

McMinnville women influence building concept

Community aspect is incorporated into design of affordable green housing

By LINDSEY O'BRIEN
lindsey.obrien@djcOregon.com

Three McMinnville women – all widowed mothers of adult children with developmental disabilities – are inspiring a building movement. Or they're at least raising awareness of community needs that could lead to one.

Living options are scarce for adults with special needs, and Patricia Smith, Patricia Britton and another woman who asked not to be identified became friends through their efforts to build appropriate housing for their chil-

dren. Now in their 60s and early 70s, the women are thinking of their own futures and, again, found few existing options.

"We thought it would be good if we could be neighbors – not roommates, but neighbors in small, energy-efficient homes," Britton said. "Like an informal assisted-living community where people would know whether we were coming or going, where people would come in and check on us if there was no activity for 24 hours."

So with the help of John Mead, founder of Cellar Ridge Custom

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Courtesy of
Doreen L. Wynja
Patricia Britton's home is the first that was built on a plot of land bought by three McMinnville women, all widowed mothers of adult children with developmental disabilities. Britton's first utility bill after she moved into the small, energy-efficient cottage was \$25.

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Women: '50/10' homes may be built on Portland lots

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Homes, the three women found a property near Cozine Creek, purchased it and helped Mead refine "50/10 Houses" – a design concept that, for many homebuilders, reflects the market's desire for affordable green homes.

The "50/10" concept is to build houses that are 50 percent more efficient than those built to Oregon code, at only a 10 percent premium. The challenge, Mead said, is targeting prospective buyers.

"Part of our success as a green builder is getting creative in our marketing approach," he said.

Matt Daby, owner of M.O. Daby Design, designed the Cozine Creek homes, as well as a suite of options for future 50/10 homes. The team was inspired by the desire of the McMinnville women to live near each other, and it hopes to bring a similar sense of community to future 50/10 projects.

"With Cozine Creek, the idea was that we're not only paying attention to your lot and your house, but also to the spaces in between and how they intersect," said Daby, whose efforts were

also influenced by his work to design a future 35-unit community for the McMinnville chapter of Habitat for Humanity. "You're thinking about your neighbors rather than just yourself."

Daby and the team from Cellar Ridge are hoping to build another "pocket neighborhood" at Valley's Edge, a McMinnville development with some existing homes and apartments, but 28 lots still for sale.

"We approached the developers and said, 'Hey, we're not in a position to buy these lots, but we'll put them on contract (for six) and market the concept,'" Mead said. "We agreed upon a purchase price with them so when we get started we have those lots ready to go."

A couple of prospective homebuyers are in discussions to purchase lots, according to Mead, but so far all six are still available. The new home models start at \$225,000, and the team is exploring options for building 50/10 houses on single infill lots in Portland.

Britton moved into her new, 1,300-square-foot home along Cozine Creek about three weeks ago, and Cellar Ridge will begin



Courtesy of Doreen L. Wyrja
Cellar Ridge Custom Homes completed work on the home of Patricia Britton, left, in October and is about to begin construction of a similar, neighboring home for Patricia Smith, right. Their ideas for community-oriented living helped builder John Mead and designer Matt Daby refine a concept for affordable green housing.

work on Smith's house in the coming weeks.

The double-wall construction, heat recovery ventilators, high insulation levels and solar orientation are paying off, according to Britton. Her first utility bill was \$25.

"Our experience is if it doesn't exist, then see what you can do to create it," she said.

After struggling to find suitable housing for their kids, the women worked with Families United for Independent Living, a Yamhill County nonprofit, to build two apartment buildings – one in McMinnville and one in Newberg – for low-income, developmentally disabled adults. Both Britton's and Smith's children live

independently in the units at Hendricks Place in McMinnville.

And now their ingenuity is helping them plan ahead for the realities of their own futures.

"So many women are left alone and as we age we need support from other women friends," said Smith, who has outlived two husbands. "It's just part of life."

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Thursday Insider

Green Spotlight notes that the Mason-Ehrman Building recently received a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design gold rating for existing buildings. **Page 4**

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On the move

Protesters are no longer in Lowndale and Chapman squares, but they're continuing to speak out in other places around town. **Page 3**

20 new construction bidding opportunities listed today. **PAGE 6**

31 thousand dollars in construction liens listed today. **PAGES 9-13**

23 new public notices and calls for bids published today. **PAGES 14-20**

Fix-it crisis: Where's the money?

Activists aim to increase awareness of well-known problem: transportation maintenance suffering from dwindling gas taxes

By ANGELA WEBBER
angela.webber@djcOregon.com

Demonstrators today will line the Steel Bridge hoping to raise awareness about its "structurally deficient" status and recent cuts to the Portland Bureau of Transportation's discretionary budget. Meanwhile, a group from the Oregon chapter of the American Society of Civil Engineers is preparing to put a plaque on the 99-year-old bridge to recognize it as an "important piece of infrastructure."

Both actions aim to increase awareness of what activists perceive as a problem in Oregon and the nation as a whole: Bridges, roads and highway are in danger of falling into disrepair because a traditional funding source for maintenance – the gas tax – is failing to keep pace with demand.

A solution, however, isn't evident. A different funding mechanism would take a long time to establish, and an infrastructure funding package proposed as part of President Barack Obama's jobs bill was rejected in Congress recently.

The Steel Bridge is only one of several downtown bridges rated either "structurally deficient" or "functionally obsolete" by infrastructure advocacy group Transportation for America. A group of union repre-



Sam Tenney/DJC
Members of Laborers Local 483, including city of Portland employees Daniel Puha, left, and Andy Goshorn, second from left, stand in support as a union representative addresses City Council on Wednesday. The union asked the council to declare economic emergency because of cuts to the Portland Bureau of Transportation's discretionary budget.

sentatives and employment advocates plan to demonstrate at the bridge under the banner of "We Are Oregon" – an organization that fights unemployment and foreclosures.

"The idea is to use the bridge as a symbol of a disconnect: We have work that needs doing and we have unemployed people," We Are Oregon communications director Angus Maguire said.

The Laborers Local 483 union will be represented at the event. The union has 300 mem-

bers in PBOT, which recently announced upcoming budget cuts of \$16 million.

"This will inevitably lead to a contraction in the department and significant layoffs for our members," Laborers Local 482 spokeswoman Megan Hise said. "This is the first public event we're doing to raise community awareness."

We Are Oregon is not targeting a specific piece of legislation or even a specific agency. Hise said the group acknowledges

that PBOT, for example, simply lacks gas tax revenue.

"We're just getting started with the 'solutions' part of the campaign," Hise said. "The first step is recognizing that there's a problem."

Transportation agencies, however, have long known that a problem exists.

"The problem at hand is that transportation (maintenance) is funded by an unsus-

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