

Fla.: New Townhomes Feature Hurricane 'Safe Room'

(March 8, 2005) -- Florida homebuyers worried about their safety in the event of a hurricane may be put at ease by a new feature offered in a Fort Lauderdale townhouse development.

Each of the townhomes will feature a "safe room" designed to provide shelter during a hurricane or other emergency situation. The rooms will be outfitted with impact-resistant windows and doors, a generator to run a refrigerator and air conditioner, various gas appliances, and even a special emergency phone line.

The developer, Boca Raton-based Bentley Realty Group, hopes this safety feature will be a selling point for the 13 townhomes that will comprise the project, called Bentley at Victoria Park. The townhomes will range in size from about 3,900 to 4,700 square feet and cost between \$600,000 and \$700,000.

Groundbreaking on the project is slated for May, with completion expected about a year later.

Local real estate professional Rob Rose, broker/owner of R.L. Rose & Co., REALTORS[®], says he's not aware of any other developer in the area offering a safe room. "I am often asked by out-of-town buyers about what a hurricane is like and what they should look for in homes that make them less susceptible to hurricane damage," he says.