Students building home at Fieldstone Crossing

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Hermiston High School students are putting up walls for the Columbia Basin Student Homebuilding Program's seventh student-built home since the program began.

After a grant from the state provided the seed money for the first home, high school students in west Umatilla County have worked each year with mentorship from area professionals to build a new home in the Fieldstone Crossing subdivision next to Armand Larive Middle School.

"It gives them real life, hands-on experience building a house," teacher Curt Berger said.

The money from each home sale provides the funding for materials for the next year's project. Last year's home sold in August for just over $400,000, according to a news release from Hermiston School District.

This year's home got started about a month behind schedule because of the complications to education brought on by COVID-19. But students are currently able to work on the home outdoors, 6 feet apart, in two cohorts of less than 10 students. This year, only Hermiston students are participating.

Berger said the homes are "very high-end homes" and people are always impressed with the craftsmanship of the students, who are taught by Berger and industry professionals, and subject to the same inspections any newly built house would face.

According to the news release, the seventh addition to Fieldstone Crossing will be a 2,232-square-foot home with three bedrooms, two and one-half baths, and an oversized three-car garage able to accommodate a large pickup truck with a 10 foot by 8 foot bay. The home will be built to "above-code standards with Energy Trust of Oregon, featuring enhanced insulation, energy-efficient windows, sealed ductwork, energy-efficient heating, cooling and ventilation systems, envelope tightness measures, energy-efficient lights, and appliances."

For more information about the student home-building program, visit columbiabasinstudenthomes.org.

Curt Berger/Contributed Photo

At top, students begin framing the seventh home built by the Columbia Basin Student Homebuilding Program through Hermiston School District. Above, a student stands inside the framing.

Curt Berger/Contributed Photo

Students begin work on the seventh home built by the Columbia Basin Student Homebuilding Program through the Hermiston School District.