

# Liv-Connected: A Newer Player in the Rapidly Growing Modular Home Industry

As regular readers know, I've written several columns on technological developments in home construction and especially in the field of manufactured and modular home construction.

This week I was made aware of Liv-Connected, a 2018 startup which really got going during the pandemic when one of their partners, who was in the live event business building compact and readily deployed stage sets found himself with no work and turned his attention to compact and readily deployable modular housing.

At first, the company worked to improve upon the typical FEMA trailer being deployed to disaster areas, but then to the housing industry itself, beset as it was with labor shortages, supply-chain problems, and a soaring demand for second or remote homes.

Manufacturing home components in a warehouse has inherent efficiencies,



but the cost of delivery of the finished home and/or its components to the build site needs to be factored in. For homes to be installed on a foundation, transportation costs for most manufacturers are inflated by the need to use wide-load trucks and pilot cars and to pay the associated permit fees. Liv-Connected's concept eliminates that need by breaking down the segments of the house and roof into components (see diagram at right) that can be delivered on one standard semi



trailer (above) and linked together in one day at the build site.

The bathroom and kitchen

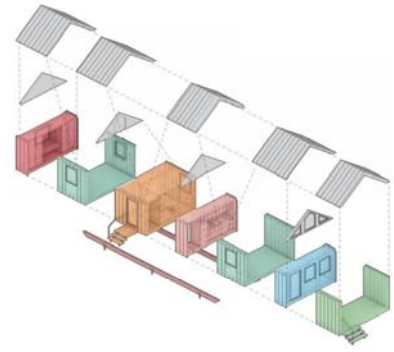
modules are fully equipped at the factory with fixtures and appliances and can be mixed and matched to create the desired end result. Also, the modular design allows the addition of more bedrooms at a later date, as illustrated on the company's website, [www.liv-connected.com](http://www.liv-connected.com).

Part of Liv-Connected's business is building tiny homes or Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) under the brand **Via**, for which delivery costs are less because the homes are on a trailer chassis. The buyer could take delivery of them at the company's Pennsylvania factory.

I have posted the link to a June 2022 article on [Forbes.com](http://Forbes.com) about the modular home industry, comparing and contrasting Liv-Connect's business strategy with that of other off-site housing manufacturers. See [www.GoldenREblog.com](http://www.GoldenREblog.com) for that link. I also posted a link there for an informative 9-minute video by Kerry Tarnow, an independent YouTuber.

Off-site construction has multiple advantages, including all-weather and year-round construction, much reduced waste, and much improved insulation. There's also less loss due to vandalism or theft from the build site.

On-site work is limited to building the foundation with its entry points for water, sewer and other



utilities, pre-matched to the underside of the Liv-Connect modules. Those connections, when done right, consume only about four hours of the one-day installation process. The driver of the truck is a Liv-Connect employee who is part of the installation crew.

Being in the tiny home business with its Via product line provides the company with protection from the boom-and-bust nature of the modular construction industry, since that line has a more consistent demand cycle. For starters, a good inventory of Via homes on wheels could be quickly sold and deployed to disaster areas and to cities looking for an affordable approach to housing the unhoused or migrants.

The prices for Via homes start under \$100,000. The prices for the modular homes, under the brand **Connexus**, start at \$150,000.

## The 'We Buy Ugly Houses' Company, HomeVestors, Is the Subject of a ProPublica Investigative Article

HomeVestors of America is a franchisor of its "ugly homes" concept and now has over 1,100 franchisees, including here in the Denver area. The chief benefit of being a franchisee is the company's national advertising which you have surely seen on billboards and in other media.



HomeVestors also trains its franchisees on lead generation, which was the subject of a May 11th article by ProPublica, co-published with the *Dallas Morning News* and Shelterforce.

To quote from the article, "*HomeVestors, the self-proclaimed 'largest homebuyer in the United States,' goes to great lengths to distinguish itself from the hedge funds and YouTube gurus that have taken over large swaths of the real estate investment market. The company says it helps homeowners out of jams — ugly houses and ugly situations — improving lives and communities by taking on properties no one else would buy. Part of that mission is a promise not to take advantage of anyone who doesn't understand the true value of their home, even as franchisees pursue rock-bottom prices.*"

Pro-Publica's investigation, which included "interviews with 48 former franchisees and dozens of homeowners who have sold to its franchises" found that franchise owners "used deception and targeted the elderly, infirm and those so close to poverty that they feared homelessness" if they sold.

One former franchise owner said they were trained to lie.

We in the real estate industry are familiar with various tried-and-true prospects for listing a home, including couples that have recently divorced, or where an elderly husband or wife has just died, but HomeVestors apparently "goes the extra mile" in that regard.

A former employee of an ad agency hired by HomeVestors is cited as saying that the ad agency's owner bragged about being able to target homeowners who had recently broken a hip, saying that the injury "is effectively a 60-day countdown to death — and, possibly, a deal."

I have posted a link to the full ProPublica article on our company blog, [www.GoldenREblog.com](http://www.GoldenREblog.com).

## So Many New Scams! Here Are Some We're Seeing

I'm so offended by the texts and emails I receive which are clearly from scammers. I don't want you to be a victim, so let me describe some of them.

At least once or twice a day I get an email labeled "payment notification," "deposit notification," "ACH transfer completed," or something similar with no message, only an attachment. But the attachment is not a PDF or document, it's a file with the suffix ".htm" or ".html," signifying that it's a website. I could be pretty sure that by clicking on that link I would have my com-

puter or iPhone infected with some kind of coding which would open me up to identity theft or worse. **Don't click on any link that's a website!**

Text messages are an increasing source of dubious and unsavory contacts. Many of them simply try to start a conversation with a greeting, but the phone number is from a strange area code. **Delete those!** If it's a real person, they will call you if you've ignored the text.

My posting of this article on our blog at [www.GoldenREblog.com](http://www.GoldenREblog.com) has many more examples of scams.

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