



The Santo project near Port-au-Prince



A sprawling squatters' camp at Port-au-Prince

PHOTO BY KURT JENSEN

news Briefs

BUILDING HOMES FOR HAITIANS

While Lane County's 4,000 un-housed people are finally getting lots of attention in the media, nearly 600,000 Haitians are still living in tents and under tarps in squatter camps two years after the major earthquake of January 2010. That disaster was followed by Hurricane Tomas and its flooding, which exacerbated the damage and casualties. Over the past five years, more than 13 million people around the world have lost their homes to a natural disaster, according to Habitat for Humanity.

Kurt Jensen, a longtime Eugene-area photojournalist for *EW* and a builder of small, hand-crafted homes in Lane County,

nearly 90 percent of its buildings were destroyed or damaged, he says.

During Habitat for Humanity's 28th annual Jimmy & Rosalynn Carter Work Project, the Carters and a group of 400 volunteers built 100 core homes, he says, and the eventual goal of the project is 500 houses in the next two years. The five-year goal is to provide at least some assistance to 50,000 families.

The small houses being built are constructed with wood frames, pressure-treated plywood walls and tin roofs. Permanent concrete slab foundations are designed to support concrete blocks for

Habitat says permanent housing is a prerequisite for rebuilding lives, families and social and economic networks.

recently returned from Haiti. He will be showing photos and talking about his experiences at 7 pm Wednesday, Jan. 4, at BRING's Planet Improvement Center, 4446 Franklin Blvd. in Glenwood. The presentation is sponsored by the Northwest EcoBuilding Guild.

Jensen has been working with Habitat for Humanity, building a community called the Santo project in Léogâne, just 18 miles from Port-au-Prince. Léogâne is near the epicenter of the earthquake and

later additions. More than 3,000 Haitians have been trained in construction or construction business practices, and Habitat says permanent housing is a prerequisite for rebuilding lives, families and social and economic networks. Haiti currently has an unemployment rate of 60 percent.

Jensen and his Cascade Small House Company can be found at www.cascadeshc.com or call 747-8925.

— Ted Taylor

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