

HOME:

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nity to close on the home. Allowing for 45 days for the sale to go through, the home should be ready to move in by late summer.

Smith said, while the district had the option to sell the house following a more traditional route, he has spoken to at least three people who have expressed interest in purchasing the house, which prompted the school district to pursue the bidding process.

“Technically we could go out and pound a sign into the ground ... but with all the interest, I think we might have a rush of people with earnest checks trying to pass me the checks before the sale sign is pounded into the ground,” Smith said. “Because we received so much interest from people, this seemed to make the most sense.



HERALD FILE PHOTO

This Hermiston Herald file photo from January shows the outer shell of the first Hermiston School District student-built home. Students are now 70 percent done with the project, and the school district announced plans to host another open house June 1 before placing the house for sale through a bid process June 2.

“I think this is the best of both worlds,” Smith added.

The school district plans to hire an appraiser to value the home to help determine a minimum purchase price that will be announced prior to bids opening. Smith said the reserve price will provide a reasonable starting point for prospective buyers based on fair-market

value as well as minimum funding the district will need for students to build the second home next year.

Smith said students in the homebuilding program, including some from Stanfield and Umatilla, are currently finishing up the home’s exterior and will next focus on installing the hardwood floors, kitchen cabinets

Fieldstone No. 1 home amenities:

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- Energy efficient lights, and high-end appliances (double ovens, gas cook-top)
- Exposed beam, vaulted great room, with tongue and groove ceiling (Rest of home 9 ft ceilings)
- Whole-house sound system with built-in enter-

- tainment speakers
- “Smart Home” with high speed fiber internet
- Custom wood trim, cabinets, and doors
- Hardwood floors and custom tile work
- Granite counters
- Central vacuum system
- Security system
- Water softener
- Custom master bathroom, with jetted Jacuzzi tub and walk-in tiled shower
- Double sinks in both bathrooms
- Gas fireplace
- RV parking, with utilities
- Fully landscaped yard with sprinkler system and perimeter fence
- Covered front and back porches
- Insurance-backed home warranty

and countertops and plumbing fixtures.

Smith said the home-building program is an educational opportunity for students on a number of levels. Students in the program, as well as other classes, are involved in every step of the process, from the actual construction, to landscaping and marketing. Smith said Hermiston High School

student Meghan Greene, who is interested in law, worked with him and a local attorney to draft all the covenants and restrictions for the development.

“So there’s so many different things for students to get involved in beyond swinging hammers,” he said.

Smith said the district hopes people will attend

the open house June 1, whether they are interested in purchasing the home or not.

“It is truly a top-tier home,” he said. “It is gorgeous.”

People can review the timeline, bid information sheets and other associated documents on the student homebuilding site at <http://columbiabasinstudenthomes.org/>.

SMUGGLER:

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a horrible, horrible situation.”

Hackett contacted Northwest Medical Teams in Beaverton, Oregon, which agreed to provide the supplies. United Airlines allowed Hackett to bring five cases free of charge when he traveled to the area, he said, but the bulk of the supplies were sent across the ocean in two large shipping containers.

“A large church in Ohio paid for us to get the containers from Portland to New York, and a shipping magnate agreed to take the containers into the Adriatic (Sea) at no cost,” he said. “Then we arranged for private boats — they were under siege, so all the ports were closed — so we had private boats come out into the Adriatic. They picked up all those medical

supplies and took them in through private docks and smuggled them into Croatia.”

Hackett said he helped hide the goods he brought on the plane in the “wheel wells and stuff” of private vehicles, which smuggled them in from the north. It was nearly 20 years, however, before he learned the fate of the shipping containers.

“The hospital in Osijek, Croatia, had been bombed, and the doctor refused to leave the patients. She stayed there through the entire war, though it was on the front lines. I had the privilege, five years ago, of meeting her for the first time,” he said, as tears welled up in his eyes. “All those supplies got to her.”

Returning to Croatia

Hackett and his wife, Wanda, returned to the war-torn country after inspiring

their children to follow in their footsteps. They have three children in full-time Christian ministry and two near Croatia.

“In ’99, our middle daughter went to Croatia as a missionary and was working in what had been the front lines, working with war victims,” he said. “This was during the Kosovo War, and she was within 20 miles of the bombing. There were towns and villages where she was at that not a building was standing. People were still living there. You’d see these candles all over, (people) living in the rubble, because that was home — not a building standing.”

He said another daughter traveled to the area in 2004. Both are still there. Hackett said both daughters married people who were affected by the wars.

“Both of their families lost everything,” he said. “One son-in-law, he and his

family, their house was taken over by Serbia. They got out with the clothes on their back. His brother was severely wounded in the war. His dad lost everything because the factory where he worked was leveled to the ground.

“My other son-in-law, he lived in the city of Zagreb, so he wasn’t at risk because only one rocket ever reached the city, but his family, who lived in Dalmatia, they lost everything,” Hackett said. “They literally fled over the mountains by foot with some cheese in their pocket and a couple loaves of bread and the clothes on their back.”

Lessons learned along the way

Before focusing their efforts on the former Yugoslavia, the Hacketts

pursued their ministry in other countries.

“I think one of the most exciting things for Wanda and I, in the late ’80s, we began going into Eastern Europe, what, at that time, was behind the Iron Curtain,” he said. “We have smuggled Bibles, and we have done some other things. We’ve had some amazing encounters.

“We snuck into the Kremlin one time and prayed throughout the Kremlin behind that red brick wall — that was interesting,” he said. “We did a prayer journey into Tashkent, Uzbekistan. We were constantly followed and harassed by the Securitate. We saw some amazing miracles in those trips.”

Hackett said he has learned many lessons during his time in the min-

istry.

“I think one of the really important things that both my wife and I learned was — the first time we had gone behind the Iron Curtain and we came back to the West — how amazingly blessed we were to be born and raised in the United States and how much we take that for granted,” he said. “It’s far more joyful to live life giving and not getting, and I think our American culture has shifted from that. No matter how rich you are, that is a poor way to live.”

Hackett said people should also be willing to forgive others and be thankful.

“No matter the circumstances, just be thankful and live in joy,” he said. “Every one of us has so much to be thankful for.”

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