

Community collaborates on foreclosed home renovation



NOVEMBER 03, 2012 8:08 PM • BRIAN WELLNER

COLONA, Ill. — The house Jenny Hager found in March looks nothing like the one she showed off Saturday.

The vice president for marketing and development at Bethany for Children and Families said the two-story, 1,130-square-foot home at 718 4th St. was an “eyesore” before her organization started renovating the foreclosed home.

She said the support from the Quad-Cities has been “phenomenal,” especially from local unions.

The International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 145 redid all the home’s wiring, the Plumbers & Pipefitters Local 25 redid all the plumbing and on Saturday, the Sheet Metal Workers Local 91 replaced the furnace and some duct work.

“You couldn’t put a price tag on the community involvement,” she said.

Quad-City area companies, including Aero Plumbing and Heating, Republic, Valspar and Seven Cities Sod, also donated services, she said.

More than 150 volunteers have worked on the renovation for seven months, she said. The front and back porches were replaced, the roof was replaced and the upstairs was totally redone. She said ceiling tiles in the living room and kitchen were glued on, and now the ceiling is plastered over.

Scott Barber, business manager of Sheet Metal Workers Local 91, said he personally has put in about a dozen hours on the home.

“We saw what needed to be done, and we couldn’t let a family live in here if it doesn’t meet code,” Barber said.

He replaced a 40-year-old furnace with a new one valued at \$2,500 and donated by Kale Heating & Air Conditioning of Moline.

Bill Steinhauser, Bethany CEO, said the renovation is one of several projects meant to stabilize neighborhoods in bad economic times. He noted that 45 homes go into foreclosure in Rock Island County every month. Bethany works in a 10-county area in Illinois, including Rock Island and Henry counties.

The city of Colona donated the home to Bethany, and after renovation, the home will be put back on the market, he said.

“For the same price, instead of renting, a family can own, and welcome to the middle class,” Steinhauser

said.

Hager said the family or individual who buys the house in Colona will get a home that is almost maintenance-free. She said the home will be put on the market for about \$82,000.

Bethany, which began 113 years ago as an orphanage, still relies on community involvement, Hager said.

“This community has just overwhelmed us,” she said.