



THE YEAR-ROUNDER

A NEWSLETTER UPDATE OF
ISLAND HOUSING TRUST

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1272 MAIN: A WORK IN PROGRESS

By Alyson Mayo

1272 Main Street in Somesville looks nearly finished...from the outside. Go inside and you'll see we have a lot of work to do!

Since Eric Dyer and I purchased the property from IHT in mid-July, we have made a lot of progress with hired help, family, and friends. We hired a crew that worked closely with us to frame the house and clarify the plans, and even allowed Eric to work alongside them when he could, and let us put up interior walls and build closets. Seeing their quality work and anticipating a first-time homebuyer's tax credit, we kept the crew on to do the siding, trim and roof. It looks fantastic (see picture this page)!

We have worked on many pieces of the house, including radiant heat tubing, insulation and some plumbing. Our electricians finished roughing in the electrical work and our neighbors let us use their electrical pole. We recently purchased light fixtures, faucets, flooring and all the items you barely have time to think about when you're trying to build a house. Some of my friends have asked what our interior wall colors will be. We have not had time to make this decision, but we'll take suggestions! A septic system, running water, and drywall are our current priorities as we aim to move into the house in December.

Though it has been exhausting, we are learning a



The house at 1272 Main. For more pictures visit www.1272main.wordpress.com

lot. I enjoy participating in the process of building a house. This was all made possible because a family donated an 80 foot wide spaghetti-shaped lot to Island Housing Trust. A small land donation to IHT can make a big difference to a family or individual who wants to build their own house but can't afford the high price of land on MDI. We are very grateful

to all who helped make this happen, and are excited that our home will remain affordable to future buyers.

RIPPLES HILL NEWS

Construction on the fourth of six Phase 1 Ripples Hill green houses began in November with completion expected by the end of April. Construction was expected to be completed on the third house by mid-December. Two lots remain available for qualified applicants in Phase 1. Those seeking information on qualification criteria or who have questions about the Ripples Hill Workforce Housing Development should email director@islandhousingtrust.org or call 207-288-4496. Information on the development may also be found on our website, www.islandhousingtrust.org

The Ripples Hill development was the subject of a feature story that was published in the October 29, 2009 edition of the *Bar Harbor Times*. To read the story, go to <http://mdi.villagesoup.com>.

A VIEW FROM THE FRONT PORCH: A NEW LOOK AT HOUSING IN A DOWN ECONOMY

By Chris Spruce, Island Housing Trust Executive Director

Two news items came across my desk recently that describe more than an incremental change in the way working individuals and families will look at homeownership in the months and years ahead.

The first was a report from Maine's Economic Forecasting Commission to the Legislature's Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs of a 17% drop in Maine wages in the first quarter of 2009.

The second item was an op-ed piece in the Boston Globe in early November by Nicholas Retsinas, director of the Joint Center for Housing Studies at Harvard, describing a "rethinking" by American homebuyers of their homeownership "dreams." After the economic crash, wrote Retsinas, "we now see physical downsizing. In 1950, the typical new home was 1,000 square feet; by 2006, it had expanded to 2,600 square feet – notwithstanding smaller households. Today, median new homes have shrunk by 200 square feet. Some builders are offering models under 1,400 square feet... Lot sizes have decreased, thus increasing density. Given gas prices, people are choosing to live closer, not farther, from the places where they work."

We also anticipate that a whole host of factors

beyond household economics – concerns about global warming, a preference for "green" building, a quest for greater energy efficiency, among others – will spur a further reduction in the size of the houses to be built in the years ahead. If 2,600 square feet was the standard size three years ago, houses approaching half that size may very well become the standard for new houses three years hence.

These revised expectations for American homeownership reinforce Island Housing Trust's current policies that encourage building "green" modest-sized, moderately-priced houses that maximize energy efficiency, that give a preference to clustering new single family houses on small lots rather than building a single-family house on a multi-acre lot, and that seek to create infill homeownership opportunities in the village areas of Mount Desert Island communities.

Despite the global economic meltdown, working individuals and families on MDI will still need quality, affordable housing in the months and years ahead. With the help of our many supporters, IHT will continue to assist in meeting this need.

Full article at www.islandhousingtrust.org under "View From the Front Porch."



Emily Sabah-Maren with the house she developed for workforce housing.

FIRST SABAH WOODS HOUSE UNDER CONTRACT

The first house in the Sabah Woods development in Salisbury Cove is now under contract. A working couple who owns a local business will be purchasing the property from Mrs. Emily Sabah-Maren, a long-time summer resident who developed the four-lot subdivision in 2008 with the intent of making most, if not all, of the lots available to qualified working individuals and families. Island Housing Trust has been working with Mrs. Maren to qualify applicants and develop the affordability covenants that will ensure the property remains affordable to working individuals and families on MDI into the future. To learn more about this project, please visit Island Housing Trust's website, www.islandhousingtrust.org.