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Revived Rambler ready for debut

by Mark Nicklawkske
Regional Editor

strong property values, the city wants to see ramblers in demand on today's housing market, Emerson said.

But in the last couple of decades many new families have shunned the Rambler, opting to buy bigger, multi-level homes. Traditional ramblers are considered too small and outdated for modern lifestyles.

Emerson said the Rambler Revolution is intended to show current home owners or potential home buyers how to update a Rambler easily and inexpensively. With a bump-out here, a wall removed there and a finished basement, the Rambler suddenly looks brand new.

"The main thing is to give people ideas," she said. "They can take the tour and come away with a handful of ideas they take back to their house."

To start the project, the city purchased a foreclosed McKnight Road Rambler for \$117,000 last fall. It paid \$3,500 for architectural work and started remodeling after a May 7 "before" open house.

Rambler/see page 7A

IF YOU GO

What: Rambler Revolution Open House

When: 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 13 and 27

Where: 3790 McKnight Road, White Bear Lake

Details: Home remodeling information, tours, contractor and architect discussion, historical society display.

For more information: www.ramblerrevolution.com

"I haven't heard anyone say anything bad about this project. I think people understand what we're trying to do and they really support it," said Mayor Jo Emerson. "They understand how important it is to our community to keep the neighborhoods strong."

White Bear Lake boasts about 3,500 one-level, three-bedroom Rambler-style homes built in the 1950s and '60s, almost half of its single-family housing stock. In order to maintain

WHITE BEAR LAKE — Sunlight floods through a front window, across hardwood floors, over a wall opening and into a spacious kitchen with sliding glass doors, new cabinets, counter tops and an adjacent mud room. This isn't your mother and father's Rambler. Wait ...

It IS your mother and father's Rambler.

The city of White Bear Lake will showcase the results of its "Rambler Revolution" home remodeling project with two open house events from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 13 and 27 at the demonstration home, 3790 McKnight Road. Current owners, potential buyers or anyone interested in home remodeling can tour the rejuvenated Rambler.

The two open house events provide the grand finale to a \$200,000 demonstration project organized last fall by the White Bear Lake City Council, acting in its role as city Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA).

At a glance

Heritage Days

Vadnais Heights' annual Heritage Days festival is Aug. 17-20. Most activities are at the Commons and Community Park. See pages 11A and 12A for details.

Election filings

As of press time Monday, two incumbents, Mayor Judson Marshall and Councilman Richard Brainerd had filed for election in Mahtomedi. Councilman Dan Soler's seat also is up for election in November. Candidates must file by 5 p.m. Tuesday, Aug. 16 at City Hall.

Century deadline



Federal charges

Rambler

Continued from page 1A

Associate City Planner Samantha Crosby said architects had all kinds of ideas for remodeling the rambler but the city stuck to a \$74,000 budget. It added \$5,400 in work for an energy efficiency certification.

Emerson and Crosby toured the project last week as contractors installed kitchen cabinets, finished basement work and put the final touches on expanded bedrooms.

"This is great," said Emerson. "Look at this kitchen with the sliding glass door, it's beautiful."

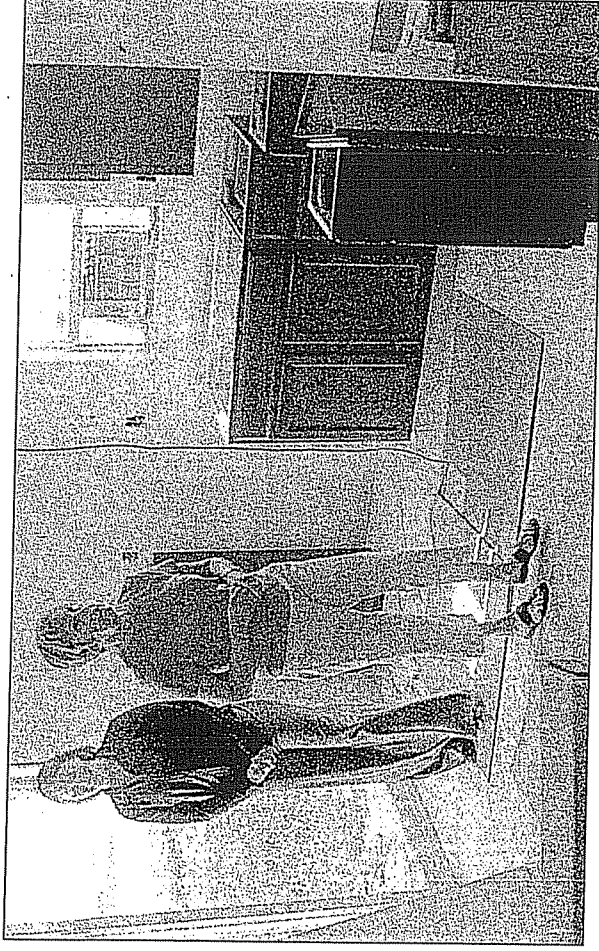
"They bumped it out and look how much more space you have up here," she said.

"I don't know how anybody used that kitchen or dining room before," said Crosby.

The original house, built in 1955, featured three bedrooms and 973 finished square feet.

Perhaps the most noticeable change is a kitchen and mud room addition on the rear of the home. Contractors pushed a wall into the backyard to expand the kitchen space, adding about 165 square feet.

In another remodeling trick, a wall was removed between two upper-level bedrooms to make one large master bedroom. Workers also finished off the basement, which created a bedroom and added a rec-



White Bear Lake Mayor Jo Emerson, right, and Associate City Planner Samantha Crosby look over kitchen work nearing completion as part of the city's Rambler Revolution project. The city spent \$8,800 to increase kitchen space in the 56-year-old home.

— Photo by Mark Nicklawskie

YOU SHOULD KNOW

The White Bear Lake Area Historical Society will be collecting information and photographs at the Rambler Revolution open house. Anyone who grew up in a White Bear Lake rambler is asked to bring interior or exterior photos of their home to the event. Historians will scan pictures on-site and record home information at the open house.

get and keep the house affordable so we couldn't do them all," added Crosby.

The city plans to sell the house for around \$190,000 to a qualified buyer.

Emerson said the home would be ideal for a new family or retirement-age couple looking to down size. It should also give current rambler owners ideas to improve their home.

"People can take pieces," she said. "They don't have to go home and do the same thing, they can figure out which improvements work for them."

The remodeled McKnight Road home is also scheduled to be on the White Bear Historical Society Home tour in September.

After all, it is your mother and father's old rambler.

will also be available to talk about remodeling ideas.

"They really thought of a lot of unique things to do," said Emerson.

"We wanted to stay within our bud-

recreation room big enough to host a ping-pong tournament.

Crosby said a variety of alternative floor plans will be on display at the open house events. Project contractors and architects

YOU SHOULD KNOW

The White Bear Lake Fire Department will hold a Fire Expo from 6:30 to 9 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 13 and two information sessions from 9 to 11 a.m. and 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Tuesday, Oct. 18.

For more information contact

Recruiter

Continued from page 1A

"The problem is retaining people on the department after five years," said Fire Chief Tim Vadnais. "I think we have a pretty good mix (of veterans and newer recruits) right now, but recruiting and retention is the No. 1 problem for paid on-call departments across the

The Mahtomedi City Council discussed the following issues at its Aug. 1 regular meeting: The council declined a citizen request to re-move a stop sign at Board Road and Board Circle

ferring to a February traffic study completed by city staff, said Mayor Judson Marshall. In the study, City Engineer Jay Kennedy said the stop signs will define vehicle

MAHTOMEDI CITY COUNCIL NOTES

nance 2011 road improvement projects (\$1.1 million) and water and sewer projects (\$2.5 million). In addition to Warner Road, the city will improve Florence, Edith