



ARCH is committed to preserving and strengthening Blaine County's economic, environmental, and social integrity.

New Homes in Old Hailey

Thanks to Idaho fiber-optics company Syringa Networks, plans are now advancing to break ground on two new affordable homes in Old Hailey by September. The homes will be built on the Walnut Street property owned by Blaine County and offered to ARCH as a site for community housing. A great piece of property and a great opportunity, there was originally only one problem, Hailey zoning regulations allowed for just one home.

By generously donating a fifteen foot section of an adjoining parcel, Syringa Networks and CEO Greg Lowe have paved the way for not one but two new affordable homes in Hailey. Following state law that forbids the county to deed land directly to a non-profit, both parcels will first be deeded to Idaho Housing and Finance Association, which in turn will hand control of the land over to ARCH.

Including environmental considerations with the drive to create affordable housing, the ARCH Home Creation Committee is investigating incorporating green design and building practices into the construction of the new homes. Both units will be three bedrooms and two bathrooms with about 1,200 square feet of living space. The finished homes will be offered to Blaine County employee's, as a stipulation of the land donation. Estimated build costs are \$200,000 per home.

What took well over a year to come to this point could be done by next spring. ARCH anticipates that the homes will be ready for open houses by June of 2010.

ARCH Hires a fulltime Executive Director



ARCH is excited to announce that on April 1st Michelle Griffith joined the organization as our first full time executive director. Michelle brings over twenty years of non-profit and corporate experience to the position. For the past fifteen years she has been living and working abroad in the United Kingdom, Venezuela and Russia. In Russia, she spearheaded the development aspect of the The Diema's Dream Foundation, an innovative program to build housing, educational, and rehabilitative facilities for handicapped Russian youth. She has also spent several years in leadership positions with BP Oil in the United States and United Kingdom.

... continued on page three

"[Walnut St.] is a significant contribution to the community."
-Blaine County Commissioner
Larry Schoen

Keeping our Firefighters Close

Fire departments throughout the valley tell the tale of firefighters who are hired only to find that they cannot afford to live here. Hailey Deputy Fire Chief Carl Hjelm, says that the reason is the gap between what fire departments are able to pay and the cost of living in this area. "We have had firefighters who stay here only six months because they are unable to cover their expenses," says Sun Valley Assistant Fire Chief Ray Franco.

... continued on page two



ARCH Membership

ARCH wants you to be a part of the initiative to bring abundant affordable housing to Blaine County. Become a member for as little as \$25.00 for an individual membership.

We count on all the members of our community to make this a great place to live. Lets make sure that the members of this community can count on us to help them find a home.

Visit www.archbc.org to find out more about becoming a member of ARCH Community Housing Trust

Firefighters

continued from page one

These are the stories from only the full-time firefighters. Ketchum Fire Chief Mike Elle reminds us that ‘volunteer, paid per call, firefighters are the backbone of the department.’ With the eleven full time firefighters on the Ketchum Fire Department there are 36 who are paid on call. “These firefighters are not doing it for the money,” states Elle, “they are doing it to help their neighbors.” The issue is, these volunteers, some who work multiple other jobs so they can afford to live here, need to live close to the station as well. “They need affordable housing in Ketchum,” stresses Elle.

Without affordable options, fire departments are going to continue experiencing what the fire chiefs describe, employee turnover, short staffing, and firefighters living far from the station.

Bringing fire fighters and other essential service workers closer to their jobs requires a concentrated and diverse approach to creating community housing. Public awareness of this serious issue is an important start. Look for the reappearance of HOSED, the first in a series public outreach posters on affordable housing for our community service providers. In conjunction with this campaign ARCH is developing community housing options and connecting with willing buyers. ARCH is dedicated to keeping our communities safe by keeping our essential service workers close.



Tax Credit for First Time Homebuyers

A new incentive was created for first-time homebuyers in the Housing and Economic Recovery Act of 2008. For any first-time homebuyer a credit is available for 10% of the purchase price of the home up to \$8,000. Changed from 2008, anyone receiving the credit in 2009 will not have to repay the amount. So are you a first time homebuyer? A first-time homebuyer is anyone who has not purchased a home in the past three years and is buying the home as his or her principle residence. The credit is for those with a modified adjusted gross income below \$75,000 for individuals and \$150,000 for couples. The credit is only available for those who purchase a home before December 1st. More information is available at www.irs.gov.

An Open Door for Potential Homeownership

The Open Door Program combines the generosity of current homeowners with ARCH donors, city funds, and potential homebuyers. The process begins with homes offered to ARCH at below market price. Homeowners selling to ARCH at less than fair market value can be eligible for a tax deduction. ARCH will then use City funds together with private donations to further reduce the price of the home. At this point, the homes become affordable for school teachers, firefighters and other working members of the community. The new buyer and ARCH enter into a permanent shared equity covenant which ensures the home will remain an affordable community asset.

So what does everyone get from this transaction? A home that could have remained vacant in an economic downturn is sold. The City gains long term economic vibrancy by adding more year round residents to the area. Community members who commute from as far away as Carey can now walk to work, reducing fuel consumption. Most importantly, a local person gets a place to call home.

ARCH received an overwhelming response to the program with a number of homes offered by sellers willing to participate. Potential buyers are now being contacted and ARCH will help them to find the perfect new home.

Open Door is a unique collaboration between ARCH, the City of Ketchum, and our partners in the program that will hopefully become a model for the development of further affordable housing in our community.

Michelle Griffith Joins ARCH

continued from page one

Michelle says of her new position, "Affordable home ownership is the fundamental thread woven throughout every aspect of community well being. I look forward to applying my business and nonprofit experience, as well as my long-running passion for the Wood River Valley to this role."

"While ARCH has established the necessary groundwork for addressing Blaine County's affordable home ownership need, the magnitude and complexity of the challenge requires a leader of unique experience and vision. Michelle Griffith possesses the combination of skills and energy necessary to advance this important initiative."

- Rebekah Helzel, ARCH Founder

"Michelle's enthusiasm, persistence and creativity are astounding, and are the attributes especially needed in this community."

- Lesley Andrus, ARCH Board Member