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CDC Pioneers Affordable Modular Housing Concept

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As the leading full-service affordable homeownership agency in Utah, Community Development Corporation of Utah (CDC), continually researches all available options to aid in meeting the increasing demands for affordable housing in a difficult and changing market. Unfortunately, due to rising construction costs and a weakened economy, the expense involved with providing affordable housing has become progressively difficult to manage.

However, after extensive research CDC is excited to pioneer a modular housing concept that should prove to be very cost-effective. Modular housing provides a good in-fill housing solution that makes efficient use of the often limited space commonly found in many older neighborhoods, and provides a quicker turnaround time for resale than conventional construction because the homes are nearly complete when they arrive to be placed on their foundations. This exciting venture in affordable housing delivers quality, replicable stick-built homes that are both International Residential Code (IRC) compliant and ENERGY STAR rated. These important building methods aid in passing on crucial energy-related savings to homebuyers for whom every penny counts.

CDC chose Guerdon Homes of Boise, Idaho as the company to design and build these homes due to the high quality product it produces and the company's ability to deliver the homes where needed. Guerdon uses what it calls "systems-built technology" which is defined as "a fast-growing modern form of new home construction using pre-built modular homes and recognized for its increased efficiency and ability to apply advanced technology to the needs of today's market place." Guerdon builds these modular homes on a large assembly line in a climate-controlled factory, and then transports them to the job site where the homes are positioned by crane onto their foundations. A trained crew then completes the onsite assembly which typically includes building a porch, finishing the roof, and completing other design details.

According to Jeff Hayden, CDC Construction Manager, "The benefits of modular housing include efficient and more affordable building methods than standard site-built construction, reduce dependence on subcontractors, and have consistent quality throughout." The homes Guerdon builds are not manufactured housing and are built to comply with standard building codes and are valued and appraised the same as site-built structures. What is more, uncharacteristic of manufactured homes, these modular homes are built with any roof pitch the owner desires, giving them a traditional look.

With an available lot in Magna, Utah, the first deployment of modular housing occurred on February 22, 2008, in an impressive display of strength and finesse. The crew and crane operator deftly navigated one half of the home through a narrow tree-lined opening, and then the other in a display of skill that thrilled the many spectators. With the home securely in place, the crew started work on the site construction portion of the home which in this case will include completion of the roof, a porch, and utility hook ups.



The result will be a seamless structure built to the highest standards, leaving no evidence to suggest that it was not constructed from ground up on site. All in all, the turnaround time from placement of the home to finished product is greatly reduced, saving money and creating a quicker resale opportunity. Additionally, with this being a pilot project, CDC is confident that costs will come down as knowledge is gained through repetition of the modular housing process. The resulting savings will then be passed on to CDC homebuyers.

Founded in 1990, CDC has rehabilitated or built over 350 homes for resale to needful low-to-moderate income families throughout the state. In a continuing effort to meet the needs of those it serves, CDC feels that modular housing will prove to be the best immediate and long-term way to keep construction costs to a minimum and still provide an outstanding and affordable product. In the near future, CDC has two more modular homes scheduled for placement in Salt Lake City and another two will be set in Myton, Utah. This concept is new to Utah affordable housing and CDC is excited to head up this pioneering effort.