## AT HOME



A walking/interpretive path is just one of the amenities that made the Blue Heron Pointe plan an award-winner

## From eyesore to eye-catcher

## Condos win planning award

By FRANK EICHENLAUB Staff Writer

Once upon a time there was a large gravel pit in Northville Township. The pit presented problems, being an eye-sore and also the site of erosion.

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Although the area was home to a lake and wetlands, it had also lain dormant for nearly 30 years. Many developers surveyed the one-time gravel pit and many turned away because of several problems.

But almost two years ago Robert C. Leighton Associates, Inc. tackled the site disadvantages, behind Beck

mand and septic tank, residents.

Despite the success of the unique system, Leighton experienced difficult waiter Coponen Associates, inc. and JCK Engineering, to create an award-winning development.

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The board recognizes Leighton Associates and Beck Development for the DNR to take a look at it," Leighton said. "Ithink they re going to use it as a standard technique now."

James Anulewicz, director of the Plymouth Township Department of Public Services, nominated the project for the MAPA award, saying, "They made a liability into an asset."

Located on Beck Road between Six and Seven Mile roads, Blue Heron Pointe has 140 residential units, each with direct access to the water, and is 75-percent complete, Leighton said.

the wetland . . . This positive earth stewardship . . . enhances both the environment and the community economically and aesthetically."

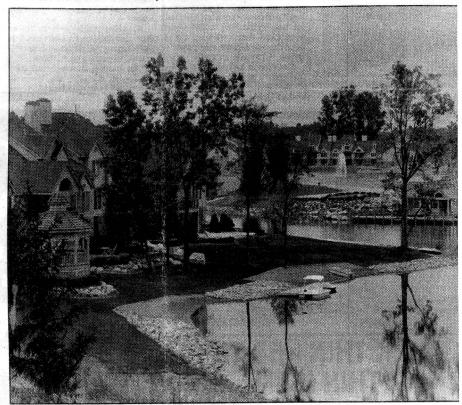
MAPA also singles out the environmental sensitivity of the project. Leighton Associates was able to present the project of the project.

serve all the wetlands in the pit, ex-

cept one.

Further, the firm innovatively employs a storm-water filtration system to insure the water quality of the lake.

The system catches the water and funnels it through a septic tank, which is cleaned annually by recidents.



From eyesore to asset, Blue Heron Pointe demonstrates how sound planning can overc

icz said. "And just as we're critical, we need to point out areas that need to be highlighted."

He also highlighted the storm wa ter filtration system in his praise of Leighton Associates. much attention, Leighton modestly credits the development firm, the architect, the engineers and Northville for the project's success.

"First of all, when we came in with nat we wanted to do. (Northville

nances to help us."

Leighton previously worked fi large consulting firms throughouthe nation, but started his own Ar Arbor-based group nearly four yea