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Published: 07:16 AM, Tue Jul 19, 2011

Pitts: 'Extreme Makeover' fans enjoy watching in person

Myron B. Pitts

The knock-knock of hammers and the sound of saws punctuated the hot air Monday as Alecia Branham and her family enjoyed their front-row seat.

"It's a unique experience," she said, "doing something like this in the community."

The spectator section for the "Extreme Makeover" home on Langdon Street is in a shady spot near a large tree and almost directly across from the action.

A low metal gate dividing the street also marked off an area for news media and for volunteers, who are refreshed with bottled water during downtime.

Producers with the hit ABC show "Extreme Makeover: Home Edition" encourage people to come by and see the developing home. A shuttle runs from Fayetteville State University up the hill to the site.

Branham drove from Hope Mills Road and braved the afternoon heat with five of her and Carl Branham's children - Catherine, John, Christopher, Victoria and Bryce.

The family watches the show and records it "when we know it's going to be a tear-jerker," Branham said.

Indeed, "Makeover" goes for the heartstrings, providing a new home for a family that is often struggling in some way. The Fayetteville project, which is scheduled to be completed by Thursday, will be a new home for a woman who takes in female homeless veterans.

Alecia Branham thinks that idea is just great. She sees the need and noted that her older son, Ryan, plans to enlist in the Army soon.

Her other children nodded in agreement with her.

"I like the way they can help other people in need," Victoria said, adding that she'd like to see a similar home for male veterans.

Branham has been re-posting to Facebook pictures of the project's progress from a local TV station's website.

"I want people to know about it," she said with a smile.

The gray exterior of the wood home is in place and dominates the lot on which it sits. On Tuesday, workers in blue shirts and white hard hats swarmed over the house, from the foundation to the top of the roof.

Maxine Harris looked on and said she was impressed with the quick progress. The construction crew, directed by Blue Ridge Log Cabins of South Carolina, began work Thursday.

Harris came with friend Alice Tann from Clinton, where Harris serves as mayor pro-tem.

She said she likes when people do good things for others, referring to both the extreme makeover and to the program for homeless vets run by Barbara Marshall.

She'd like to see more spectators come out and take a look.

"Maybe it'll inspire them to help somebody else," she said.

Columnist Myron B. Pitts can be reached at pittsm@fayobserver.com 486-3559.

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