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Two Omaha houses to be first of their kind in U.S.

BY ABE WINTER

WORLD-HERALD STAFF WRITER

Flexible. Efficient. Sustainable.

Those are the three themes builder Fernando Pages is incorporating into two of what the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development considers state-of-the-art homes to be built in Omaha.

A groundbreaking ceremony was held this morning at the corner of 25th and Parker Streets, where the Partnership for Advancing Technology in Housing unveiled its plans for the construction of the houses. The houses will have 2,000 square feet on the main and second floors of the single-family units.

The PATH Concept Home, government officials say, is a house that "combines innovative products and systems with traditional design elements to create a comfortable, inviting and affordable home."

Pages said new technology will make the homes hail-proof and leak-proof. Also, they will be built to allow occupants to change room configurations by moving partitions, and lights and electrical outlets will be movable.

The houses, to be built by Lincoln-based Brighton Construction, are the first of their kind in the United States. They are considered part of a broad commercial and residential redevelopment effort in north Omaha, said Mayor Mike Fahey.

"To be the first in the nation is quite an honor for the city," Fahey said. "Obviously, we always need more housing, and to have state-of-the-art and affordable housing like this is a big plus for Omaha."

Pages estimated the price of the new houses to be \$145,000.

HUD Assistant Secretary Darlene Williams took part in the groundbreaking ceremony.

Officials hope other construction companies and consumers tour the houses during their construction to learn of the innovations being incorporated.

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