

Calistoga Affordable Housing revives program to repair homes of elderly and disabled

By The Weekly Calistogan

Friday, January 22, 2010

Elderly and disabled homeowners in Calistoga may now apply for a program in which their homes will be repaired or refurbished free of charge.

Applications for Calistoga Affordable Housing's "Rebuilding Calistoga" program are available at Calistoga City Hall, the Calistoga Chamber of Commerce, the nonprofit's Lincoln Avenue office and on its Web site.

"The purpose of Rebuilding Calistoga is to help seniors and handicapped homeowners correct problems that either pose safety hazards, threaten the structural integrity of their homes or negatively affect the appearance of their neighborhoods," said Larry Kromann, president of CAH. "In an economy that makes construction of new affordable housing difficult, it's even more important that we preserve our existing housing stock and, at the same time, help citizens who can't make repairs."

Rebuilding Calistoga will use donated materials and volunteer labor to complete the projects, which are expected to begin in April.

The nonprofit is organizing various community-based groups to assess applications and select projects, solicit donations and volunteers, and plan and execute the repairs.

"Although CAH is organizing the program, our goal is to make it as broadly based as possible," Kromann said. "Clearly, we can't pull this off without substantial community participation."

CAH also hopes the grassroots approach of the project will nurture community spirit in Calistoga, Kromann said.

Applications must be submitted to Calistoga Affordable Housing, 1332 Lincoln Avenue, by Feb. 15. The program timeline requires projects to be selected by Feb. 20 and construction to begin no later than April 24.

Kromann said the program especially needs the help of qualified building contractors and other construction professionals to plan repairs and manage volunteer work crews. Numerous volunteers will be needed to provide manual labor for the projects.

Initial financing for the program was provided by a \$10,000 grant from the DeLong-Sweet Family Foundation. CAH hopes to receive additional matching grants of at least \$20,000. Monetary donations will be used to buy materials and specialist contract labor, Kromann said.

Information on the program is available at the CAH office, by calling CAH at 942-5920, or by visiting the organization's Web site at www.calistogaaffordablehousing.org.