Where the smart money is

Buddy Naidu

Two thousand technologically innovative houses planned for Hartbeespoort Dam

Gauteng residents will get a taste of the future when the country's first "smart" homes are launched at a new housing development at Hartbeespoort Dam next year.

Using only their cellphones, homeowners at the R3-billion Leloko development will be able to turn on the fireplace, dim the lights and set the room temperature at home - all while they're still at the office.

Construction of 2,000 state-of-the-art homes is expected to start next year.

Each home on the estate will be fully automated so that the security gates, alarm system, room temperature and music can be activated at the touch of a button or by using a cellphone.

Property expert Graeme Jay confirmed that the development was the first of its kind in the country. "Theme-style developments are the thing of the future. We are familiar with golf estates and retirement villages so a 'smart estate' and the like is essentially an extension of this concept."

Jay said lots more "technologically innovative and energy efficient" homes and estates would be built in the future.

"As unusual as it may be now, in maybe 10 to 15 years it's not going to be anything out of the ordinary. And, if you are a developer, why build one such house when you can build an estate and make more money?"

One of the developers of Leloko, Lewis Civin, said construction would also focus on making homes "technologically ready" to accommodate advances in the future, such as hands-free phones in the home.
"The homes are designed especially for those who work or operate their businesses from home but still
yearn for quality of life."

He said prices ranged from R980,000 to about R3.5-million and that the area comprised 210ha of prime
land. More than 1,000 trees will also be planted on the estate.

Property valuer Graham Ewing said innovative concepts like Leloko would improve the country's
"international marketability".

"South Africa is being advanced by taking these concepts to such levels. There's obviously a market for
them and thus they are building to satisfy market needs."