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Photo by VICKY GITS | The Courier

BLUE SPRUCE HABITAT FOR HUMANITY has a duplex under construction in Kittredge on South End Road. The American Institute of Architects is sponsoring a design contest for the fourth duplex to be built to the west on the same street. Blue Spruce Habitat helps low-income community members build and own their own homes.

Local Habitat chapter to build winning house in design contest

BY VICKY GITS
Staff Writer

Blue Spruce Habitat for Humanity has been chosen as the first Habitat affiliate in Colorado to build a Habitat home designed by the winner of an architectural design contest.

"We are absolutely thrilled," said Kathleen O'Leary, executive director of Blue Spruce Habitat. "One of the things the contest focuses on is energy efficiency and sustainability. We want to make sure the houses are designed as well as possible so the owners don't have a lot of energy costs."

The winning home design will be translated into a duplex on land on South End Road in Kittredge, where Blue Spruce has already built two duplexes in recent years. Another one currently is under construction. The contest winner will be the fourth of seven projected duplexes on South End Road.

The contest is sponsored by the American Institute of Architects of Denver and CAD-1, a software company. Similar contests have taken place in other states, but this is a first for any chapter in Colorado.

The winning design will be featured on a tour of homes during the AIA's 2013 National Convention

Volunteers needed

Volunteers needed for a building in progress. No particular skills needed. One day at a time OK. Project under construction in Kittredge. Tuesday, Thursday or Saturday. Call volunteer coordinator Susan Brubaker at 303-674 1127, ext. 2. Or sign up online at www.bluesprucehabitat.org.

and Design Exposition in Denver.

The purpose of the contest is to showcase low-cost methods and energy-efficient materials and to improve affordable housing through design, according to the call for entries.

The proposed duplex is 2,200 square feet or 1,100 square feet on each side. The materials costs are limited to \$72 per square foot, or about \$169,000, not including the infrastructure, foundation, architect fees or permitting fees.

The guidelines call for a front porch, 1½ baths, two bedrooms, living room, utility room, kitchen, a full or partial finished basement, and a two-car parking area.

The competition is open to any licensed architect (or teams of four architects) who is also a member of AIA Colorado. The winner of the competition will be announced Friday, Oct. 14, at the AIA

Colorado 2011 Practice and Design Conference in Keystone. The entry deadline was Sept. 2.

The winner receives a \$5,000 stipend to complete the construction blueprints.

EVstudio will donate the necessary engineering work for the project.

The idea of a design contest had been talked about for a few years in the AIA Denver chapter, but gained momentum in 2010 when CAD-1 approached the organization about the idea and agreed to sponsor the contest, said Alaina Gonzales, membership and communication manager.

Committee members met with Habitat for Humanity of Colorado to help identify a few local Habitat affiliates that could benefit most from the competition.

"We determined that Blue Spruce Habitat for Humanity would be a great fit for the recipient of the final design," Gonzales said.

Over the years, Blue Spruce Habitat has built 27 homes locally, using a combination of volunteer labor, homeowner sweat equity and affordable mortgages. Its service area includes western Jefferson County, Clear Creek County and parts of Park County near Bailey. For information, visit www.bluesprucehabitat.org.

Blue Spruce Habitat signs lease on park-district building

BY VICKY GITS
Staff Writer

Blue Spruce Habitat for Humanity is moving from an office building on Buffalo Park Road to the former Blue Creek Family Medicine and Urgent Care building at 1520 Evergreen Parkway.

Beginning Oct. 1, the nonprofit will occupy the 1,700-square-foot

ground floor of the facility, which has been vacant since March 2010. The rental rate is \$1,050 a month, according to the draft 2012 park district budget.

"It's a good deal for Habitat. The space is quite a bit more visible," said Bill Downes, a commercial real estate broker. "It's a very difficult market. There's just not many takers for anything. I think the

property is very nice. I had several inquiries but none I could make stick," he said.

"It's a right turn in and a right turn out," so it's not suitable for a lot of commercial entities, Downes said. "I was surprised it took as long as it did, but it turned out to be to Habitat's advantage."

Please see **HABITAT LEASE**, Page 7B



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