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Dave Love

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New director plans to expand Bend Habitat

Art Martori / The Bulletin /

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The choice of Bend Habitat for Humanity's new executive director signals a change in direction for the nonprofit organization, leadership officials said.

Dave Love, 55, who started work Monday as executive director of Bend Habitat for Humanity, will help the nonprofit increase its scope by building more homes and recruiting additional volunteers, said Alison Hamm, president of the board of directors.

Hamm added that the nonprofit aims to double the number of homes it builds for needy families, from five to 10 each year.

"It was a change of gears for us. In the past, executive directors have been more construction focused," Hamm said. "This time, we were looking for somebody to lead us."

Love replaced Mike Jensen, the nonprofit's former executive director, who left in November to take a position with the Central Oregon Builders Association.

On Thursday, Love sat in his new office at Bend Habitat for Humanity, just two hours before he would attend the groundbreaking for the nonprofit's second subdivision in the city. Vida's Village, a nine-home, nearly 1-acre subdivision in northeast Bend, is slated for completion by June 2008.

"I think I'm a catalyst for an organization," Love said. "I make sure the expected reaction takes place."

In addition to doubling its housing output, Bend's Habitat for Humanity will spend \$1 million in August to purchase a 10-acre parcel of land outside Bend's eastern city limits, Love said. If all goes according to plan, the city's urban growth boundary will grow to encompass the land, where the nonprofit plans to build 60 to 70 homes, Love said. If the city approves the nonprofit's plan for the subdivision, construction could start by 2009.

Love also oversees about 15 paid employees and 350 volunteers, who perform duties that range from administrative tasks to construction work on homes.

Bend Habitat for Humanity also operates reStore, a retail site that offers home remodeling services and supplies to low-income families. Love will also be responsible for representing the nonprofit in partnerships with the city and with local businesses. For example, last year Bend contributed more than \$190,000 to Habitat for Humanity for construction of a subdivision near the center of the city.

On March 22, Love moved with his wife to Bend from Lander, Wyo., where he lived for the last five years. While in Lander, he started a school on the local Indian reservation and commuted each summer to New Hampshire, where he directed a summer program for youth, Love said. He added that he was particularly proud of his work in Bolivia, where in 1999 he completed a program to bring drinking water to the an area in

the country's high desert.

Love said prior to his career with nonprofits, he worked for 25 years as a teacher in the eastern United States.

Love added he expects Bend will be the last stop as a working professional - he plans to retire after about seven years and then work with Habitat for Humanity in a volunteer capacity.

"I'm looking for my last port," he said.

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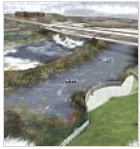
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