

Local 1091 members finish home build for deserving veteran



Local 1091 members stepped in to help Chuck Stewart and family after an unscrupulous contractor took their money and left them with an unfinished home.

When disabled Air Force veteran Chuck Stewart of Underwood, ND, was left in dire straits with an unfinished house and no contractor to build it, members of Carpenters and Millwrights Local 1091 in Bismarck stepped in to help.

Stewart and his wife had hired a contractor to build a house with an open floor plan and main floor bedrooms in order to accommodate his condition of pulmonary fibrosis. Unfortunately, their contractor died in January 2014. After hiring another contractor — and paying out \$86,000 — the new contractor took the money and ran, leaving the Stewarts with an unlivable house and no cash to finish the project.

When Local 1091 members heard about the dilemma, they called up Stewart and offered their assistance. They began

work on the house in the Fall, which still needed everything from sheetrock and flooring to wiring and plumbing. Some materials were donated, and union laborers got involved as well. The Minot Builders Association contributed electrical and plumbing help.

Several apprenticeship classes worked on the site, gaining skills in framing and sheetrock. They also learned how to fix mistakes that had been made by the previous contractor.

“This was an absolutely worthwhile project for our apprentices to work on because they saw how things were done the wrong way,” said Carpenter Instructor John Doubek. “The real-world experience of fixing someone else’s mistakes helped them learn the

right way to do things. It was great hands-on experience for them.”

Fixing the mistakes included re-working most of the framing, fixing the openings for exterior windows and doors, and leveling out the concrete floor. Apprentices also rocked the walls and ceilings in every room and re-built an 8x8-foot exterior deck so that it was up to code.

The project was completed in May, allowing the Stuart family to finally move in after having spent a winter living in a camper.

“They were ecstatic to have everybody step in and offer support,” said Business Representative Levi Backhaus. “They really appreciated everything we did.”

