

State Farm donates \$2,500 to Habitat chapter

Posted: Tuesday, May 25, 2010 - 10:05:34 am PDT

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SANDPOINT — State Farm, Idaho's largest auto and home insurance company, recently donated \$2,500 to the local Habitat for Humanity chapter. The company making the contribution as part of the company's on-going commitment to building safer, stronger, and better educated neighborhoods through its Good Neighbor Citizenship program.

Idaho Panhandle Habitat for Humanity is a locally-run affiliate of Habitat for Humanity International. A non-profit, ecumenical Christian housing organization, Habitat for Humanity works in partnership with people in need to build and renovate decent, affordable housing. The houses are then sold to those in need at no profit and with no interest charged. This year's house will be the 13th built by the Panhandle affiliate.

"Strong neighborhoods are the backbone of a vibrant, thriving community," says Sandpoint State Farm Agent Dale Reed. "Our long-term partnership with Habitat programs helps us fulfill our commitment to building strong communities."

Reed is organizing a group of State Farm volunteers for June 5 to help build the newest home at Schissler Meadows.

In the News

Habitat for Humanity Builds 12th Home

Posted: January 28, 2010

(Used with the permission of the Bonner County Daily Bee)

SANDPOINT — The local chapter of Habitat for Humanity, the volunteer group promoting modest, self-build housing has just completed its 12th home. The new owners will be Chuck and Miranda Bowman and their children Charles (8), and Haley (6). Of course their dog and cat—Sindy and Kit Kat—came along too. The home is in the Schissler Meadows property in Kootenai, where Habitat has developed six home sites.

The Bowmans, who were selected for the house 19 months ago, have spent the past year working on their house alongside many volunteers, working under the direction of volunteer supervisor Dan Wimberly. They have exceeded the 500 hours of “sweat equity” required by the Habitat, working on every phase of the construction. “We’ve worked on everything,” says Miranda Bowman, “from the first step to the last step, so that if anything needs to be done, we pretty much know how to take care of it.”

“They were just a delight to work with,” supervisor Dan Wimberly says of the Bowmans. Helping Dan on construction has been Habitat leader Dick Ensminger, and many local volunteers, including groups from the Church of the Nazarene and State Farm Insurance.

Chuck and Miranda moved to Sandpoint from Butte, Montana in 2003, a rough town, they felt. “It was no place to raise children,” Chuck says. Chuck works for Sandpoint furniture, and Miranda does part-time work for Mountain Springs janitorial service. They are thrilled with their new 3-bedroom, 1,264 square foot home. It has a tile floor for the kitchen and family room area and is radiantly heated with a new inexpensive system that employs flexible plastic tubing. Asked about her reaction to the home, Miranda says, “We love everything about it.” Being a homeowner focuses attention on costs. “I’m very picky about lighting and energy. I don’t know how many times a day I turn lights off,” she adds, laughing.

The Idaho Panhandle chapter of Habitat for Humanity was founded in 1992 by local builder Mike Schissler, and has built eleven other houses. It gets no government funds and is entirely supported by donations, and by payments each Habitat family makes on a no-interest, 20-year loan on their house. The payments work out to be around \$300 per month. Participating families are required to contribute 500 hours of “sweat equity” work on their homes, as well as take a budget course, and build a modest savings prior to closing.

Miranda was asked who makes a good candidate for a Habitat family. Her reply:
“Somebody who’s willing to work hard, somebody who’s earned it.”

The dedication of the Bowman home will be held on Saturday, February 6 at 10 AM.

For more information on the Idaho Panhandle Habitat for Humanity see [www. iphfh.org](http://www.iphfh.org)
or call 263-3564.

In the News

Chamber Announces Choice™ Nominees

Posted: Wednesday, Jan 06, 2010 - 10:06:25 am PST

(Used with the permission of the Bonner County Daily Bee)

SANDPOINT — The Greater Sandpoint Chamber of Commerce is proud to announce the nominees for the second Chamber Choice Awards.

The awards, presented by Horizon Credit Union, recognize excellence in businesses and the community.

Nominees are:

Business of the Year — Bonner Community Food Center, Pend Oreille Arts Council, Sandpoint Furniture Carpet One, Northwest Handmade, Sharon's Hallmark, LaQuinta, Community Cancer Services, Quest Aircraft Company and Perfection Tire

Volunteer of the Year — Tricia Sullivan, Tawnie Sleep, Shane Parsons, Lisa Ailport, Doug Lynch, Judy Thompson, Chris Bassett and Kristan Peacock.

Nonprofit of the Year — Idaho Panhandle Habitat for Humanity, Wishing Star, Bonner County Fairgrounds, Bonner General Hospital, Community Action Partnerships, and Friends of Scotchman Peaks Wilderness.

Green Award — Advanced Ice Melt Solutions, Six Rivers Market, Friends of Scotchman Peaks Wilderness, Coldwater Creek, and Pend d'Oreille Winery.

Employee of the Year — Carolyn Inge, Bonner County Daily Bee; Colleen Spickelmire, Panhandle State Bank; and Maddie Imeson, The Lodge at Sandpoint

Employer of the Year — Horizon Credit Union, Pend Oreille Insurance, and Williams & Parsons CPAs.

Rookie of the Year — Evans Brothers Coffee Roasters, STCU, Catie's Uniform Shoppe, Holiday Inn Express & Suites, Business Management Services, LLC, Days Inn, and 41 South/Trinity at City Beach.

Innovation in Education — Bill Jhung, Idaho Small Business Development Center; Cynthia Nielsen, Carden Academy; Dick Cvitanich, Lake Pend Oreille School District; Mindy Cameron; Colleen Ross, Lake Pend Oreille High School; and Mona Stafford, Lake Pend Oreille High School.

Tourism Partner of the Year — Keokee Creative, Schweitzer Mountain Resort, Linda Mitchell, Lake Pend Oreille Cruises; and Big Leap Creative

Citizen of the Year — Jim Lippi, Ivano's; Allen McClelland, Washington Trust Bank; Colleen Spickelmire, Panhandle State Bank; Douglas W. Lynch, Advocate Insurance; David Keyes, Bonner County Daily Bee; and Michael Boge, Sandpoint City Council.

Young Professional of the Year — Jacob Styer, Coldwater Creek; Michelle Anderson, Pend Oreille Health Care; Kevin Estes, Coldwater Creek; Alana Hatcher, Coldwater Creek; Stephen Snedden, Sandpoint City Council; and John Reuter, Sandpoint City Council.

More than 550 members of the Greater Sandpoint Chamber of Commerce will vote on these awards. The winners will be announced at the Chamber Choice Awards on Friday, Jan. 29, at the Sandpoint Business & Event Center.

The event is an Oscar-style awards ceremony honoring businesses and individuals who are involved, innovative, and inspirational and represent the "best of" in the greater Sandpoint area.

Sponsoring the event is STCU, Williams and Parsons, 95.3 KPND, Panhandle State Bank, and the Bonner County Daily Bee.

For tickets and information, visit <http://www.sandpointchamber.com/> or call 263-2161.

In the News

Habitat for Humanity is area's best-kept secret

Posted: Thursday, Dec 31, 2009 - 10:06:01 am PST

By TOM HARVILL

(Used with the permission of the Bonner County Daily Bee)

In December, the Idaho Panhandle Habitat for Humanity, will finish the 12th home constructed in this area. This house is not a donation or given to the recipient family, but is sold to them. They pay monthly payments for 20 to 25 years against a mortgage held by the local affiliate. Payments go right back into the pool of funds to build the next house.

But what does this really mean. It means another local family is given the opportunity for safe, affordable, and decent housing. It means they can stay and work in this community. Their wages are earned and spent here. The materials to build the house are purchased here. The minimal professional service required on each house is obtained from the local trades.

There are no government grants funding these homes. All of the funds to build our homes come from homeowner payments, cash gifts and donations from generous individuals and businesses within the community, and profits from the ReStore. The labor to build these homes comes from dedicated volunteers from throughout the community.

We purchased and developed Schissler Meadows into a 15 lot subdivision. That required cash to develop. Those lots are slowly being used up as we complete additional homes. We have another seven acres that is pending infrastructure development. When complete, our lot costs have been about 25 to 35 percent of market costs, thus allowing our homes remain affordable. But this requires cash.

Habitat is not only just about pounding nails. It's about finding potential low to moderate income homeowners that have a job, a desire to give 300 to 500 hours of sweat equity on their home as well as others, and truly have a housing need. It's about volunteering at the ReStore one day a week. It's about being with an existing family while they struggle with the current economy, helping them make life decisions. It's about dedicating a Tuesday or Saturday morning for several months to work on the house, it's about bringing a group out to Schissler Meadows to chop weeds. It's about taking your gently used building materials or appliances and donating them to the ReStore. It's about supporting the local mission of your church through a Habitat tithe. It's about our community, our town and the neighbors that make it such a great place to live.

I encourage anyone interested in learning more about our affiliate to attend our monthly board meeting, always held the second Tuesday of each month (Jan 12, 2010), 6:30 p.m. at the ReStore located at 1424 N Boyer. Cash donations can always be sent to our local address, P.O. Box 1191 in Sandpoint.

Tom Harvill is president of Idaho Panhandle Habitat for Humanity.

In the News

Evergreen Donates to Habitat for Humanity
Posted: December 24, 2009

(Used with the permission of the Bonner County Daily Bee)

Evergreen Realty has donated \$5,000 this year to the Idaho Habitat for Humanity bringing their five year total to almost \$40,000. Each agent donates a portion of their commissions from each sale to Habitat all year long. Even in these tough times in real estate, the Evergreen crew continues to give back to the community of Sandpoint.

Habitat Benefits From Harvill's Birthday Celebration

Posted: Thursday, Oct 01, 2009 - 10:06:26 am PDT

(Used with the permission of the Bonner County Daily Bee)



Tom Harvill, left, presents a \$2,500 donation to Curt Hagan of the Idaho Panhandle Habitat for Humanity. The donation was given by AmericanWest Bank in celebration of Harvill's 60th birthday. (Photo by DAVID KEYES)

SANDPOINT — At a typical birthday party, the honoree receives the gifts.

Tuesday, however, was not a normal party. Instead, AmericanWest Bank hosted a birthday party for Tom Harvill, the manager of the Sandpoint Financial Center.

Anyone who knows Harvill knows he's passionate about his work at the bank as well as Habitat for Humanity so it's no surprise he found a way to bring the two together Tuesday. In honor of Harvill's 60th birthday, the bank is gifting \$2,500 to Idaho Panhandle Habitat for Humanity.

"One of the things I like most about volunteering with Habitat is our efforts result in a home — a permanent residence for a deserving family — and often it's for those that may not otherwise qualify to win a home," Harvill said. "Every Tuesday and Saturday morning, a crew is out quietly and without fanfare, building one house at a time, house after house."

Tuesday's party was part of an overall community celebration at the Sandpoint Financial Center, located at 605 5th Street, and included food, fun and special CD rates.

"We truly value the important contributions Habitat makes to this community and Tuesday's \$2,500 gift is special because it honors Tom and his long-time volunteerism with Habitat," said Braddock, Idaho regional manager for IdahoWest Bank.

The 12th Habitat home is currently under construction in the Sandpoint area, this one in Schissler Meadows, with an ambitious Dec. 1 completion date.

"Right now, Habitat is working to raise the final \$12,500 to complete the current house," Harvill said. "I cannot think of a better birthday gift than to assist Habitat in completing the house."

Habitat Seeks Push to Finish Home
 Posted: Sunday, Aug 23, 2009 - 10:05:01 am PDT
 By DAVID GUNTER
 Feature Correspondent



Miranda and Chuck Bowman work together to help install siding on their new home under construction in Schissler Meadows. The couple has invested nearly 500 hours of sweat equity in building two homes as part of the ongoing efforts of the local Idaho Panhandle Habitat for Humanity chapter. (Photo by DAVID GUNTER)

(Used with the permission of the Bonner County Daily Bee)

KOOTENAI — A nail drops and bounces on the front porch as it is passed from Miranda Bowman to her husband, Chuck. The couple bends down to pick it up, nearly bumping heads in the process. When they come up with the nail clasped between their joined fingers, they laugh.

The tiny object they retrieved represents a much larger part of their lives together — it is a piece of the home they are helping to build and hope to move their family into this fall.

The Bowmans' abode will be the 11th house completed by Idaho Panhandle Habitat for Humanity since that local organization was formed in 1991. Donations have been down in a rough economy, but the group keeps building on faith, confident that the money will come, just as it always has.

"The bottom line on this particular home is that we're about \$20,000 short of what we need to finish it," said Curt Hagan, who oversees real estate procurement and fundraising for the local Habitat chapter. "We're still hoping to have the new family ready for occupancy by October, but it would be nice to have a push here at the end."

Corporate donations have remained steady this year, "but it's those little \$25 donations in the mail that make the difference," Hagan said.

The Bowmans have invested almost 400 hours of "sweat equity" in building the four-bedroom home that will house them and their four children. Before that, they put in another 100 hours helping to build the home before theirs. In all, it has been a two-year commitment for the couple.

"They've got a great work ethic," said Dan Wimberly, vice president for Idaho Panhandle Habitat for Humanity and construction foreman for the project at Schissler Meadows — a 15-lot Habitat housing development in Kootenai. "I had them shoveling sand one Saturday for four hours and they never complained. They just kept shoveling sand."

"I love it," Miranda Bowman said as she stood inside the unfinished interior of the home she will call her own. "It's not even like work."

As she spoke, a crew of Habitat volunteers unloaded siding in the driveway as the future owner of home No. 12 pounded nails to build a set of wooden stairs leading up to the back door.

Including the Bowmans' new residence, there will be six homes at Schissler Meadows, named in memory of one of the original founders of the local chapter, homebuilder Mike Schissler, whose construction experience and abundant positive energy lifted the chapter off the ground more than 18 years ago.

Last summer, the group opened a 6,500-square-foot Habitat for Humanity ReStore on North Boyer. The store sells new and used building materials, tools, paint, appliances and furniture at 25-50 percent of retail cost. If sales grow as planned, the ReStore is expected to net about \$60,000 next year — a little less than the amount needed to build the average-priced Habitat home.

"We've been on a one-a-year trajectory for new homes, but we're hoping to ramp that up to two-a-year with help from the ReStore," Hagan said.

With nine lots remaining at the 5-acre Schissler Meadows site, doubling the rate of construction means that Idaho Panhandle Habitat for Humanity will need to plan ahead for future building. For that reason, the organization procured a 7-acre site on McGhee Road in Kootenai, giving it room for as many as another 21 Habitat homes going forward. Just as has been the case at Schissler Meadows, the land is paid for, according to Hagan.

"Financially, we're a conservative group," he said. "We do everything on the free and clear."

Financial considerations have been the sole limiting factor in how quickly Habitat builds homes in Bonner County, where the chapter works with lower-income families to provide housing. Although Hagan invariably takes exception to the term "affordable housing" — too vague, he argues, and too prone to misinterpretation — he does agree that there is a constant need for decent housing that falls within the means of working families. That's especially true, he noted, in a region that has experienced rocketing home prices due to its attractive location.

"If people feel that supplying a steady home for children is worthwhile, then, as a community, we need to step up," Hagan said.

"There's this flashy resort in Bonner County and underneath that, there is a huge underbelly of poverty," he added. "Habitat is not flashy; we're not front-page news. But we're real steady and consistent — we just keep building houses."

For more information about how to volunteer for Habitat for Humanity or to make donations to the local chapter, write to: Idaho Panhandle Habitat for Humanity, P.O. Box 1191, Sandpoint, ID, 83864.

State Farm Donates \$2,500 to Habitat Chapter

Posted: Friday, Apr 17, 2009 - 10:06:11 am PDT

(Used with the permission of the Bonner County Daily Bee)



Dale Reeds presents a check for \$2,500 to Tom Harvill of Panhandle Habitat for Humanity. (Courtesy photo)

Idaho's largest auto and home insurance company recently donated \$2,500 to Idaho Panhandle Habitat for Humanity.

Idaho Panhandle Habitat for Humanity is a locally-run affiliate of Habitat for Humanity International, a nonprofit, ecumenical Christian housing organization. Habitat for Humanity works in partnership with people in need to build and renovate decent, affordable housing.

The houses then are sold to those in need at no profit and with no interest charged.

State Farm is making the contribution as part of the company's on-going commitment to building safer, stronger, and better-educated neighborhoods through its Good Neighbor Citizenship

program.

"Strong neighborhoods are the backbone of a vibrant, thriving community," said Sandpoint State Farm Agent Dale Reed. "Our long-term partnership with Habitat programs helps us fulfill our commitment to building strong communities."

Once the building season begins, Reed will organize a group of volunteers from State Farm to help build one of the new homes in the Schissler Meadows subdivision.

Bank of America Launches Drive for Habitat for Humanity

Posted: Tuesday, Dec 02, 2008 - 10:05:40 am PST

(Used with the permission of the Bonner County Daily Bee)

The local branch of Bank of America is continuing its support for Habitat for Humanity this holiday season and is asking for the community to help out.

On Dec. 16 from 9-3, bank employees will be attempting to fill a Habitat for Humanity ReStore truck with appliances and building supplies. They will also accept cash donations to help Habitat.

"We are excited to continue a tradition of supporting the local Bonner County Habitat for Humanity," said Vivienne Smith, bank manager. Smith wanted to recognize former manager Tom Harville for keeping BofA so active with Habitat.

To kickoff the public relations portion of the "Build a Home for the Holidays," Smith and a handful of employees spent part of last weekend making gingerbread houses.

"We had the stickiest, funnest time," she said. "It's now our hope people will notice the houses in the branch and will ask us about our Dec. 16 drive."

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Reuse, Recycle, ReStore: Habitat Discount Retail Store to Open Aug. 2
 Posted: Sunday, Jul 13, 2008 - 09:32:01 am PDT
 By DAVID GUNTER
 Correspondent

(Used with the permission of the Bonner County Daily Bee)



Photo by DAVID GUNTER - Construction is under way at the Idaho Panhandle Habitat for Humanity ReStore location, which is scheduled to open Aug. 2 on North Boyer. Pictured, from left, are Don Hanset, treasurer; Dick Ensminger, board member and representative to the state association of Habitat for Humanity; and William Kopiecki, store manager.

SANDPOINT - Idaho Panhandle Habitat for Humanity has taken the next step in the evolution of the organization, a move that will allow the non-profit group to double the number of homes it builds each year for lower-income families. On Aug. 2, the local affiliate of Habitat for Humanity International will open its ReStore in a 6,500-square-foot building behind Panhandle Special Needs, Inc., at 1424 North Boyer.

The store will sell new and used building materials such as doors, windows, flooring, lumber, cabinets, countertops, plumbing and electrical supplies, lighting fixtures, tools, paint, appliances and furniture at 25-50 percent of retail cost.

After its second year in Sandpoint, the ReStore is expected to net about \$60,000, according to Don Hanset, treasurer for the local affiliate.

"Which will get us to that second home," he said, adding that the affiliate has averaged about one home per year over the past decade.

There are now 10 Habitat for Humanity homes in Bonner County, with the 11th under construction at Schissler Meadows - a 5-acre, 15-lot parcel in Kootenai named in honor of Mike Schissler, one of the original founders of the local affiliate whose vision and energy drove its progress before he passed away.

When the organization was formed here in 1991, land prices were less than half what they average today. The first few homes were built on lots priced at about \$12,000, Hanset said. The land price for more recent homes has climbed to \$25,000.

Building a larger number of homes will mean that Schissler Meadows reaches capacity not too many years down the road. To get in front of escalating property costs, Idaho Panhandle Habitat for Humanity purchased a 7-acre lot north of the Kootenai Cut-off Road in late 2006.

"We wanted to look into the future instead of waiting until we used our last lot and then looking around and saying, 'Now what are we going to do?'" the treasurer said.

There already are two families lined up for the next couple of Habitat homes on the schedule. Working alongside local volunteers, they each will invest between 300-500 hours of "sweat equity" to help build the home that is before them in the queue, as well as their own dwelling. Once inside the new home, families pay an average of about \$300 per month, which generates a little more than \$35,000-a-year from current Habitat homeowners.

The search for additional funding led the affiliate to the ReStore concept. At present, the U.S. has about 450 such stores, with approximately another 50 in Canada. Regionally, ReStore locations are operating in both Spokane and Hayden. The stores tend to do well, with about 50 percent of gross sales hitting the profit line.

"People who buy things from a ReStore are looking for bargains - they're people who normally would be going to a yard sale or looking in the Nickel's Worth," said Hanset.

Materials such as framing lumber that was the wrong dimension, or items like hot tubs and appliances that were difficult for the affiliate to deal until now will be welcome at the ReStore.

Beyond raising money for more homes, the store will create two or three new jobs and re-route unwanted items out of the waste stream and back into good use, the treasurer explained.

"For every dollar of sales we have, we avoid one pound of materials from going into the landfill," he said.

"Think of us as one giant recycling center," said William Kopiecki, manager for the ReStore. "We emphasize the donation of building materials, but we can take everything. People can clean out that old barn or garage, drop the items off here and then we'll distribute what we can't use to thrift stores in the area."

The manager sees the new store as both a source of funding for the organization's building projects and a resource center for Habitat applications and information.

"My interest has been to raise the public profile of Habitat for Humanity - we've got a listing in the phone book, a physical address and we had a float in the Fourth of July parade," said Kopiecki, a former contractor who served as a board member before being selected as ReStore manager.

"My vision is that the store will be a magnet for more donors and volunteers and that, because of the visibility, people of means will begin to adopt Habitat as their own cause," he added.

Until then, the affiliate plans to keep taking one small step at a time by raising money from the sale of donated goods. With the Aug. 2 deadline approaching, volunteers are at work to finish the interior shell of the store, but it still lacks much of the hardware that will be necessary to display merchandise.

"We're going to need a lot of shelving, pallets and carts, so we've been kind of going around with a tin cup in our hand saying, 'Can you help us out?'" Hanset said.

It's a familiar drill for the people behind the Habitat homes built locally. And although ReStore profits will accelerate the construction schedule, there may always be more families waiting for housing than there are homes to go around, according to Hanset.

"It's kind of daunting, because we realize we'll probably never solve the affordable housing problem in Sandpoint through Habitat," he said.

"But we're the ones out there working on it," Kopiecki said. "Considering the emphasis on affordable housing and workforce housing, the ReStore can be one of the resources to make that happen."

Donations to the local ReStore are tax-deductible and may be dropped off at the North Boyer site on Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Donors can also arrange for items to be picked up. For information: 265-5313 or visit <http://www.ipfh.org/>

Evergreen Realty agents donate to Habitat
Posted: Friday, Dec 28, 2007 - 10:39:29 am PST

(Used with the permission of the Bonner County Daily Bee)

For the second year, agents of Evergreen Realty in Sandpoint and Schweitzer elected to donate a portion of each of their commissions to support the local Idaho Panhandle Habitat for Humanity.

"What a wonderful Christmas gift to the community and Habitat," said Tom Harvill, president of the Idaho Panhandle Habitat for Humanity.

"Last year Evergreen Realty contributed \$11,000 and they have added \$14,000 this year for a total of \$25,000".

"It is safe to say that Evergreen Realty has built a house for a deserving local family," he said.

The agents at Evergreen Realty have not put any stipulations on the use of these funds, but it is anticipated that the proceeds will be used to finish the infrastructure at Habitat's project in Schissler Meadows in Kootenai.

"I am very proud of our agents and the commitment they have made to Habitat," said Charlie Parrish, Broker/Owner of Evergreen Realty.

"Everyone is aware of the state of the real estate market," Parrish said.

"In spite of the nationwide trend, we enjoyed a successful year and are happy to share our good fortune to see that another family finds a home."

Donations to Idaho Panhandle Habitat for Humanity can be mailed to PO Box 1191, Sandpoint, Idaho 83864.



Habitat Plans to Open Building Supply ReStore

Posted: Sunday, Nov 04, 2007 - 12:46:07 pm PST
By MARLISA KEYES
Staff writer

(Used with the permission of the Bonner County Daily Bee)

SANDPOINT -- Constructing one house a year is all Panhandle Habitat for Humanity can afford. But the organization's goal is two homes a year for two families, said volunteer Don Hanset.

One way the affiliate's members think they can accomplish that is by opening a Habitat ReStore in the area sometime next summer. ReStores specialize in selling used, overstocked or outdated building materials at 30 to 50 percent of market value.

The closest such store is located in Hayden.

Although the local organization brings in \$36,000 a year from 10 no-interest mortgages on the homes it has built, that money is used to make the monthly payment on seven acres of land north of Coldwater Creek that the organization purchased several years ago.

Habitat builds homes primarily with volunteer labor for qualifying families at no profit and does not charge interest on mortgages. Those who qualify are required to put in 300 to 500 hours of sweat equity on a Habitat house.

Panhandle Habitat also raises money through various individual and corporate donations, but that still is not enough to fund building two houses a year.

Currently, it costs the Panhandle affiliate about \$72,000 to build each house -- \$60,000 for the home and \$12,000 for the lot. However, utilities were recently added to a second phase of lots in Schissler Meadows in Kootenai, putting those lots prices at \$20,000.

Habitat affiliates have more than 500 ReStores around the United States, using money raised from sales for purchasing building materials to construct houses.

About 50 percent of what a ReStore makes returns to a Habitat affiliate.

For example, the Hayden affiliate sold \$375,000 worth of materials last year and kept \$175,000. That money allowed the organization to build an additional three homes, Hanset said.

He doubts a ReStore in this area will raise that kind of money in Bonner County, but is hopeful that enough money can be made to build additional homes.

The other 50 percent raised by an affiliate is used to pay for a store manager, a truck driver, one other employee and typically rent for a facility. That same approach will be used for the Bonner County affiliate, Hanset said.

A ReStore provides many benefits to a community in addition to raising money for building supplies and providing jobs, Hanset said.

Budget-minded consumers will enjoy the prices, and business and individuals will receive tax benefits from their donations.

People who purchase items from ReStores tend to be those with low-incomes and looking for bargains to do small remodeling projects.

Habitat home owners also can choose to work at the store for their sweat equity hours rather than on the construction site.

Instead of materials from remodeling projects going to the landfill because people have no other means of disposing of them, they can be sold at the Restore.

A year ago, Hanset added onto his house and a window removed from the project went to the landfill.

"There was no place to take it," he said.

The one thing a ReStore does not do is compete with local building supply and hardware businesses like Lumberman's, Merwin's, Home Depot or Sandpoint Building Supply.

If a house is being remodeled or built, contractors purchase those supplies new from a building supply or hardware store.

"We're really competing with the yard sales," he said.

Panhandle Habitat has tried to sell supplies at summer yard sales, but that has not worked well -- perhaps because people may not have the need for an item at that point, but could at a later date.

Individuals sometimes will offer leftover building supplies to Habitat for their projects, but those materials don't work on the organization's project because they use standard plans and more often than not, those supplies are the wrong dimension or color.

ReStores sell items like doors, windows, flooring, lumber, cabinets, countertops, mirrors, plumbing fixtures and supplies, electrical and lighting fixtures and supplies, vents, piping, fans and paint. They also may sell furniture and appliances.

Panhandle Habitat is looking for a 5,000 to 7,500 square foot warehouse space, a truck, dollies for transporting materials and cash registers.

Anyone interested in helping plan for the ReStore's startup can contact Hanset at 610-0620. To learn more on Habitat for Humanity, call 265-5313.

Habitat's 10th House

Posted: Thursday, Jun 28, 2007 - 09:40:08 am PDT

(Used with the permission of the Bonner County Daily Bee)



Jesse Christiansen and her children, Hannah and Tyler, are with Habitat for Humanity volunteers who worked on their home. Idaho Panhandle Habitat for Humanity dedicated its 10th house on June 9 at Schissler Meadows. The home belongs to Jesse Christiansen and her children, Hannah and Tyler. Christiansen put more than 400 hours of work into her home during the nine months of construction; 300 hours are required.

Schissler Meadows will have 15 Habitat homes. Work on the next house will begin this summer. Volunteers typically work 8 a.m. to noon Tuesdays and Saturdays. If an individual or group is interested in working, call 265-5313.

Habitat's local board meets the second Tuesday of the month at 6:30 p.m. at the United Methodist Church.

Habitat for Humanity keeps on giving
Posted: Sunday, Dec 31, 2006 - 01:22:13 pm PST
By MARY BERRYHILL
Staff writer

(Used with the permission of the Bonner County Daily Bee)

SANDPOINT -- Habitat for Humanity is the organization that gives all year long.

This upcoming spring, the Idaho Panhandle Habitat for Humanity is readying its 10th home for occupancy. The non-profit organization has been in existence for 15 years now, thanks to founder Mike Schissler and a host of area individuals and businesses.

While building homes in Mexico on a mission for his church, Schissler decided that when he returned home to Sandpoint, he was going to look into starting the program that builds homes for low-income families.

He soon founded the Idaho Panhandle Habitat for Humanity. Two years later the first Habitat home was being built in Whiskey Jack on Red Clover Lane. Shortly after a second was built at Jewel Lake.

"That one took quite a while to construct because it was a considerable distance from town," said Curt Hagan, former president of Habitat, and currently its vice president.

Following the home on Jewel Lake, two additional homes were constructed on a plot of land east of Division on Hickory. Ken and Annie Jackson donated the land. Later, two more houses were built next to the East Bonner County Library, followed by another two on Cedar west of the library.

"In the early times, Mike (Schissler) was working construction all day and still, he would stop on his way home from his regular job and work some more on the Habitat homes - up to three additional hours a day," Hagan said. "So that was a lot of dedication."

Schissler owned and operated Schissler Construction, and when he passed away, a plot of land was dedicated in his name. It was called Schissler Meadows and is located about five miles northeast of Sandpoint.

"His dream was to get to that 10th home," Hagan said.

"We both used to laugh and say that if we could get 10 houses, we wouldn't have to worry about finding anymore donations. But that was a dirty trick because we discovered that Habitat still worries about donations because there is such a demand."

Upon completion, all Idaho Panhandle Habitat for Humanity homes are "free and clear" with no mortgages. Recipients, in turn, make payments on their homes and also dedicate 300 to 500 hours on the homes that they will some day own. They are asked to give other Habitat recipients a helping hand on their homes as well.

"When we dedicate a home, there is no debt remaining on it," Hagan said. "Everything is paid for as we go, and that includes the land. When payments are made, the money is used for the next home to be built. So we are kind of unusual in that respect. But there is never enough money. We continue to fundraise, and all those things that non-profits do."

A recent newcomer to the Idaho Panhandle Habitat, Ron Read, said that three years ago while searching for a home to buy, he met Hagan, who is also a local Realtor. Hagan asked him if he'd like to become involved in Habitat, and today Read finds himself working three hours each day, seven days a week, managing Habitat's day-to-day operations.

"The work doesn't stop," he said.

Read, who owns Rocky Mountain Excavation, oversees all water, road and sewer issues, coordinates utilities, and takes care of various city matters. He also helps search out donations for the projects.

"We've been involved in Habitat now for four months and our job is to make sure everything is going smoothly," Read said. "Habitat is alive and doing well."

To keep the Idaho Panhandle Habitat for Humanity alive, donations of time and services are provided by such businesses as Rocky Mountain Excavation and Cedar Street Electric. Dan Provolt of Northwest Traverse donated all surveying services from the very beginning for all 15 lots. Sewell Engineering has been generous with their engineering services.

"They are a group of three who have worked so hard on all of this," Hagan said.

Hagan, who joined the organization in 1994 with three original Habitat members who are still involved today - Penny Mattson, Tom Harvill and Joe Johnson.

Marty Taylor, Jessie King, Eric Eldenburg, Consolidated Pipe and a host of other individuals and businesses have helped eliminate area homelessness over the years. The Idaho Panhandle Habitat for Humanity wouldn't exist without them.
