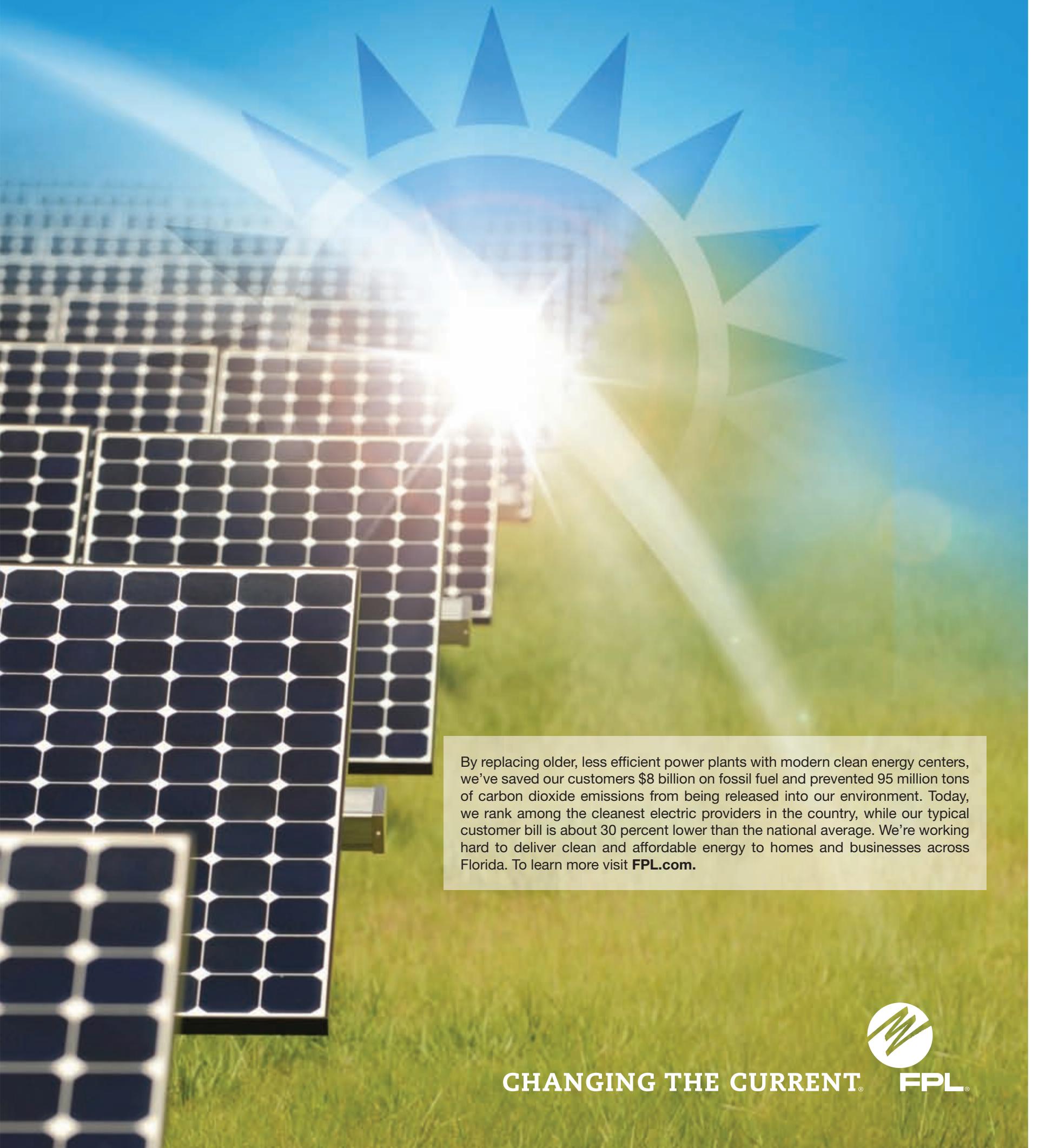
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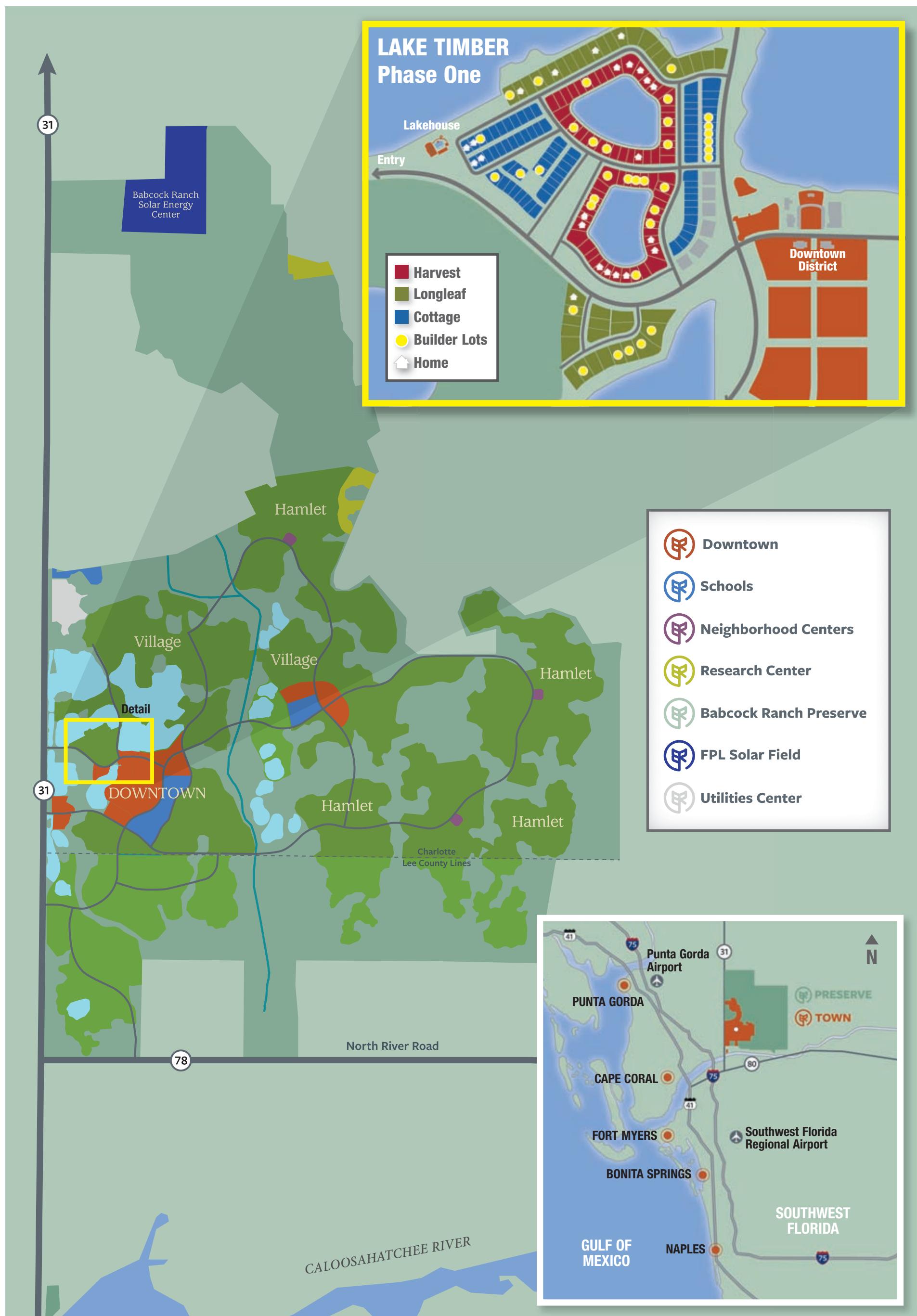


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BABCOCK RANCH EVENTS

Every day through Oct. 30

Pumpkin Patch
9:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.

FITNESS

Tuesdays
Mom & Me Fitness
9:30 a.m.

Strength & Conditioning
10 a.m.

Saturdays
Boot Camp
8:30 a.m.

Yoga
10:30 a.m.

HAPPENINGS

Saturdays

Live Music
4:30 p.m.

Sundays

Brunch
Table & Tap
10 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Halloween Oct. 31

Trunk or Treat
6:30-8:30 p.m.
Founder's Square

Come to Babcock Ranch for some Halloween fun at "Trunk or Treat," where children and their families can trick-or-treat throughout Founder's Square with trunks full of candy. There will also be a canned food drive to provide food to the victims of Hurricane Irma so bring your canned goods.

The event is free, but please RSVP in order for us to get an accurate count of attendees. If

■ Fall is upon us and it's time to celebrate with the 2017 **Pumpkin Patch**.

Come by Babcock Ranch for some fall fun and pick out pumpkins perfect for carving.

— www.babcockranch.com/events

THROUGH OCT. 30

you'd like to volunteer your trunk, please email Michelle Churchill at mchurchill@ccmcnet.com.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Nov. 12-17

Scholastic Book Fair at Babcock Neighborhood School



■ **Strength and Conditioning** classes incorporates muscular strength and endurance. A great total body workout, suitable for all ability levels.

— www.babcockranch.com/events

■ Come enjoy **Trunk or Treat** where children and their families can trick-or-treat throughout Founder's Square

— www.babcockranch.com/events

10.31 TUESDAYS



■ Run through the finish line and finish in Founders Square at the **Jingle Bells 5K and 10k**. Live music, food, and drinks at the finish line.

— www.babcockranch.com/events



Founder's Square

Run through the finish at Founders Square, next to Lake Babcock and the beautiful Band Shell. Live music, food and drinks at the finish line.

10K Race starts at 7:30 a.m.

5K Race starts At 7:35 a.m.

Nov. 16

Community Day at the Scholastic Book Fair
3-6 p.m.

Dec. 9

Jingle Bell 5K and 10K
7 to 10 a.m.



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HOME

From page 1

the environment in mind.

"It's exciting to be part of a new town," said Claudine Léger-Wetzel, vice president of sales and marketing for Stock Development, which has completed five fully furnished model homes. "Syd Kitson does a remarkable job with master-planned communities and Babcock Ranch offers a long-time opportunity. How often does a builder get to shape the future of a new town? We believe in the vision."

More than a dozen model homes are now open in the town's first phase of the Lake Timber neighborhood, capturing the unique vision of architecture that recalls Florida's past, an emphasis on outdoor spaces – front porches included – and the lifestyle residents can expect at Babcock Ranch. Many showcase sweeping lake views and interior design that makes visitors feel truly at home. The models complement the already-in-place amenities at Founder's Square, offering a restaurant, outdoor outfitter, discovery center and the neighborhood school that welcomed its first students for the 2017-18 school year.

Another 12 models are in various stages of construction.

Babcock Ranch launched home construction with Castle Harbour Homes, Fox Premiere Builders, Homes by Towne, Stock Development and Florida Lifestyle Homes. Major national builders Pulte and Lennar joined the family this spring.

The diversity of builders and home styles creates a true sense of place, nodding to Southwest Florida's variety of historical architecture. Prices range from the \$200,000s to about \$900,000. With two to four bedrooms, one- and two-story plans and 1,025 to 4,000 square feet of living space, buyers will find the perfect home, whether they're downsizing or fully customizing to create their dream home. Townhouses are expected to join the residential offerings in 2018 and also in the works: a community geared to residents 55 and older.

Pulte, the newest builder on the block, is constructing quick move-in inventory homes with alley-loading garages and expects to welcome its first residents in March, said Marc Taglieri, general sales manager for the PulteGroup's Southwest Florida division. He describes the floor plans as "life tested. We conduct focus groups to find out what homebuyers are looking for."

That wish list includes an open great room concept melding gathering spaces with dining room and kitchen and an emphasis on outdoor living. The inventory homes offer up to three bedrooms and 1,758 square feet of living space with pricing in the upper \$200,000s.

In January, Pulte will start model home construction in Parkside, a neighborhood of 132 homes nestled against a community park and just southeast of the Founder's Square town center. The models, expected to open in April, will represent two of the builder's eight floor plans, which offer two to five bedrooms and 1,700 to over 3,000 square feet. They include one- and two-story plans, front porches and metal roofs and are base priced from the low- to mid-\$200,000s, Mr. Taglieri said.

"Babcock Ranch is a ground-breaking project," he added. "Any time a company like us has the opportunity to work with a great developer like Kitson & Partners, we're going to jump in. We're offering affordable products for not just family buyers but empty nesters."

Among the features Pulte is incorporating in its home designs to maximize efficiency are LED lighting, double-pane low thermal emissivity windows and tankless water heaters.

Babcock Style: Community Character

Babcock Ranch homes are created to stringent architectural and environmental guidelines and enhanced building codes. Homes offer energy and water efficient features, a gigabyte of fiber-optic connectivity and are powered by the sun, courtesy of the 440-acre onsite FPL Babcock Ranch Solar Energy Cen-



PHOTOS BY VANDY MAJOR / BABCOCK RANCH TELEGRAPH

More than a dozen model homes are now open in the town's first phase of the Lake Timber neighborhood.



The diversity of builders and home styles creates a true sense of place.

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Inspired by nature and the Cypress Lodge homestead on the adjoining state-owned Babcock Ranch Preserve, the town's style echoes pre-World War II neighborhoods throughout Southwest Florida. It's a mix of cultural vernaculars – from Spanish and coastal to Colonial West Indies, farmhouse and Old Florida – characterized by deep and wrap-around front porches, lap siding and metal roofs.

Lennar signed on at Babcock Ranch in March and plans to build a mix of twin villas and single-family homes in a neighborhood of 180 sites. Twin villas will start around \$180,000; single-family homes in the \$220,000s.

At build-out – some 20 to 25 years away – Babcock Ranch is expected to have 19,500 homes, 50,000 residents and 6 million square feet of commercial space.

Fox Premier Builders is introducing Babcock Ranch's cottage homes, presently constructing several models from its portfolio of five floor plans, most of them two stories. The rustic homes recall Old Florida-style homes, offer two to four bedrooms and span just over 1,000 to nearly 2,500 square feet. Each plan has a one-car garage with options for a second car.

The homebuilder worked previously with Kitson & Partners at Talis Park in Naples.

Daniel Monroy, Fox's project manager, said the models are being constructed with structurally insulated panels, or SIPs, that exceed Florida Green Building Coalition certification



requirements, are as strong as concrete and more energy efficient.

"Babcock is a good fit for us and we went above and beyond. We're greener," said Mr. Monroy. "We've had pretty good response and have reserved 10 lots. People like the idea of what the town is going to be."

The Name Game

Babcock's builders have gotten creative in naming their floor plans. Stock's four open models — Crystal, Destin, Delray and Sebring — are inspired by other small-town Florida destinations. The builder's model repertoire offers three and four bedrooms, 2,676 to 3,744 square feet and plan-specific features such as studies, three-car garages, formal dining rooms, second floors and large alfresco living areas.

Stock's homes feature standing seam metal roofs and most of the company's floor plans were designed exclusively for Babcock on two

lot sizes in Lake Timber. "The whole concept of the community is about front porch living," said Ms. Léger-Wetzel. "Our models were planned to show buyers very livable floor plans that showcase outdoor living – in the front of the home – and in back with covered living areas and pools."

Stock tapped into some of Southwest Florida's leading design firms, including Clive Daniel Home, Norris Furniture & Interiors, Builders Design, Pizzazz Interiors and Soco Interiors.

Visitors, she said, have been wowed by the variety and details. "We've had tremendous interest," Ms. Léger-Wetzel said. "We're working with quite a few clients and are excited for 2018."

A fifth model, the three-bedroom, 2,822-square-foot Bartow, has just been completed.

Castle Harbour Homes created four new floor plans when it joined the Babcock team in 2016 and named each after a Florida fortress. Fort Casey, a completed three-bedroom Spanish-inspired model, represents the former historic military post on Useppa Island in Charlotte Harbor. The 3,500-square-foot model and the builder's second open home, the ranch-style Fort Arbuckle with upgraded finishes, are built on the banks of Lake Timber and Lake Bullhorn and showcase interior design by Lori Manning Designs. A third model, the four-bedroom Fort Davenport, is currently under construction. Options allow homebuyers to customize their homes by expanding kitchens and adding rooms.

Homes by Towne offers eight semi-custom floor plans on two lots sizes as part of Babcock Ranch's Harvest Collection. "All our models are named after tomatoes," said Kitt Kearney, vice president of sales and marketing. "We give out seeds so visitors can plant tomatoes or green peppers."

A founding builder at Babcock and Lakewood Ranch in Sarasota some 22 years ago, Homes by Towne has completed four models. The Sterling, Sungold, Jade and Brandywine feature two and three bedrooms and 1,955 to 2,660 square feet.

"We love the whole concept of Babcock Ranch and the front porch which we're taking through the home," Ms. Kearney said. "Visitors are really enjoying our floor plans and realizing they meet their needs. We've had 10 sales."

The models' architecture spans craftsmen, farmhouse, coastal and West Indies styles with interior design by John Fleming of Sarasota-based Model Home Group. Four additional models are under construction: the Heirloom, Juliet and Amelia, each offering two bed-



The Discovery Center in Woodlea Hall is the place to start your tour of Babcock Ranch's model homes.



rooms, and the Southern Star, which at 3,071 square feet will be the builder's largest model.

In keeping with the neighborly and family friendly community essence that is Babcock Ranch, Florida Lifestyle Homes borrowed the names of employees' children and those of owner Bill Ennen's for its floor plans.

Mr. Ennen has completed The Lauren, a two-story model overlooking Lake Timber, and The Taylor offering three bedrooms and a 16-foot vaulted wood ceiling. Next up is The Madison. A custom builder at Babcock, Florida Lifestyle Homes' floor plans range from 2,500 to over 4,000 square feet and are based priced at \$499,000. Floor plans offer bonus rooms, lofts and multiple options for buyers to make it their own.

"We can customize anything," Mr. Ennen said. "I tell clients are floor plans are like Silly Putty. We can pull and stretch them anyway they'd like."

He also praises the developer and the community.

"I liked the idea of solar power and sustainability," said Mr. Ennen. "Kitson was also a big part of my decision as were the number of units and the longevity of the buildout. We're talking to potential buyers and the response has been overwhelming. They love the idea of being outdoors, the hiking trails and the school being open. We're looking forward to seeing more people out here. I always said rooftops will breed rooftops."



The open great room concept melds gathering spaces with dining room and kitchen with an emphasis on outdoor living

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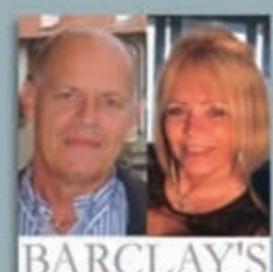
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A day in the life of Babcock Neighborhood School

BY EVAN WILLIAMS

ewilliams@babcockranchtelegraph.com

On a warm, drizzly Friday afternoon at the end of September, first graders at Babcock Neighborhood School were at recess, playing in the splash pad, a small courtyard filled with fountains next to the school. It was a much-deserved break from their studies at Charlotte County's newest charter school. Its inaugural class of 153 kindergarten through sixth-grade students began in August to study the school's innovative "project-based, Green STEAM" curriculum, which aims to engage students in real-world projects and activities that integrate science, technology, engineering, the arts and math.

Their day begins at 8:30 a.m. when they are due to arrive at school. A healthy breakfast created by Babcock's Table & Tap culinary team is waiting, including items such as his scratch-made yogurt or apple muffins. The team also creates the lunch menu at the school, which features fresh, locally-sourced ingredients prepared with no refined sugar. After breakfast, they head to class in big, bright rooms with tall windows that look out on Founder's Square — "where the magic happens," said Principal Shannon Treece.

After morning announcements and the Pledge of Allegiance, teachers generally focus on the core curriculum, which the students will need to meet state requirements. In the afternoons, after lunch, they are involved in activates that tie what they learned into the larger world outside the classroom in the Babcock Ranch community, and make deeper connections between different STEAM disciplines.

"Ultimately, student engagement is what (teachers) are looking for," Ms. Treece said. "To make every day a day the student remembers, and make every day a day students want to go to school."

In one kindergarten classroom that Friday



EVAN WILLIAMS / BABCOCK RANCH TELEGRAPH

afternoon, kids were engaged in the culmination of lessons about Johnny Appleseed that began on Tuesday. Besides reading and writing about his

life, they had made applesauce and apple pie, and then delivered it to people who work in downtown Babcock, their "community partners" — a

lesson in communication and social skills.

For art, activities included studying the patterns and colors inside an apple. For math, they voted on which types of apples they liked best — Golden Delicious, Red Delicious or Granny Smith — and then graphed the results.

One student named Connor voted for Golden Delicious.

"It was sweet and good," he said, after politely offering me a taste.

His teacher Rachel Crawford enjoys working at the school, which allows her space to develop her own lessons around the fundamental elements of STEAM study. Students were getting back on track this week after ongoing recovery from Hurricane Irma disrupted plans the week before.

"It's really exciting. We're really starting to get it going," she said. "I think the biggest thing is (principal Ms. Treece) is giving us the freedom to expand and explore project-based learning."

During a visit to the class, Ms. Treece told one boy who was dancing with excitement during the apple-tasting project, "Find your listening ears."

"OK," he told her, walking back to his seat, "just let me plug them in."

In another class, students engineered devices to bob for apples using pipe cleaners, bobby pins, paper clips and popsicle sticks.

On the second floor of the building that afternoon, fifth and sixth grade students were involved in a hands-on entrepreneurship lesson. Amya Hearn, 13, Chloe Cole, 12, and Kylee Mills, 11, had secured a small loan for their start-up business called Solar Scentsations, which will sell bath and body products. Ms. Treece asked them how they liked working on the project, and how it differs from studies at their old school. There was a chorus of answers:

"It's more active."

"More scency."

"At our old school, it was just books."

"I love it."

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"It's more active. More sciency.
At our old school, it was just books. I love it."

— Students **Amya Hearn, Chloe Cole** and **Kylee Mills** on how Babcock School differs from their previous school's studies



VANDY MAJOR / BABCOCK RANCH TELEGRAPH

Near the end of the day, students at different grade levels have a chance to work on "passion projects" they create. The projects engage them in service to the community, and help them master critical thinking skills. For instance, some students worked on collecting goods for homeless shelters and making bed kits. Ms. Treece helps guide them through the nitty gritty questions of making their projects come to life, asking questions such as, have they talked with leaders at a homeless shelter? Do they know where to donate

supplies and who needs them? In November, the students will get a chance to speak about their projects at an open house.

Later, a line of cars began to collect outside the school, waiting to pick up children when their day ends at 3:15 p.m. Some students will stay for after school programs such as a yoga class or Bricks for Kids, in which they engineer their own creations with special Lego kits.

And finally, the weekend was about to arrive. ☺



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On Babcock School's menu: healthy, sustainable meals

BY EVAN WILLIAMS

ewilliams@babcockranchtelegraph.com

On the menu at Babcock Neighborhood School are homemade wheat-crust pizzas, butternut squash with chicken, and for "Meatless Mondays," Spanish chickpea stew: these are not your father's school lunches.

The menu brings the principles of healthy, sustainable eating to kindergarten through sixth-grade students, as well as challenging their palates.

The meals program is overseen by Chef Richard Howze, who runs the kitchen at Babcock Table & Tap restaurant as well as Slater's Goods & Provisions marketplace, which has a kitchen where school breakfasts and lunches are prepared.

Chef Howze took over in October from Chef

David Rashty, who created the school lunch menu for the start of the year.

"My approach is clean, healthy prepared foods — nothing processed, fresh vegetables from the garden," Chef Howze said. "It's a real simple approach. Just healthy and local."

During the first few months of the year, the kitchen experimented with different menu items to see what students liked the most, including scratch-made yogurt with fresh fruit for breakfast, or lunch ingredients that included farro ancient grains and green-pea guacamole.

"We'll continue to develop different dishes and keep it new and fresh," Chef Howze said.



The pizza and burrito bowls have been among the kids' favorites.

"We utilize organic flowers and cheeses for the pizza," Chef Howze said. "So it's not your standard pizza, we make the dough from scratch. It's all about the ingredients you know?"

BNS principal Shannon Treece was impressed by the Babcock culinary team's commitment to creating healthy meals.

"It's all fresh and no sugar," she said, "and that's not your usual school."

Chef Howze uses no refined sugar in the school menu, though he does substitute other sweeteners such as Babcock Ranch honey from

Wonderful Bees.

The meals are also woven into school lessons that tie into Babcock Ranch's focus on living in harmony with the environment, including sourcing local ingredients.

Herbs such as basil for calzones and pizza come directly from Babcock's garden. Seafood on the menu is sourced through Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch, to ensure it is caught using sustainable practices. Other proteins such as beef, chicken and pork come from Circle C Farm in Felda, and were raised without using GMOs, steroids, or antibiotics.

Chef Howze's experience before coming to Babcock includes working as executive chef for Stilwell Enterprises on Sanibel Island, chef de cuisine at Naples Grande Beach Resort, and executive chef at Edgewater Beach Hotel.

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"I believe people want ways to connect with nature, to leave everything else behind and recharge. Babcock Ranch is all about the great outdoors. Living in a town with half of its total area dedicated to green space, residents can walk out their door and truly immerse themselves in nature without leaving their neighborhood." — Syd Kitson



Babcock Ranch elevates natural connections

BY NANCY THEORET

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It was almost as if the land spoke to Kitson & Partners, nature guiding the development of the innovative town of Babcock Ranch and in the process creating an all-encompassing passion to do right by the environment. The land determined the placement of neighborhoods and commercial buildings, amenities and utilities. It whispered to the past, of historic water flow blocked decades ago by agricultural operations, and it presented unique opportunities to respect the environment, building with minimal impact of traditional developments and even coaxing nature along when necessary.

There was never a question nature would play a major role in Babcock Ranch, an innovative and environmentally friendly Charlotte County town planned for 19,500 homes, 50,000 residents and six million square feet of commercial space. Its environmental emphasis is obvious throughout the town, witnessed along the first five of more than 50 miles of planned trails, wildlife foraging for dinner near public lakefronts and an emphasis on native landscaping that included planting more than 5,000 trees and minimizing the use of grass. Nature provides the canvas for outdoor childhood adventures, the venue for family and community gatherings, and those simple aah moments enjoyed from a front porch or lanai.

"I believe people want ways to connect with nature, to leave everything else behind and recharge," said Syd Kitson, chairman and CEO of Kitson & Partners. "Babcock Ranch is all about the great outdoors. Living in a town with half of its total area dedicated to green space, residents can walk out their door and truly immerse themselves in nature without leaving their neighborhood."

Because of the mindfulness of Babcock Ranch's design, nature improves the healthy lifestyle of the community, connecting residents and visitors with a known mood-booster. Countless studies document the mental health benefits of natural immersion, whether walking or biking along that road less traveled, surrendering to the mesmerizing play of light on water while fishing on the Sunset Lake dock or — already a favorite of onsite employees and visitors — savoring the setting sun peeking through the Babcock logo on its signature bridge.

At Babcock Ranch, nature offers quiet spots to meditate, lakefront boardwalks, neighborhood parks and trailheads, and myriad opportunities to explore the great outdoors. Trails will eventually connect to the adjoining Babcock Ranch Preserve, 73,000 acres of state-owned land featuring pinelands, dry prairie ecosystems, cypress domes and Telegraph Swamp and home to 13 endangered or threatened species, including the Florida black bear and panther, the eastern indigo snake and Florida burrowing owl.

Onsite trails and lakes offer destinations



PHOTOS BY VANDY MAJOR / BABCOCK RANCH

Nature has always guided the development of the innovation of Babcock Ranch, with natural connections everywhere you look.



Curry Creek Outfitters in Founders Square offers bicycle and paddle equipment. **Table & Tap** restaurant offers fresh produce.

to bicycle and paddle with equipment rentals available at Curry Creek Outfitters in Founder's Square. Babcock's first two of many planned Zagster sharing stations allows cyclists to reserve bikes in advance. Canopied Surrey bikes are perfect for sharing quality time and pedal power aux deux.

To reduce environmental impact, nearly 90 percent of Babcock Ranch's 18,000 acres is woven into land previously used for farming, pastures and rock mining. The town is fringed by forests and each neighborhood also offers community gardens. Onsite farming operations also supply fresh produce to Town Square's Table & Tap restaurant.

Throughout the town, rain gardens are planted with native vegetation to filter and recycle storm water runoff — mirroring the qualities of natural marshlands. Reclaimed gray water for irrigation conserves a precious resource. By reestablishing historic flow ways, the town reaps the benefits of natural storm water management systems that have been weathering storms for years.

Native landscaping that thrives in Florida's heat and during rainy season—and even hurricanes — not only reduces water use, it minimizes storm runoff and flooding, improves

surface water quality and requires less maintenance, irrigation, fertilizer and pesticides. It's also more resilient to fire and natural weather events as demonstrated during Hurricane Irma.

Babcock Ranch was designed for resiliency. Portions of the town are located 30 feet above sea level and buildings and homes constructed to Florida's enhanced building codes met Irma's test. Some of the newer trees that had not yet established a deep root system were impacted by the storm but were able to quickly recover, said Rick Severance, president of Babcock Ranch.

"Storm safety and resiliency has factored into every element of the design and engineering of our new town," said Mr. Kitson. "We've taken great care to incorporate the latest technologies to keep people truly safe in a storm and allow a quick rebound after a storm passes."

Hurricane Irma showed us that if you build in the right place and adhere to the codes, the return on investment can be infinite."

As a sustainable community, Babcock Ranch is on the cusp of introducing North America's first autonomous shuttle network beginning this November. The service, a

partnership between Kitson & Partners and Transdev, will expand with the town's growth and reduce the reliance on vehicle ownership and impact on the environment through lower emissions.

Considered the global leader in multi-modal mobility solutions, Transdev is using Babcock Ranch as a living laboratory, redefining transportation through its concept of Mobility-as-a-Service platform, which will eventually include car-sharing, bike-sharing, autonomous pods, and charter transit in future phases of the mobility plan.

"We recognize that progress comes in increments," Mr. Kitson said. "When people can walk, bike, catch a shuttle, use their handheld device to summon an on-demand autonomous vehicle, or utilize a shared vehicle service for trips off-site, they will quickly realize they don't really need their own car."

As the first completely solar-powered new town in the country, Babcock Ranch is putting nature first. Not only has nature inspired the town's unique architecture, half of the development plan is dedicated to public green space and lakes.

Nature is the language of the land, spoken fluently throughout. ☀

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Homes by Towne invites you to join its family of happy customers

BY LAURA TICHY-SMITH

Babcock Ranch Telegraph Correspondent

With several excellent builders offering a number of fabulous home models at Babcock Ranch, you may feel a bit like a kid in a candy store when contemplating your future domestic bliss. Of the builders, Homes by Towne has the unique distinction of being majority-owned by a charitable foundation named after the company's founder and his wife. The Joseph and Vera Zilber Charitable Foundation provides grants to organizations that work to improve the well-being of individuals, families and neighborhoods, so when you have your Babcock Ranch home built by Homes by Towne, you not only help yourself but you help nonprofits as well.

"Joseph Zilber was an extraordinary man who was extremely generous," said Kitt Kearney, the company's vice president of sales and marketing. "He gave to charity all through life, and now that he's passed it's going through the foundation."

With over three decades of experience in the sunshine state, Homes by Towne knows building in Florida. And as a founding builder 22 years ago at Lakewood Ranch near Sarasota, Homes by Towne has experience with building during the founding stages of a new town. The company has embraced the lifestyle and energy-efficiency standards set as Bab-



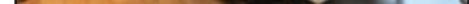
VANDY MAJOR / FLORIDA WEEKLY

Several excellent builders offer a number of home models including Homes by Towne.

cock's vision and added its own touches to it. The Homes by Towne designs build upon the energy-efficiency mandate by adding radiant barrier roof sheeting, tankless water heaters, impact-resistant front windows, double-paned windows with shutters and 16-seer high efficiency heat pumps. The company started with Babcock's requirement for front porches and expanded that vision such that the floorplan designs include not only the interior but also the exterior living space so that you are invited

"to live all the way through" your home, Ms. Kearney said.

"We have four different outside living plans," she said. "One is a pool/spa, one is an outdoor firepit you step down into, one is a pool and one is a Jacuzzi, so it gives you four different outdoor lifestyles to choose from. You can be on the front entry porch visiting with neighbors, and as you live through the house, each has beautiful areas onto the water views, so we have a nice lifestyle on the outside."



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To discover what Babcock Ranch offers, start here

BY EVAN WILLIAMS

ewilliams@babcockranchtelegraph.com

Babcock Ranch is a burgeoning community fueled by solar power. It's an outdoor adventure destination with trails and lakes set among a mosaic of oak hammocks and dry prairie, palmetto flatwoods and cypress domes. It's also a foodie oasis with its gourmet Table & Tap restaurant and Slater's market. There's a lot to see and do, so where do you start?

You can find all the answers at Woodlea Hall, also known as The Discovery Center, in Founder's Square. The civic and information hub of Babcock, it is perhaps the most important initial destination for first-time visitors, whether visiting for a day fishing on the lake or looking for more information about the town's new charter school.

Visitors will find a circular desk at the entrance, where town ambassadors greet wondering eyes who walk through the door.

"Even though we're in our you could call it 'slow season,' we still have a lot of activity," said ambassador Janis Bowles.

People come looking for information Babcock's builders and real estate, its trails, downtown markets, holiday events, where to eat or what the first day of soccer camp is — whatever it is, the ambassadors can field just about any question you have about the town.

If you're looking for a more in-depth explanation of what Babcock Ranch is all about, they can do that too.

"When people come in we are able to give them a full orientation on the community and the lifestyle," said ambassador Rick Vorell.

They lead visitors to comfy nooks with couches where they explain the details of the community with some visual aids on big flat-screen televisions, the history of Babcock and its commitment to the environment and to new



VANDY MAJOR / BABCOCK RANCH TELEGRAPH

The Discovery Center in Woodlea Hall in Founder's Square is the civic and information hub of Babcock Ranch.

technology, such as full gigabyte fiber-optic connectivity and the use of autonomous vehicles.

If a day outdoors is on your agenda, The Discovery Center also houses Curry Creek Outfitters, a gateway to the area for hikers, bikers, kayakers, boaters, and fishing enthusiasts alike, a first stop for exploring the natural playgrounds of the ranch and thousands of acres of connected conservation lands.

"We want it to be the hub, the place people come and ask questions about the paths, places to walk, bike, and go fishing," said Mike Serfozo, Kitson & Partners retail shops manager.

He adds the people have often been catching



5- to 6-pound bass in Babcock Lake, which has a shore in Founder's Square. Visitors will have access to rental kayaks and row boats; eventually a Duffy electric boat will hold sightseeing, sunset and wine and cheese tours, too. There will



also be bicycles to rent, including trail bikes, fat-tire bikes and four-wheeled Surrey bikes. Many people like to use the Surrey bikes to go check out model homes, Mr. Serfozo said.

"We've got a couple of these sitting outside that people just love to take. There's just something nostalgic about it."

If you forget the sunscreen, Curry Creek has that too. It's a fully-stocked outdoor shop with backpacks, clothing, fishing tackle, snacks and beverages, and more sundry items such as bug spray, blankets and folding chairs.

"All the things you need to go have a fun day outside, we sell in the shop," Mr. Serfozo said. ☀

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Ambience and energy efficiency key for Fox Premier Builders

BY GLENN MILLER

Babcock Ranch Telegraph Correspondent

The Fox Premier Builders' model homes are tucked away on Lake Timber Drive, overlooking a lake to the north and Babcock Ranch's Lake House to the west.

A sidewalk wraps along the street and leads to Founder's Square, the downtown destination of shops and restaurants and school, a short walk or bicycle ride away.

Fox's models sport the names Camden, The Cabin, Whisper Creek and Eden, all set in an Eden-like corner of Southwest Florida. On an early fall morning, only three weeks or so after Hurricane Irma roared through Florida, Tom Vet, Fox's project manager for Babcock, showed a visitor around the homes. He walked through the models and trudged up the stairs and explained why his company is involved with Babcock Ranch, which is America's first solar powered town.

"We're excited about the sustainability and the energy saving and the whole set-up," Mr. Vet said.

Fox is so excited about Babcock Ranch that it is moving its offices from Naples and into the new town. At the moment Mr. Vet started chatting with the Telegraph he was standing in the kitchen of the Camden, a three-bedroom, 2.5-bath two-story house that is listed at \$489,900. The home, designed by architects Allison Ramsey & Associates of Beaufort, S.C., features an expansive porch and is built strong enough to survive hurricanes even more powerful than Irma.

"It can sustain 160 mph winds," Mr. Vet said.

But the Camden like all of Fox's models is about more than being built strong. It's about ambience and location and easy access to Babcock Ranch's kayaking, bicycling trails, the Lake House pool and its pool table right across the street. A child could throw a baseball from the house's front steps to the pool across Lake Timber Drive.



COURTESY IMAGES

Fox Premier Builders' Camden model, above, and renderings of the Eden, top right, and the Timberbuilt, bottom right.

Like all of Fox's homes in Babcock it is built with energy efficiency in mind. Mr. Vet estimated that even during the summer Camden's power bill to cool its 2,029 square feet should be only \$111.

Mr. Vet walked out of the Camden and next door to the Cabin, where he stopped on the front porch and glanced across the street at the lake.

"Front porch living," Mr. Vet said while on porch before walking in the Cabin, which features a living room with a ceiling he estimated at 26 feet high.

The beams shoring up the room are, he said, fir. The Cabin, designed by Timberbuilt, a North Collins, N.Y. firm, is a two-bed, 2.5-bath, 2,001-square foot house that sells with a starting price of \$569,000.

It has a detached one-car garage with carport.

Like all Fox homes, and indeed all homes in Babcock Ranch, it has fiber optics that offer very fast Internet speeds so the community combines the feeling of the charm of old Florida living with the best technology the 21st century offers.

The next stop on Mr. Vet's short walking tour was the Whisper Creek model home. The Whisper Creek is a two-bed, 2.5-bathroom arrangement in a 1,555-square foot home starting at \$399,900.

The Whisper Creek home features a cottage look with front porch. Allison Ramsey & Associates, the firm that designed the Camden, also is behind the Whisper Creek model.

The last stop on the little tour was the two-story, 2,483-square foot The Eden, a four-bed, four-bath model listed as starting at \$499,900.

"This is my favorite," Mr. Vet said.

Allison Ramsey & Associates also designed The Eden.

Like all the Fox homes on the bend of Lake Timber Drive, it's right by the Lake House, a community center with fireplaces inside and out.

The little cluster of Fox model homes will soon be joined by many more. Eventually, according to Mr. Vet, Fox plans more homes in Babcock Ranch on land adjacent to the bend in Lake Timber Drive where the models now stand gleaming and providing a sweet new home scent.

"We've got 80-some lots lined up for Fox," Mr. Vet said.

All snugly situated between the Lake House and Founder's Square, in the serenity of Babcock Ranch. ☀



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Bike it, hike it, however you like it: Babcock Ranch has a trail for you

BY NANCY THEORET

nthoret@babcockranchtelegraph.com

Visitors are already hitting the trails at Babcock Ranch. So, too, are Amanda Staerker and other onsite employees of Kitson & Partners, which is developing the sustainable community with more than 50 miles of hiking, biking and equestrian trails.

Sunset Trail, the town's first, offers a 2.5-mile looping adventure beginning and ending in Sunset Park. Covered with loose gravel and part of the old trail system on the Crescent B. Ranch, it passes pine trees and skirts wetlands before arriving at a water-spanning boardwalk with an observation deck. Visitors are likely to see wading birds foraging for dinner and fish performing those mysterious leaps fish are known to do.

"I see a lot of people who are checking out the development walking the trails in the evenings," said Ms. Staerker, a land planner who often bikes Sunset Trail. "Our intent is to leave as much of the trails as natural as possible while accommodating a range of needs and uses. They've done such a great job with native landscaping and the legacy tree program, even the more urban trails will appear natural over time."

Many of the town's multimodal trails will use existing cattle runs, fire breaks and logging roads created during the town's former life as part of the sprawling Crescent B., said Gary Nelson, senior vice president of planning and development for Kitson & Partners. "This minimizes the amount of disturbance to the natural environment."

"Our goal is to keep the trails as natural as we can, provide hidden spots, water overlooks and highlight the natural beauty we have here at Babcock Ranch," Ms. Staerker said.

Outdoor recreation at Babcock Ranch is



designed to encourage residents and visitors to abandon their cars and explore the community on foot or by bike and in the process promote health and wellness.

"You can get around Babcock completely on bike or sidewalks," Ms. Staerker said. "Pedestrian connectivity is everywhere."

"The trails will interconnect with all the neighborhood sidewalks creating a transportation network independent of the roads," Mr. Nelson says. "It will be readily accessible to everyone."

Educational markers will describe native flora and fauna seen along the pathways.

Ms. Staerker said plans are also in the works for the town's signature Curry Creek Canal Trail, a north-to-south town-bisecting path meandering through nature preserves with few signs of civilization or previous agricultural use. The five-mile greenway trail will offer observation platforms, picnic areas and link with other trails. Most of it already exists, created half a century ago when the waterway was dredged and dredge material was placed to one side, creating an elevated trail following the creek.

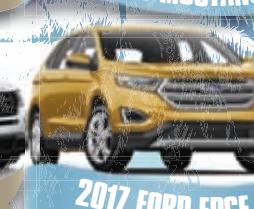
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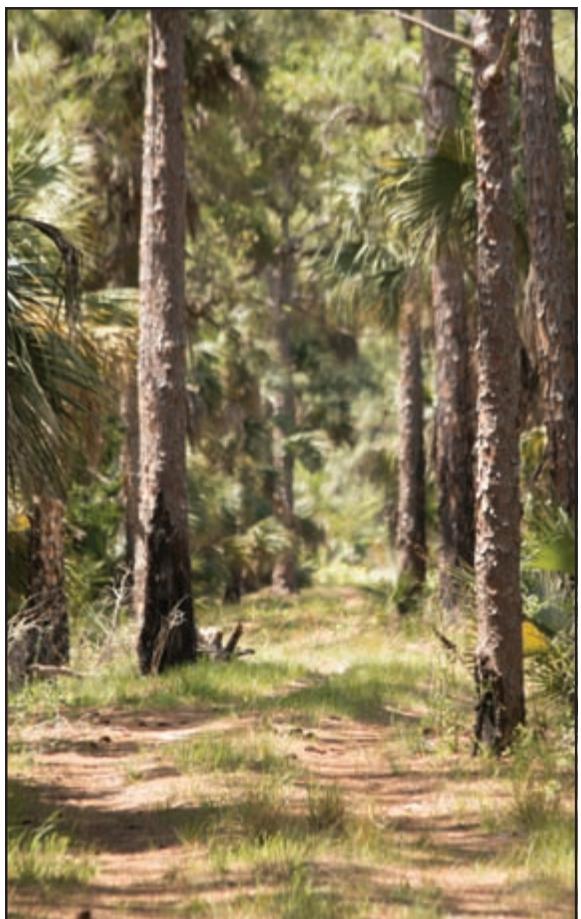
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and kayaks on Lake Babcock, currently just half of its planned 275 acres. Curry Canal will eventually open for paddlers as well.

"We're currently talking about more trails and blueways and considering the most suitable places for them," Ms. Staerker said.

For residents, the design of Babcock Ranch makes trail access as easy as a walk through the neighborhood, each offering a trailhead that will eventually link to the greenways. As the town grows, so too will its bicycle and pedestrian trails with plans for more rustic hiking paths and a likely tie-in to trails on the town's periphery and adjacent to the Babcock Ranch Preserve.

The town's hiking, biking, riding and walking trails also will eventually connect with the adjoining state-owned preserve, where the Florida Forestry Service is developing long-range plans to offer more recreational opportunities, expand its trail system and introduce horse trails. The preserve's existing Footprints Trail offers a trailhead on SR 74 and a series of long and shorter looping paths skirting rangeland, flatwoods and wetlands.

Babcock Ranch and the state property will also become part of a regional trail plan linking Fort Myers through Babcock to Punta Gorda and back to Fort Myers.

"Hiking and biking will be easily and quickly accessible and in many cases the easiest and healthiest way to get back and forth within Babcock Ranch," says Mr. Nelson. "Within a few years you will be able to take a trail ride or walk for as long a distance as you like."

And Babcock Ranch's state-of-the-art technology will help visitors and residents plan and monitor their trip. And, there's an app for that. ☺

Visitors can bring their own bikes or rent four-person canopy bikes and off-road models from Curry Creek Outfitters in Woodlea Hall at Founder's Square.

"As promised, our trails have been open to the public since day one," Mr. Nelson said. "People can come to Founder's Square, rent a bike and explore the neighborhoods and trails, and return to the square for lunch or a drink overlooking the lake."

Additional trails and blueways for paddling are also planned.

There's also a rental station for paddleboards

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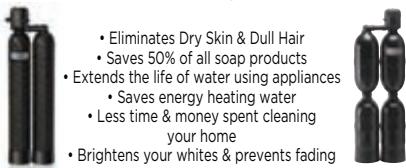
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By GLENN MILLER

Babcock Ranch Telegraph Correspondent

Square Scoops satisfies the cravings and dreams of two sets of customers — that of kids and adults, a place for ice cream and caffeine, a post-school destination for children and a hangout for adults, a place to snag that morning jolt of coffee.

Just dozens of steps from Babcock Neighborhood School is an ideal next stop for kids — an ice cream parlor tucked into Slater's Goods & Provisions. Square Scoops offers 16 flavors of ice cream plus banana splits and sundaes in a shop overlooking Founder's Square.

"And many other cool concoctions," said Rick Severance, president of Babcock Ranch, not intending a pun.

Now what kid wouldn't want such a place within easy skateboarding distance of the schoolhouse door?

But Square Scoops is more than an ice cream parlor. It's also a coffee shop, a place offering craft coffee in a rural setting many miles away from the Starbucks tucked away in downtown Fort Myers.

The shop's name is far more than an exercise in alliteration. Square Scoops is just what it implies — ice cream will be scooped up in squares, not the traditional rounded ice cream scoops of yore or the one found in many kitchens.

Like nearly everything at Babcock Ranch's food emporiums, the emphasis is on local products. That is the case at Square Scoops, which is across Founder's Square from Table & Tap, Babcock Ranch's lakeside restaurant. The ice cream comes from the Ice Cream Club, part of the Fresh From Florida initiative.

"All home made," said Rich Howze, chef at Table & Tap, Babcock Ranch's restaurant



VANDY MAJOR / BABCOCK RANCH TELEGRAPH

Square Scoops offers 16 flavors of ice cream plus banana splits and sundaes in a shop overlooking Founder's Square.

across Founder's Square from the ice cream parlor.

People have been eagerly awaiting Square Scoops' opening.

That includes the 160 or so kids at the school. Do they peer through the windows wondering when the ice cream shop will open?

"All the time," Mr. Severance said. "Every day."

Everybody knows the old shout: We scream, you scream, we all scream for ice cream.

Soon, Babcock kids won't have to shout.

Square Scoops offers a kid-friendly environ-

ment with a chalkboard on one wall where kids can write and draw. There will be a counter set up lower so pint-size customers can sit and place their treats at a comfortable level.

Mr. Severance envisions Square Scoops also becoming a gathering place for adults from residents to employees to visitors. It offers more than an old-fashioned cup of joe. In the rural setting of Babcock Ranch, far from the hurly burley of Southwest Florida's urban sprawl, people can sample espresso or cappuccino or just a top-notch, finely crafted cup of coffee.

"Get the adults best coffee," Mr. Severance said.

A town isn't complete, Mr. Severance believes, without a first-rate place for coffee.

"You need to have a great coffee shop," Mr. Severance said.

And more than coffee. ...

Square Scoops will also offer tea. The brand of choice is Jenwey Tea. ...

And not in a setting like many other craft coffee places scattered around the region and steps away from six lanes of traffic and the grinding of gears and screech of tires and rumble of trucks.

Not at Square Scoops, which is in the quiet serenity of downtown Babcock Ranch, near a lake and woodlands and the singing of birds, not the roar of traffic.

Now that the weather is starting to cool the 36 outdoor seats and the 15 indoor seats will likely become places for friends to gather, for business associates to discuss work or just some quiet time to curl up with a book or laptop and a nice cup of coffee.

Square Scoops will combine two worlds — ice cream shop and coffee shop.

When the Telegraph visited on a September morning, the finishing touches were being put on Square Scoops.

Teal-colored chairs were scattered about. The lights were working. The AC was humming. A waffle maker and other kitchen equipment were installed and ready to put to their designed use.

The plans are coming together. Those plans include more than ice cream and coffee and waffles.

"We can do smoothies," Mr. Severance said.

Square Scoops and Slater's Goods & Provisions and, indeed, all of Babcock Ranch is taking it one scoop at a time...

That, of course, will be one square scoop at a time. ...



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The Lakehouse at Babcock Ranch

BY EVAN WILLIAMS

ewilliams@babcockranchtelegraph.com

When it opens near the beginning of November, The Lakehouse at Babcock Ranch will be a neighborhood clubhouse and gathering place for the town's residents that can accommodate everything from weekend pool parties to shooting pool after school.

Perched on the edge of Lake Timber, it's the first building you see when driving over the bridge into town, with architecture typical of Babcock developments in that it blends old-fashioned, rustic charm with modern, green-building techniques.

"We wanted to make sure that building grabbed people's attention and created a foundation for what people are going to see as they enter into the community," said Tyler Kitson, project manager for Kitson & Partners.

Residents will have access anytime by reserving the space or, if it's not being used, with a key card.

The 2,400-square foot building was inspired by the historic Cypress Lodge on the Babcock Reserve bordering the town. Its features include a wide-open floor plan full of windows and light. It was constructed with 24 by 24-inch beams that soar under 25-foot ceilings and are held together with walnut pegs.

"You walk in that building, you can smell the wood, and it's absolutely beautiful," Mr. Kitson said.

On the west side of the building, a two-sided stone fireplace that overlooks the lake rises from floor to ceiling.

Near the front entrance, visitors will find a kitchenette, a game room with a billiard table, and two 55-inch flatscreen televisions. Outside, residents have access to a 2,200-square foot, zero-entry pool, along with a bathhouse.



PHOTOS BY VANDY MAJOR / BABCOCK RANCH TELEGRAPH

The Lakehouse at Babcock Ranch is a neighborhood clubhouse that is set to open in November.

A lawn with shade trees meanders down to a 2,000-square-foot lakefront deck. There's also a playground for after-school kids. Adirondack chairs, chaise lounges, and tables with umbrel-

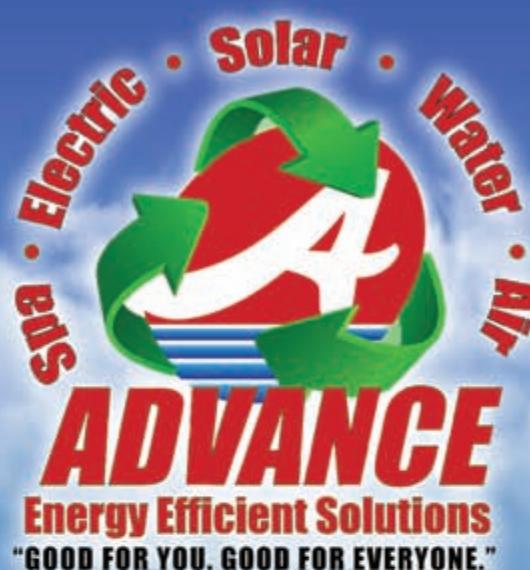
las will offer visitors a place to kick back and relax.

The wilderness-chic style of the building's stone and exposed-beam materials pays hom-

age to a bygone era, but it's also one of the most energy-efficient buildings in the community. That's in large part due to the walls made of SIPs (Structural Insulated Panels).



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"It's actually structurally stronger than masonry and more energy efficient," Mr. Kitson said. "We're trying to show people there are new and efficient ways of developing and building these buildings to help reduce our carbon footprint."

It's the same process used to construct the Cottage Collection homes Fox Premier Builders is building within the Lake Timber neighborhood of Babcock, where the Lake House is the focal point. Developed by New Panel Homes in Englewood, SIPs are a high performance, 21st Century building system that can be fabricated to fit nearly any building design. The panels consist of an insulating foam core sandwiched between two layers of plywood. The method of construction acts as a thermal blanket, compacting all the insulation within the walls so that everything inside is usable, conditioned space. The process also saves time, money and labor.



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Model mania at Babcock Ranch reflects town's emphasis on front-porch Living

BY NANCY THEORET

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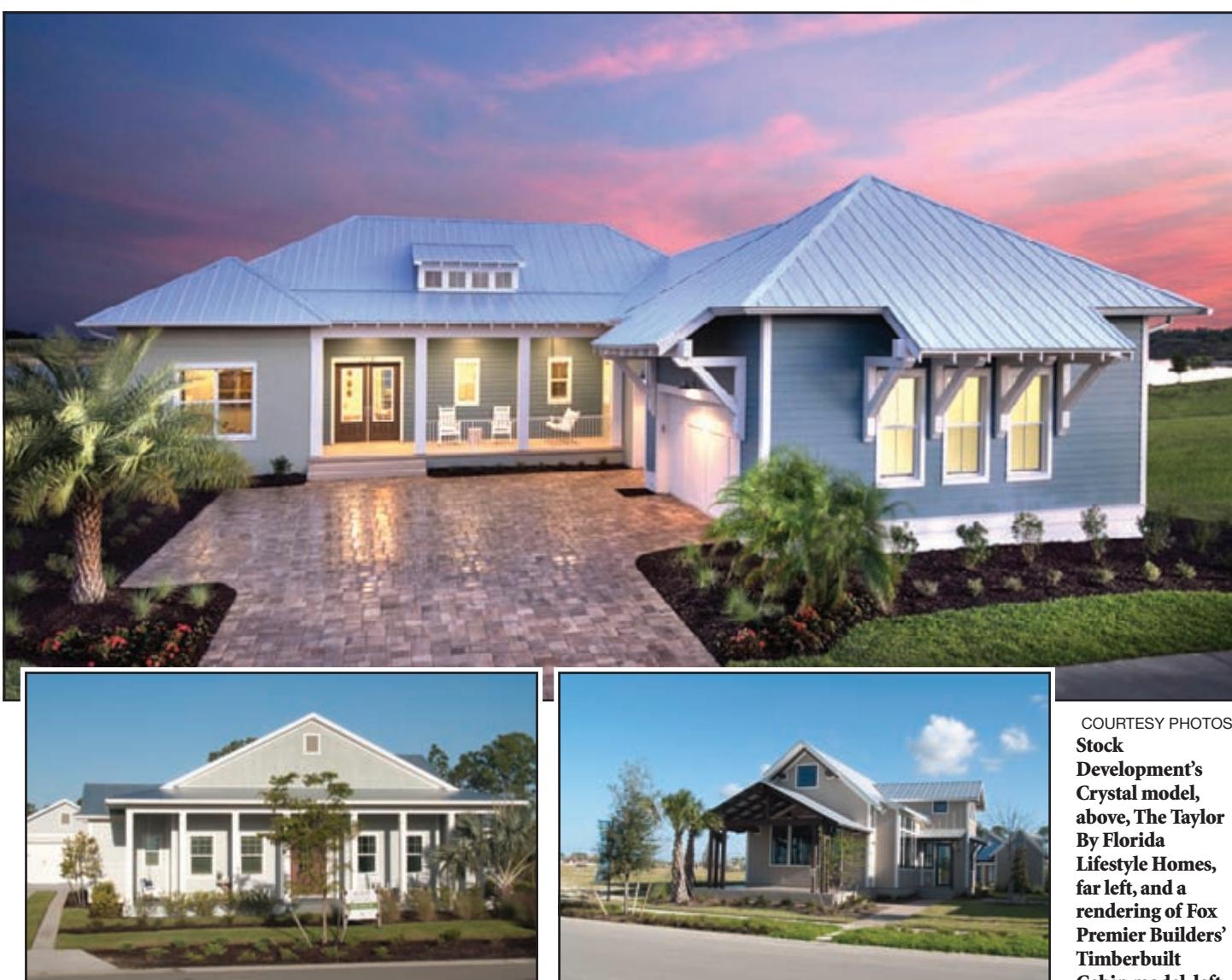
What it's like to live at Babcock Ranch is no longer a guessing game. Now offering 12 single-family model homes in the Lake Timber neighborhood – some with sweeping lake vistas – the vision of America's first new solar-powered town is clearly in focus. Visitors are bound to find the perfect home, or two or 12. Created by Southwest Florida's top builders, each model capturing a mood, a moment and the imagination – from one- and two-story floor plans, two to four bedrooms and life's little extras like bonus rooms, lofts, studies and dens.

While each model has its own personality and architecture characteristic of Southwest Florida's pre-World War II neighborhoods, they all share a common thread – environmentally friendly design that conserves water and energy and emphasizes front-porch living. Square footages range from 1,025 to over 4,000 and prices start in the \$200,000s to over \$900,000.

Visitors can make the most out of touring each model by bringing a bike or renting one from Curry Creek Outfitters in Founder's Square. They'll also discover more models are under construction, including inventory homes by Pulte offering occupancy as early as March 2018.

Open models feature five by Stock Development, two by Fox Premier Builders, four created by Homes by Towne and two from Florida Lifestyle Homes. Currently under construction are several other models by Castle Harbour Homes and Fox Premier Builders.

Lennar is building a mix of twin villas and single-family homes in a 176-site neighborhood. Welcome home. ☺



COURTESY PHOTOS
Stock Development's Crystal model, above, The Taylor By Florida Lifestyle Homes, far left, and a rendering of Fox Premier Builders' Timberbuilt Cabin model, left.

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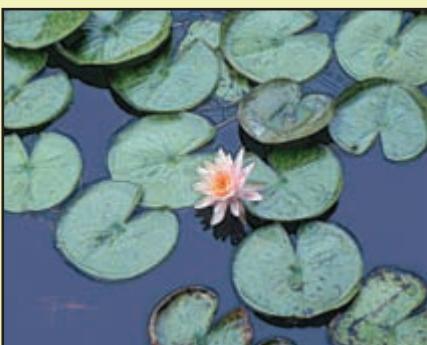
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COURTESY IMAGES
An artist's rendering of Castle Harbour Homes' furnished Fort Davenport model is set for completion in January in the Lake Timber neighborhood.



VANDY MAJOR / BABCOCK RANCH TELEGRAPH

Homes by Towne's Sterling at Babcock Ranch.

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Curry Creek Outfitters, the first stop on a Babcock adventure

BY EVAN WILLIAMS

ewilliams@babcockranchtelegraph.com

With Babcock Ranch opening its gate to the world comes a slew of firsts, including the town's first retail store, Curry Creek Outfitters. Named for a canal and trail on the ranch, it is located downtown in Woodlea Hall, Babcock's civic and information center.

The Outfitter store is designed as a first stop for exploring the natural playgrounds of the Ranch: conservation lands, lakes and trails that sprawl across oak hammocks and dry prairie, palmetto flatwoods and cypress dome forests and pastures under endless sky.

"We want it to be the hub, the place people come and ask questions about the paths, places to walk, bike and go fishing," said Mike Serfozo, Kitson & Partners retail shops manager.

The opportunities begin just outside the front doors of the shop where the 268-acre Lake Babcock will be kept stocked with fish, including bass.

"We hope to have a lot of people fishing in this lake," Mr. Serfozo said.

The 1,750-square foot store itself is well stocked with items for rent or to purchase, including fishing rods and tackle, kayaks and stand-up paddle boards.

There are clothes for hiking, fishing shirts and hats, and sundry items such as sunscreen and bugspray, blankets and folding chairs for enjoying a concert or event in Founder's Square. And the distinctive Curry Creek Outfitters logo, the initials of the shop made into a compass, adorn an array of clothing, mugs, cups, bottles and other items.

On a recent Friday morning, Mr. Serfozo and his staff greeted customers as they stopped in to see the store, curious about what this new solar-powered place is all about.



COURTESY PHOTOS

The 1,750-square-foot Curry Creek Outfitters has everything you need to explore Babcock Ranch.

"We fully believe in the Disney philosophy," he said. "When someone comes into the shop they're going to know they're special."

Outside on the sidewalk, a worker assembled a surrey bike with its cloth awning, which families can rent and ride. The shop will have a bicycle mechanic for maintenance and repairs, and the store will rent and sell fat-tire bikes for riding the ranch's off-road trails. It will offer children's bicycle rentals as well. Adults can use the town's bike share program to get on two wheels if they

plan to ride on the street or commute to work.

While Babcock will eventually offer some 50 miles of trails that range from dirt to boardwalk, one of the first available is Sunset Park, a three-mile unpaved loop. Curry Creek Canal trail itself was created when the canal was dredged years ago.

Mr. Serfozo, who lives in Alva with his wife, was hired in January and helped the Babcock team turn a shell of a building into a fully functioning shop.

"I can't believe how much we've accomplished in such a short time," he said.

Originally from Ohio, he was an engineer and quality assurance manager. Prior to arriving at Babcock, he owned Del Sol retail shops for 15 years in Ohio, Michigan and Naples.

"When I saw an ad for this position in the fall, it was like they defined me," he said. The thing that got me excited about (Babcock Ranch) is the fact that it's something no one else has done. This had a specialness to me."



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The store is stocked with items for rent or to purchase, including fishing rods and tackle, kayaks and stand-up paddle boards.

He has the store well thought out, all the way down to a scent machine that creates a very mild outdoorsy smell in the air.

"The biggest compliment that somebody can give us is they mention the place has a nice feel to it," he said. "The idea is if we help them have a good time then it makes them want to remember the good time they had."

With a soft opening at the beginning of March, the Outfitters store got a taste of the business to come at the Founder's Festival on the weekend of March 11 and 12, when an estimated 20,000 people showed up to get a look at the beginnings of this unique place. The store went through about \$6,000 worth of merchan-



dise and had about 90 people using the kayaks and paddleboards.

As the town continues to grow, the Outfitters store plans to offer further goods, services and events such as sunset cruises on the lake. Paddleboard yoga classes are now being taught.

"As our town grows, Curry Creek Outfitters will grow along with it by offering more products and services to our guests," Mr. Serfozo said. ☎

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Table & Tap offers taste of Old Florida ambience, splendid food

BY NACI THEORET

ntheoret@babcockranchtelegraph.com

Admittedly, I was probably looking forward more to seeing Babcock Ranch's unique commercial and residential architecture than I was to sampling the cuisine created at its first restaurant, Table & Tap. I love the idea of farm-to-table dining (some of the restaurant's produce is grown onsite) but I was eager to inspect the new town's style — a low-country-meets-old-Florida vernacular, novel to the area but so appropriate for Southwest Florida.

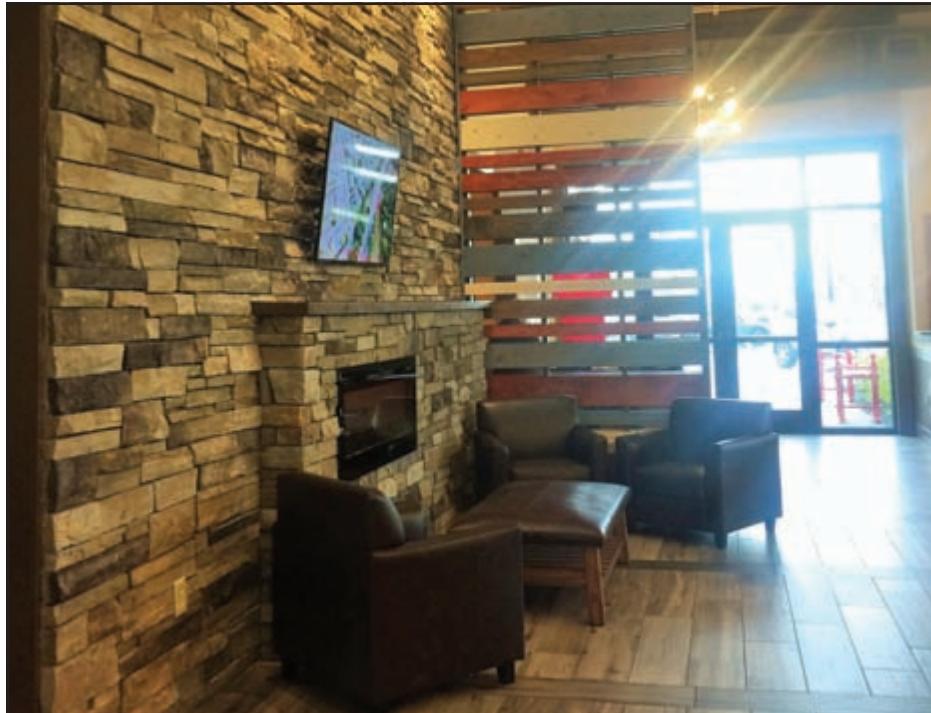
My inaugural visit was a best-of-both-worlds experience: Great food served in one of the first buildings completed in Babcock Ranch's Founder's Square. Table & Tap recalls Old Florida with its lap-siding, metal rooflines (mesmerizing during a summer rainfall) and rustic interior design — hello, barn door. The restaurant offers a number of inside dining areas, its largest incorporating a lounge area and bar serving patrons inside and outside on the oversized wrap-around patio. Rock- and brick-clad walls, a cozy fireside seating area, floating rafters and wood flooring add rustic warmth and charm without being kitschy. A smaller dining area can be closed off with the aforementioned barn door.

Early-afternoon rain had chased away the humidity and my companion and I opted to join most of the other diners outside under the tin roof covered patio overlooking the sweeping Lake Babcock. It was the perfect setting to observe the town's smattering of completed model homes from a distance and imagine the water eventually surrounded by additional residences, native landscaping and amenity buildings.

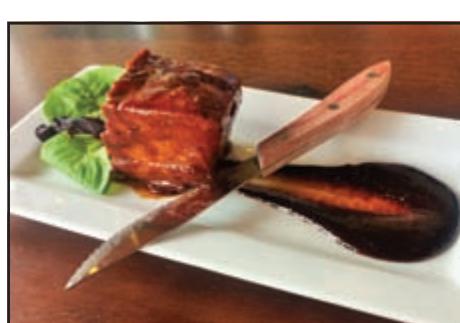
Table & Tap offers a full-service bar with a somewhat limited selection of whiskey, bourbon, rum and gin displayed on wood crates. A handful of draft selections include Babcock Brew and a rotating tap which during my visit featured Sarasota-based JDub's passion wheat. I ordered the namesake beer, a refreshing pilsner made by Fort Myers Brewing Co.

Table & Tap's lunch menu provides choices to eat healthy or indulge: Five salads, including roasted beet (\$10) and chicken paillard (\$12) and small plates such as miso-braised pork belly and fried goat cheese with local honey plus an assortment of sandwiches, among them fried gator and a fried green tomato BLT. The chef also prepares daily specials based on recently acquired ingredients like the watermelon gazpacho and chicken and waffles available during my visit.

My companion curated her selections from a three-course prix fixe lunch menu (\$15) which included the options for house salad, organic chicken noodle or butternut squash soups for starters and a choice of short rib tagliatelle or two sandwiches as the main



NACI THEORET / BABCOCK RANCH TELEGRAPH



Miso and cherry bourbon glaze enhance a simple pork belly appetizer.



A combination of bison, brisket and ground sirloin makes for a melt-in-your mouth burger.



A buttery whole-grain croissant and chicken salad with homemade mayo offer a fresh flavor profile.



The prix fixe menu's miniature strawberry shortcake.

course. Diners also pick from two desserts as well.

In addition to my guest's soup, which looked basic but packed a lot of homemade flavor, we also ordered chicken wings and the braised pork belly. We took our server's recommendation and ordered the chicken wings (\$10) plain

with a trio of sauces for dipping. It was spot-on as the wings remained crisp and we weren't forced to choose between sweet or savory. I preferred the buttermilk (which wasn't listed on the menu) over the sweetness of the mango barbecue and the mango habanero, which provided a late-hitting heat.

The pork belly (\$9) was also crispy on the outside and marbled with layers of moist meat and fat. It was great on its own; wonderful with the accompanying cherry bourbon glaze that gave the dish depth.

My companion's chicken salad sandwich was a daily special and served on a buttery whole-grain croissant. The emphasis on fresh was apparent; the server said the chef makes the restaurant's mayo and brought us ramekins to dip our French and sweet potato fries (sides also include fresh fruit or a house salad).

The French fries accompanying my burger (\$15) were hearty, the kind that can stand up to malt vinegar. A blend of bison, brisket and ground sirloin, the burger was grilled to a perfect medium rare, its flavor and juiciness benefitting from the meat combo. A buttered and toasted brioche bun didn't turn soggy and three chunks of homemade pickles — a curious taste bordering on dill and bread and butter — were a nice addition to the plate.

The prix fixe menu's miniature strawberry shortcake proved a good size with just enough spoonfuls of ripe strawberries, whipped cream and shortcake to sate a sweet tooth. The tres leches cake (\$7) was moist as it should be; not super saturated like some versions. I detected a nice note of cardamom.

Table & Tap is a great place to unwind and relax. An outdoor game area offers cornhole, oversized Jenga blocks and an equally large board inspired by the Connect 4 game. All proof that Table & Tap wants patrons to enjoy a leisurely afternoon or evening hanging with friends or family. ☺

Table & Tap

42860 Crescent Loop, Babcock Ranch, 941-235-6906

Ratings:

Food: ★★★★½

Service: ★★★★★

Atmosphere: ★★★★

Hours: Monday through Saturday 11 a.m. to 10 p.m.; Sunday brunch from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Reservations: Accepted

Credit cards: Accepted

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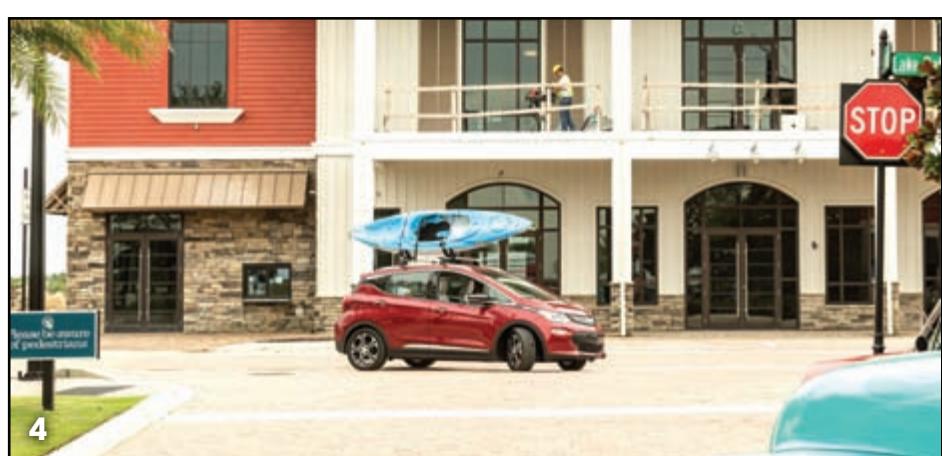
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Chevy Bolt EV rolls out in Florida with a road trip to Babcock Ranch



VANDY MAJOR / BABCOCK RANCH TELEGRAPH

1. A classic Chevrolet show was part of the Bolt roll-out event.
2. Row of Bolts charging in designated EV spaces in the Downtown District.
3. Scotty Yates, Bob Santoianni, Carl Hatley, Herb Lester Bass, Al DiNicola and Michelle Churchill
4. A Chevrolet Bolt transports a kayak in the Downtown District.
5. Jaxon Beasley, Dillon Beasley and Gavin Beasley with a 1969 Corvette.
6. David Kurash, Stephanie Wallin, Connie Kurash and Rob Bagans
7. Jim Limota, Barbie Sullivan and Bryce Clark
8. Kristie Gnagy, Cooper Gnagy, Chad Gnagy and Chase Gnagy
9. Donie Schepp, Dominic Llorens, Arco Llorens, Michelle Macom and Jaha Cummings



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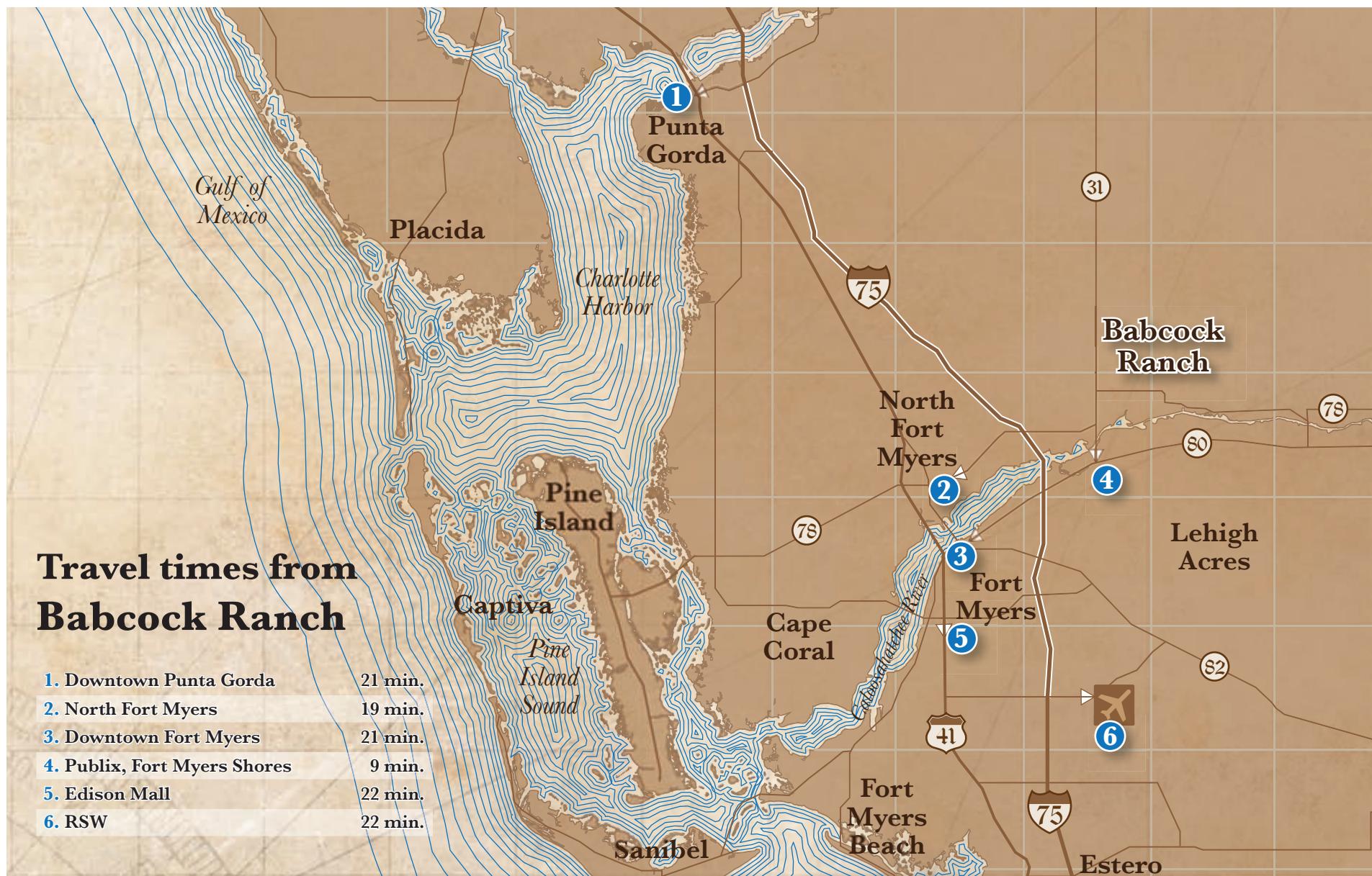
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AROUND BABCOCK

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VANDY MAJOR / BABCOCK RANCH TELEGRAPH

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Babcock Telegraph advertisers and Realtors tour Babcock Ranch



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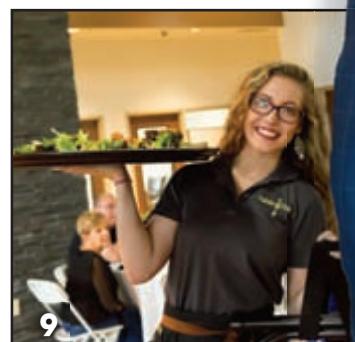
6

7

8

Rick Severance,
Michelle Churchill and
Natalee Burns

1. Eric Riemenschneider, Jerry Elliott and Gray Davis
2. Lynn Bacon and Bill Bacon
3. Transport vehicles ready for the tour.
4. Christin Collins and David Collins
5. Scott Folsom and Joan Cox
6. Lori Sprattlin, Richard Plummer and Cathy Sink
7. Bruce Foster, Janis Bowles and Connie Sherrard
8. Guests visited various model homes during the tour.
9. Table & Tap serves up lunch



9



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AROUND BABCOCK

Babcock Neighborhood School Burger Flip on Aug. 5



VANDY MAJOR / BABCOCK RANCH TELEGRAPH



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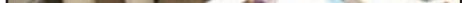
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AROUND BABCOCK

Babcock Neighborhood School Burger Flip on Aug. 5



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