

Wall-to-wall action

'Makeover' building process blends sweat and computers

By [Greg Stiles](#)

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The location remains a mystery, the "go" time still a day or so into the future.

Yet, a band of local volunteers hammered, drilled and sawed away on Labor Day like there was no tomorrow with ABC television's "Extreme Makeover: Home Edition" due to arrive this week.

More than a dozen skilled and semi-skilled carpenters gathered on one of the

hottest days of the year at the Pacific Wall and Truss Systems plant in Central Point, piecing together a series of walls that will be assembled into a new home for a Rogue Valley family to be named Wednesday.

It was the third day on the production line for Rogue Community College construction management student Joel Parsons, who also lent a helping hand on Thursday and Friday after getting an email about the project last week.

"My wife loves the show and all the creative ways they have of knocking down the houses," said Parsons who returned to school after he was laid off from his job at Panel Crafters in White City.

"Extreme Makeover: Home Edition" producers said in June they were scanning Jackson County to find a family whose home needed more than a simple fix-up.

Nancy Mansfield, one of the owners of Pacific Wall and Truss Systems, said her firm received drawings for the project a couple of weeks ago so that specifications could be entered into the company computer.

Last week, the community held a pep assembly at South Medford High School to launch the massive volunteer effort it will take to demolish the existing structure and replace it with a new structure. Previous efforts, have been over-the-top masterpieces.

"The way I see it, we're all giving back to each other," Parsons said. "That's the way I was raised, to do unto others as you would have them do unto you. I'm a go with the flow kind of guy, wherever I'm needed I fit in whether I'm doing carpet, walls or painting, it doesn't matter."

During the real estate boom, Medford resident John Kelton got a contractor's license and joined the mad scramble to build homes. Today, he works in shipping and receiving for Big R. On Monday, he tagged along with his neighbor Bob Dohanos.

"This is quite a bit different than what I was used to do," Kelton said. "We'd take everything out there and build on the site. Part of what we did was to get to know the people we were building for and know exactly what they wanted. We don't know who this is for."

Nonetheless, he said he plans to be around when volunteers spring to action for round-the-clock construction at the home site, if it doesn't conflict with his job.

David McKinley, who is studying construction technology at RCC, had never worked on wall systems before.

"This is kind of cool," he said. "I've been more involved in the sales aspect and haven't done a lot in manufacturing."

One thing the Medford resident could tell, however, was how rapidly wall panels were constructed and bundled.

"When you run a computer-generated system," McKinley said. "It definitely makes things go a lot faster than being out in the field, running around with a lot of tape measures."

More important, he said, was the community spirit on display.

"What we've got here is everyone helping each other," McKinley said. "In this economy, you help people wherever you can."

Avi Zohar of Medford, an instructor at RCC's Construction Department, said the system was slick.

"Provided all the numbers marked on the panels are the right numbers," he said.

Volunteers expected to crank out panels well into the night, Mansfield said.

"Right now, they still need material donations like gravel, wallpaper, lumber and donations to the builders' fund to pay for materials," Mansfield said. "Basically, it's miraculous something like this is happening."

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