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Extreme dreams

Campobello-based Blue Ridge Log Cabins earns national exposure with Jubilee House build



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By Colin Riddle

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An unassuming company tucked away in the small town of Campobello has brought national attention to a growing issue.

Blue Ridge Log Cabins is building a luxury log cabin for Barbara Marshall, whose Jubilee House offers shelter and counseling services for homeless female veterans. And it's all being filmed by "Extreme Makeover: Home Edition."

Last Thursday, Ty Pennington, host of "Extreme Makeover: Home Edition," knocked on Marshall's front door in Fayetteville, N.C., to tell her she was going to Disney World while the Blue Ridge crew and

hundreds of her neighbors built her new cabin.

Blue Ridge Log Cabins makes and assembles modular log cabins in its 120,000-square-foot facility in Spartanburg County. The company devised a process that allows for quicker and cheaper delivery by avoiding delays caused by bad weather.

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"Extreme Makeover" officials noticed Blue Ridge on an episode of HGTV's "Amazing Log Cabins."

In March, representatives from the show met Greg Landess, vice president of marketing and sales for Blue Ridge, at an international trade show in Florida and expressed interest in finding a project for Blue Ridge Log Cabins.

Later in the spring, "Extreme Makeover" officials came to Chip Smith, president and chief executive officer of Blue Ridge Log Cabins, and Landess with the idea for building a home for the Marshall family and Jubilee House.

"It's a great story. There are so many aspects of this project that have spoken to our team," said Smith.



Marshall

Smith

Landess

"Extreme Makeover" and Blue Ridge constructed the 7,000-square-foot home in the upstate facility in 13 parts and hauled them via Blue Ridge's transportation company four hours away to Fayetteville.

The team from Blue Ridge Log Cabins arrived in town two days before the start of construction to prepare for a project with a one-week time limit.

The project tested Smith's company and employees on many levels from the design of the cabin to the assembly project, all the while building in the presence of a camera crew.

The two-hour special – to include First Lady Michelle Obama – is expected to have more than 10 million viewers and air in the fall.

"It's been a tremendous project to tear down a house and build our cabin in 106 hours. It really took the cooperation of our company and the town of Fayetteville who gave us 300 to 500 volunteers," said Smith.

Marshall, a 15-year veteran and chaplain in the Navy, started the Steps-N-Stages Jubilee House for homeless women veterans in a two-bedroom cottage after she became aware of the growing struggles of female veterans. She used her own money to buy the home in Fayetteville.

She began offering services to women by giving shelter and counseling.

Marshall also helps female veterans acquire food stamps, find job recruiters and build resumes.

Counseling for drug and alcohol abuse is available as well.

Currently, 30 women and families seek help from Marshall and the Jubilee House. Time magazine has called Fayetteville America's most pro-military town.

The town is also home to Pope Army Air Field and Fort Bragg, which headquarters the U.S. Army Airborne Forces and Special Forces.

Blue Ridge and "Extreme Makeover" representatives believe the new home will increase the number of people that the Jubilee House can help along with the number of women they can house.

Chris Dew, a sales associate of Blue Ridge, has been helping on site all week.

"This has been the most exciting project I've worked on. Awesome project, awesome team, and tons of volunteers," he said.

Blue Ridge and "Extreme Makeover" will reveal the cabin home to Marshall and the Jubilee House women on Thursday.

A bus has been chartered for 40 additional employees of Blue Ridge to be on hand.

Mills Smith, a service assistant for Blue Ridge, along with two dozen other team members has spent more than 12 hours a day assembling the cabin.

"This has really been an incredible experience for everyone. I'm really proud of what we have accomplished and what we have done for this group of women," said Smith.

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