

Video Game Drive



Brian O'Shaughnessy/Index

Sophomore Matt Angelly sat in the SUB on Monday for a video game drive hosted by Phi Kappa Theta. All games collected will go to hospitalized children.

Local residents eligible for home improvements

BY LISA KUCHARSKI
Staff Reporter

Homeowner Jeanine Murrie looked around earlier this month at her newly finished house, repaired and updated by professional contractors, and smiled because she didn't have to pay a dime. All she did was fill out an application.

The Home Repair Opportunity program, or HeRO, is allocating \$20,000 to each of the five eligible homes in Kirksville this year in an effort to improve the quality of life of its residents. The program can help with issues involving repairs, updates, accessibility, weatherization and rehabilitation, according to the Kirksville Housing Authority press release.

Murrie applied for the

HeRO program in 2009. She said construction on her home began Feb. 10 and ended earlier this month. The 2009 HeRO program allocated about \$14,000 to her house, which was used to put in new soffits, doors, windows, a fuse box, air conditioning and four inches of insulation in her attic.

"My electricity bill has gone down by \$30 already," Murrie said.

Murrie said she was very pleased with how well the contractors worked with her and her pets during the construction and their concern about trying to keep the home warm.

Kyle Horst, Kirksville's assistant to the director of the Housing Authority, said this program has potential to really help the community.

"It's like a mini-stimulus package," Horst said. "It's great because no money comes out of the homeowners' pockets and they get major repairs done on their houses."

The Kirksville Housing Authority administered the HeRO program for 2010 and is accepting applications until Oct. 1 at its offices located at 100 Valley Forge Drive. Horst said the office has received two eligible applications so far this year.

Specific criteria must be met to be an eligible applicant. The houses must be owner-occupied and financial need is taken into great consideration. Horst said three applications already have been turned down due to ineligibility.

"I just hope that we get enough eligible applicants



Photo Submitted

The HeRO program allotted \$20,000 to five homes in Kirksville to assist with improvements.

so we can allocate our funds and help out the homeowners," Horst said.

Last year was the first time this program became available to Kirksville. Cherie Bryant, assistant to the city manager, wrote a grant for Kirksville to be a part of the HeRO program. She was able to submit the grant application because Kirksville is a designated DREAM Initiative community.

DREAM is an acronym for Downtown Revitalization Economic Assistance for Missouri. The program was established to provide financial and technical support to communities to revitalize the downtown area more ef-

fectively and efficiently.

Bryant said the city needed a relationship with a downtown agency, so the Housing Authority stepped in.

"They're pretty much handling the whole thing," Bryant said. "Last year I wrote the grant. This year they wrote it and got it."

Last year's efforts are still underway. Six houses were funded: Murrie's is now complete, two are approximately 80 percent complete, and another recently was started.

Horst said that for most of the houses, repairs and replacements similar to Murrie's home were necessary.

"A big focus, so far, has been on the windows," Horst said. "There are a lot of lead-painted windows that we need to replace and weatherize to reduce risk and create efficiency and accessibility."

Homeowners who purchase and install energy-efficient products, such as appliances, insulation, doors and windows, may be eligible for federal tax credit for consumer energy efficiency, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of Energy.

"I think HeRO is a great program," Bryant said. "You really get to see the before and after."



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For further information and enrollment forms, please contact Steve Salt @:

✉ Green Valley Farm, 28461 Linderville Trail, Kirksville, MO 63501

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