



CONTACT:
Randy Gehl
Public Information Officer
563-589-4151 (office)
563-599-2448 (cell)
rgehl@cityofdubuque.org
www.cityofdubuque.org

NEWS RELEASE

Oct. 7, 2008 – For Immediate Release

HEART Students Deconstruct Barn for Industrial Center Expansion

DUBUQUE, Iowa – The City of Dubuque is expanding the crowded Dubuque Industrial Center West through the acquisition of the “North Siegert Farm,” a 130-acre farmstead on the north side of the City’s western industrial park. As part of the expansion, the City is conducting substantial earthwork in two phases and must remove the buildings on the property.

In keeping with the “Sustainable Dubuque” initiative, the City turned to Dubuque’s Housing Education and Rehabilitation Training (HEART) Program to accomplish a zero-waste removal of the largest buildings on the site.

The HEART Program approached the project collaboratively with the City, site contractor IIW Engineers, and local contractor McDermott Excavating. The work began with cataloging the salvageable material and getting the site ready for the students to work. Next, students stripped the buildings of their barn siding and de-nailed the material for easier handling. Rotted and splintered wood was removed from the site and composted at the landfill. Project participants then collaborated with McDermott Excavating staff to skillfully pull down the large barn. Finally, students will sort and process the material, palleting the old growth lumber into categories of beams, siding, joists and rafters according to size and material. Metal is taken for recycling and the leftover concrete and stone will be used for fill in the redevelopment of the site. The program is working to link potential end users of the products with the material, so it can all be reused.

The HEART Program is a broad-based community partnership in which the City of Dubuque and Four Mounds are founding members. The HEART Program provides high school students from Dubuque Community Schools with the opportunity to earn a high school diploma while being involved in unique and diverse vocational training opportunities. Students have been revitalizing homes in the north end of Dubuque and filled real needs in projects like the Teresa Shelter and the Crescent Community Health Center. Recently, they have been assisting with the new Step-by-Step apartment

conversion on Bluff Street for women with mobility challenges. These projects provide on-the-ground opportunities for the students to make a difference in their community. The program has been seeking ways to incorporate deconstruction in training as a way to teach students a “green-collar” trade and a sensible approach toward rehabilitation and demolition projects.

“The barn deconstruction was a natural fit for us to help the City approach this project sustainably. It’s a one-of-a-kind opportunity for our students and we knew they’d be up for the task,” said Christine Happ Olson, executive director of Four Mounds, with the HEART Program. “We set a goal to send less than one percent of the material to the landfill and to try to get as much of the material into the hands of local folks that can use it again. We’re meeting those goals and some of the material will even be used for repairs of historic farm buildings at Four Mounds, which the students will be restoring after they finish work here.”

“It is very exciting to blend a couple City priorities into one project,” said Dave Heiar, economic development director for the City of Dubuque. “By working with the HEART program, we accomplish a part of the mission established by Project HOPE -- to provide training and job opportunities for disadvantaged youth. The sustainable priority of the Mayor and City Council is achieved by deconstructing the barn and other buildings. The salvaged building products are then reused in many constructive and creative ways. Everyone wins.”

The highest goal for the project is to reuse salvageable material, saving the embodied energy in the beams, rafters, sheeting, siding and joists that make up the building. Reuse of building materials decreases dependency on natural resources as well as the energy used in logging, transporting, processing and purchasing those materials. “This material is unlike what you can find at a lumber company,” said Kyle FitzGerald of Four Mounds. “The old growth lumber is dense and stable and the pieces have unique characteristics like notches, wormholes, and patina. One woman even purchased the siding to create an indoor ‘outhouse’ around her toilet in her luxury bathroom. I am amazed at peoples’ creativity.”

Plenty of old growth quality wood is available from this site in a variety of sizes. For more information about obtaining wood, call Kyle FitzGerald at 563-542-6867 or Chris at 563-557-7292 at Four Mounds in Dubuque.

###