

BUILDING TRADES

‘This is our house’

CHS students show off their big project

BY BRENDEN WEST

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CLINTON — Mom’s going to have a tough time pinning this one to the fridge.

A dozen Clinton High School students capped off a fine project when they invited the community through the doors of 506 River King Road on Monday afternoon. It started two years ago on a vacant lot in the west part of town.

It ended in a 1,650-square foot, three-bedroom ranch home, complete with two bathrooms, a basement, a two-car garage, a backyard deck and 12 smiling teens eager to showcase every nook.

"It feels good to learn everything," said CHS senior Kody DeCoster during a tour. "Just even knowing that you yourself helped with this, or you know how to do this now, it's really helpful for later in life." The property was appraised to be worth \$170,000. The Clinton School District will receive money gained from the property sale.

Like DeCoster, many of the students envision they'll enter the workforce in carpentry or other trades. They all operated under Building and Trades instructor Brian Johnson's guidance.

"They see it from framing all the way to where it's at today," Johnson said. "I say it's the biggest school project you'll ever see. Hopefully, I enter some of them into the field. They get to see it all. We're trying to promote the trades and show the kids they can make a darn good living doing that." Johnson started with the group during the fall 2012 semester, taking a successful blueprint he used on another project.

He held two classes per year during the fall and spring trimesters. His students did a majority of the work, from pouring the house's foundation to installing electrical. The more technical aspects of building were left to local experts in the trade.

Some portions will be left to the future homeowner 's discretion. The basement is unfinished and the builders left options for carpeting in some rooms.

Otherwise, the home is up for sale. Johnson said the feeling is bittersweet.

"It's real stressful for all of us. There are so many things to do," he said.

"But it feels really good at the end. Nothing better than driving away from a finished project." The students feel as though they now have a leg up when they do wind up in the workforce. Even though he doesn't want to enter home building specifically, senior Ben Lauritzen said what he

learned in the class will help him as he pursues a mechanical engineering degree next fall.

"I feel proud to be able to be a part of this and to say I helped build a house like this," Lauritzen said.

"I feel like one day, I'm going to drive by here and tell people I helped build this place."



Clinton senior Kody DeCoster showcases a closet in one of three bedrooms of a home he helped to build. DeCoster joined 11 classmates in a project that took two years to complete. For a video of the new home, go to Clintonherald.com.



The property at 506 River King Road was built by a handful of River Kings and is worth an estimated \$170,000.



Above, Brian Johnson's Building and Trades class presents their latest work — a 1,650-square foot ranch home. From left are Shawn Coppess, Ben Lauritzen, Brandon Norem, Johnson, Derek Drews, Guillermo Gonzalez, Kody DeCoster, Deven Dodd, Chris McQuiston, Roman Dombrowski, Brandon Sturtz and Michael Brown. Not pictured is Dominick Ernst.