

SATURDAY, MAY 15, 2010 • THE BULLETIN

NW Crossing: Preview Open House



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Volunteer Bruce Schroeder and ReStore director Sophie Paez work with one another to install siding on the Bend Area Habitat for Humanity ReStore home.

Building Beyond Green

Bend Area Habitat for Humanity proves that green building can be cost-effective.

by Nicole Werner, The Bulletin Advertising Department

The term "green building" can conjure the notion of high expense for cost savings that won't be realized for years. This, however, is not the case for homes built by Bend Area Habitat for Humanity (BAHFH) volunteers.

In the past two years, BAHFH has worked with numerous contractors, Earth Advantage and Northwest Energy Star to establish green building practices that could be incorporated into each Habitat home built. Earth Advantage standards are based on energy efficiency, healthy indoor air and minimal environmental impact, and Energy Star rates energy efficiency.

During 2009, BAHFH built 11 homes that achieved Energy Star qualification. According to Energy Star statistics, the impact of those homes can be translated as the elimination of emissions from 5.39 vehicles, saving 32,604 pounds of coal,

planting 8.91 acres of trees and saving homeowners \$4,917 on their utility bills.

Those 11 homes, and the homes currently being built, also meet Earth Advantage Gold standards — standards that go above and beyond Earth Advantage's minimum standards for green building.

According to Bruce Sullivan, building consultant with Earth Advantage in Bend, features that are currently incorporated into all of the Habitat homes include well-designed floorplans with smaller footprints, high-performance insulation, tankless water heaters, solar energy devices, fiber-cement siding, low-flush toilets and low flow faucets and shower heads.

The energy use of a Habitat home is up to 65 percent less than that of a 2,400-square-foot home

built to standard Oregon code. While less energy is used, a more healthful environment is created through the use of automatic fresh-air ventilation systems and paints and sealants that are low in volatile organic compounds (VOCs).

"... this principle is not limited to Habitat homes, but applies across a wide spectrum of the housing market."

built to standard Oregon code.

"While it is difficult to put a price on health, it is safe to say that healthy homes promote healthy people who spend less [money] on health care," said Sullivan.

"They're very healthy homes, and they'll keep the costs low for the people [who live] in them," said Sophie Paez, ReStore Director.

One home in BAHFH's newest community, Parkway Village, will possess all of these qualities while taking one step further in green building to meet Earth Advantage Platinum standards.

"BAHFH has billed the 'ReStore house' as 'taking it to a new level,'" said Sullivan.

The ReStore house gets its name from the orga-

nization involved in its construction. ReStore is a nonprofit building material outlet affiliated with BAHFH that carries donated and surplus materials, appliances, fixtures and furniture. All proceeds from ReStore benefit BAHFH.

"I've always tried to encourage the connection between ReStore and Habitat," said Paez.

The use of reclaimed materials in the ReStore home will take the certification standards beyond Gold to make it eligible for Earth Advantage Platinum certification.

"Because we build so many homes each year now, we buy in bulk," said Paez. "We've never really had the opportunity to use materials from the store."

Paez noted that using reclaimed materials pur-

chased from stores such as ReStore is a sustainable practice, and it also saves money.

"It's not extra," said Paez. "It's using the knowledge of what's available."

During the planning process, the family that is buying the ReStore home was involved in shopping for and organizing materials that came from ReStore.

Reclaimed doors and light fixtures from ReStore will be installed in the home. Reclaimed cabinets from Moon Cabinets and Wool carpets from Brilliant Environmental Building Products will also be used in the home's finishing.

"Bend Habitat demonstrates that green homes don't need to be expensive homes," said Sullivan. "When Habitat owners accept the keys to their new homes, they know that any extra money they invested in green features will come back to them immediately in energy savings. In other words, the cost to finance the savings through their mortgage



Raised heel rafter trusses allow for insulation to be installed across the entire attic for improved energy efficiency in the ReStore home.

is less than the monthly reduction in their energy bills. They save money from day one."

The ReStore home demonstrates the ability to utilize a wide variety of techniques and materials that can fit into many levels of building and remodeling budgets.

"... this principle is not limited to Habitat homes, but applies across a wide spectrum of the housing market," said Sullivan.

Bend Area Habitat for Humanity builds homes through volunteer labor and donations of money and materials. Habitat builds and rehabilitates simple, decent houses with the help of the homeowner (partner) families. Habitat houses are sold to partner families at no profit and are financed with affordable loans. The homeowners' monthly mortgage payments are used to build more Habitat homes.

Photos by Nicole Werner



Half-inch Styrofoam sheathing, donated by Dow Chemical, adds additional wall insulation and protection from water vapor condensation in the wall cavity of the ReStore home.

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