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## **Idea House Successfully Promotes Best Building Practices**

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On Saturday 6 September 2008, Community Development Corporation of Utah (CDC), Salt Lake County, Assist Inc., and Utah Housing Coalition jointly hosted a neighborhood block party and open house to celebrate the completion of their *Idea House* at 4801 South 4980 West in Kearns. CDC acquired the vacant house in February and remodeled it to create an example for the community of low-cost energy efficiency, water conservation, and visitable (accessible) best practices. This 1400 square foot, masonry block home with three bedrooms and two bathrooms has an identical footprint and construction type to the hundreds of homes that surround it and which were built in the 1950s as tract housing to meet the growing need for affordable homes in the Salt Lake Valley after World War II.

“This is an excellent model for homeowners looking for ideas to improve their homes,” says Salt Lake County Mayor Peter Corroon. “Yet, the Idea House also serves as a model for what we can do working together. We have many great partners who contributed to making the Idea House a showcase of remodeling best practices.” CDC purchased and remodeled the home with help from Assist Inc., Questar, Rocky Mountain Power, and others.



“We wanted to present a home that offers practical ways homeowners can save energy, conserve water, and accommodate disabled family members and visitors without draining all their resources,” states Darin Brush, CDC Executive Director. “The ideas we implemented include adding adequate insulation to the attic, changing from incandescent to fluorescent lighting, xeriscaping the yard, and adding a porch with a no-step entry to the house. We have had many positive comments from the neighbors.”

The cost of living today has unfortunately made homeownership more difficult than ever for many to achieve. What is more, much of the affordable housing that is available has not been properly updated. Old windows and doors that don't seal properly, venting systems that are no longer efficient, inadequate insulation, and outdated appliances all eat up hard-earned money. CDC works diligently with experienced rehabilitation contractors to help remedy these concerns by bringing all rehabilitation projects up to established building codes. This includes making the homes as air tight as possible by adding proper insulation, replacing outdated doors and windows, and also correcting any structural damage which often includes repairing worn out roofing. CDC cleans and repairs air ducts and replaces heating and cooling systems for greater air flow efficiency. CDC also supplies its homes with new, ENERGY STAR rated appliances. Additionally, the Idea



House (which will be duplicated in other areas of Salt Lake County) and some of the other homes CDC will be working on in the future will have the added water conserving measure of xeriscaped yards. CDC understands that the homes it rehabilitates or builds from the ground up should not just be initially affordable, but should have cost-saving measures built in to them to help maintain affordability throughout the life of the home. These efforts result in substantial yearly savings for CDC homebuyers

for whom every penny counts.

The open house for the Idea House in Kearns was a great success with over 100 people visiting and commenting on the positive transformation from an old dilapidated home to an appealing and safe home. Those that attended left with ideas for their own homes and CDC also gained some valuable insight from this experience that will help make future housing projects even better. Bringing the community together to share ideas helped to make this an especially rewarding home rehabilitation project.

Community Development Corporation of Utah and its many valued partners will continue to seek out the best possible affordable and accessible housing options to help first-time homebuyers realize the dream of homeownership. The first Idea House is now being offered for purchase to a low-income family for whom financial assistance will be available.