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Christopher Homes owner Chris Hilgeman at a finished home site on Siesta Key. The company completed three custom homes this year.

Custom builder sees future growth

Tiny Christopher Homes is finding success with its custom designs and narrow geographic concentration

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SARASOTA — Can a new builder constructing only a handful of homes per year survive in this market?

Despite unpredictable market conditions, tiny Christopher Homes LLC is exceeding its 2007 custom home building goals and says it is well positioned for growth next year.

Christopher Homes' year-to-date sales for 2007 is \$7.5 million, a 31 percent increase in total revenue from 2006.

With a combined 40 years of local experience, Sarasota-

based Christopher Homes was established in October 2004 by family-owned team Chris and Joe Hilgeman — son and father, respectively.

Chris Hilgeman has lived in Sarasota all 30 years of his life. Before forming Christopher Homes, he served the Sarasota community as a firefighter and paramedic.

He also gained expertise in the local real estate industry as a licensed Realtor, investor and developer.

Joe Hilgeman, 62, has 30 years of experience in the construction industry in South-

west Florida.

After earning his bachelor's degree in technology with an emphasis on civil and building construction from Missouri Western State College, Joe Hilgeman owned a custom cabinetry business and worked in residential and light commercial construction.

The father-and-son team say that their staff is supplemented by a longtime network of subcontractors and superintendents.

Another advantage that the company might have right now is its narrow geographic niche.

Rather than focusing on large communities, Christo-

pher Homes builds custom homes mainly in the Siesta Key area.

But the company's portfolio includes custom homes from Sarasota to greater Tampa Bay.

Christopher Homes is considering branching out into multifamily homes and light commercial buildings.

The Hilgeman duo said that another advantage they have in this market is that they avoid the practice among some builders of simply modifying existing plans.

They create custom designs for each homeowner by ensur-

Company sees path to growth in its future

HOMES FROM 10D

ing preplanning and logistics as the first step in every building process.

The company provides each homeowner with a personal on-site superintendent and other experts.

Christopher Homes has a team of five professionals, and all members of the Christopher Homes team that work on site and are involved directly with construction are licensed and certified.

The company expected only two custom home jobs this year, but completed three.

Christopher Homes now has four custom homes in construction phases, as well as four custom homes in preplanning phases.

The price of the custom homes built by the company vary depending on customization, but primarily range from \$500,000 to \$5 million.

The sizes of the homes vary from 2,500 square feet up to 7,500 square feet.

Christopher Homes says that its increase in revenues also is a result of being ahead of the curve with the latest technologies and techniques for custom home building, such as green building.