

# Breathing Easier

## Waynesboro Asthmatic Expects New Home Will Improve Quality Of Life

By **BETTINA PUCKETT**  
News-Record Staff Writer

Some people "grow out" of asthma, but Charles R. Reynolds has dealt with it all his life.

The 53-year-old owner of Reynolds Funeral Service tries to lead an active life, but there are times — especially in the spring and fall — when he has to use an inhaler or take medication for his condition.

But he believes his quality of life is about to improve, thanks to a new home he just bought in Waynesboro. The house at 2924 Plantation Lane is hardly an ordinary dwelling; it's a "Breathe Easy Home."

Several groups, including the American Lung Association of Virginia, teamed up to produce the home, which features enhanced indoor air quality and low energy consumption.

—““—  
*One of my big problems is going from one temperature to another. This house eliminates all that because it's all one temperature throughout the whole house. That will help me greatly.*

Charles Reynolds

—””—  
This is the second "healthy house" in Virginia — the first one was built in Richmond in 1996 — and the 14th in the country, said Dan Sheehan community activities director for the American Lung Association's Harrisonburg office.

On Tuesday, doctors, builders, real estate agents and others were invited to view the new house. The house will be open to the public from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday and again on Jan.

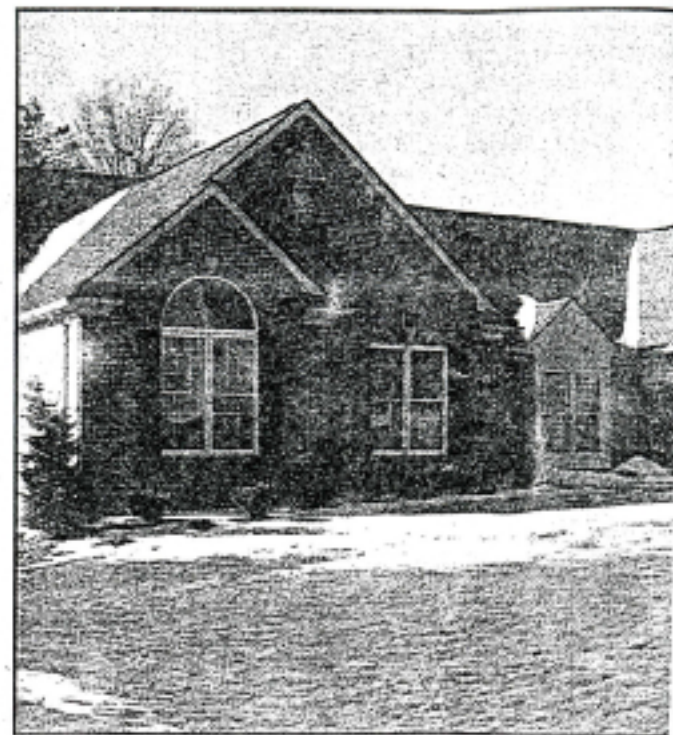
23-24.

Priced at \$249,000, the house was built with environmentally friendly materials. "We sold it in three days," said Rick Kane, vice president of Westhills Co., a Waynesboro building company. Kane designed the house.

Westhills is donating a portion of the proceeds it will earn on the house to the American Lung Association. Also involved in the project were Virginia Power and Richmond-based Tecstar Energy Systems.

The features that make the house "healthy" cost an additional \$12,000, but are well worth it, said the man who bought it.

"One of my big problems is going from one temperature to another," Reynolds said. "This house eliminates all that because it's all one temperature throughout



The "Breathe Easy Home" will be open to end and also Jan. 23-24.

—““—  
the whole house. That will help me greatly."

The crawl space under the home is sealed, insulated and conditioned year-round. "An added benefit to this is it keeps the floor warm in the winter," Sheehan said. "You can walk around in bare feet."

The crawl space also is designed to have a slightly positive air pressure when the heating and air-conditioning system is running. This prevents gases, such as radon, from escaping out of the ground and into the house. Sheehan said radon is a naturally occurring gas that is the second-leading cause of lung cancer.

The average American breathes in two tablespoons of airborne particles a day that the body must process and discharge, he said. The body easily gets rid of the

—””—  
*Indoor air pollution has gotten worse over the last 20 years and it's because of the synthetic construction material that is being used. . . . This is important for people with lung problems . . .*

Dan Sheehan, American Lung Association

—””—  
larger particles, but the smaller, microscopic particles are dangerous to people's health, especially to people with asthmas and other respiratory problems.

Even on days of highest pollution, the indoor air of most homes is 20 to 70 times worse than outdoor air — and Americans spend 90 percent of their time indoors, Sheehan said.

"Indoor air pollution has gotten worse over the last 20 years and it's because of the synthetic construction material that is being used," he said.

The HEPA Air Filtration Sys-

tem that was installed in the Breathe Easy Home is 99.97 percent effective and virtually eliminates dust in the house, Sheehan said. "This is important for people with lung problems, or the elderly, children or people who are more susceptible for these types of problems."

Reynolds said summertime can be tough because of the pollen in the air. "This house will not have any of that getting in it and if it does get in, (the air filtration system) will take it out," he said. "I look for a little better breathing." The carpeting was made from re-

cycled plastic soft drink bottles and the deck was built from recycled milk jugs. And instead of fiberglass insulation, which Sheehan said is a carcinogen, the house is insulated with cellulose, which is much denser. "Not much air can pass through it," Sheehan said.

The insulation and other materials in the house are so energy efficient, they will pay for themselves, over time, he said.

The house was also built to be wheelchair accessible, featuring wide hallways, lowered light switches and lots of room for turning around a wheelchair in the bathroom. Sheehan said the builder has already had requests to build five more "healthy" homes.

This type of house will likely become more popular in the future, Kane said. "In the next two to five years, I think the buying public may start demanding it," he said.