

#66: Neumann Enterprises

A need for a different type of green inspired this environmental developer to start his business.

May 16, 2003

URL: <http://www.Entrepreneur.com/article/0,4621,308774,00.html>

Company: Neumann Enterprises, a Nashotah, Wisconsin, conservation residential developer

Founder: Mark W. Neumann

Began: January 1999

2002 Sales: \$7.3 million

Why did you start this business?

Mark Neumann: The opportunity to be financially successful in a business that focused on environmentally desirable goals of preserving green spaces in a rapidly developing part of southeastern Wisconsin was the primary motivation.



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Our company recognizes that as the population continues to grow at a rate of 1 percent annually, we'll see continued demand to also increase our housing supply by 1 percent annually. This demand could easily, over a 10 to 15 year period of time, eat up the majority of our green spaces, especially in areas like southeastern Wisconsin. This is a common problem in many areas around the country.

In eight projects over the past three years, we've managed to supply housing opportunities while putting conservation easements in place to preserve more than 400 prime acres of green spaces. It should be noted that this has been accomplished without the use of tax dollars. Not a bad start.

When did you know you'd made it?

Neumann: When we started, our goal was to set aside 1,000 prime Wisconsin acres in open green space without the use or benefit of tax dollars. We now know how to do it profitably, but we're still on the way to "making it."

What did you think you'd blown it?

Neumann: We've had to walk away from several major projects because I couldn't get the governing entities in these areas to see the vision clearly. Various rules and regulations prevented the type of development that preserved the greatest amounts of green space while also recognizing the requirement of economic viability in our work.

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