

High praise for Classic affordable housing

■ Medicine Hat housing official applauds project

BY DON PATTERSON
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An official with the Medicine Hat housing organization says affordable housing projects in the city similar to one proposed for High River have been a big success.

Darren Rud, homeless and community housing co-ordinator with the Medicine Hat Community Housing Society, said projects by Classic Construction are a case where the private sector has been able to address affordable housing and "hit a home run."

He said the company's projects in Medicine Hat have helped people who wouldn't have otherwise been able to afford it to purchase their own home.

"It's opening the doors to people who just never thought they could get into a home," he said. "It creates wealth for individuals, wealth for families and wealth for

communities. And I can only see that as being beneficial for the people in High River."

"We have all been brought up on the adage that if it's too good to be true, then it must be. That's not what happens here; this is as true as it is good."

Officials from the company presented details of a housing project proposed for north of Holy Spirit Academy at town council's March 12 meeting.

The company offers subsidies that go towards the down payment and monthly mortgage payments, which in Medicine Hat are administered by the city's community housing society. According to Rud, the subsidies can also be transferred to the new owner if the unit is sold.

He said residents in Medicine Hat developments have been able to use the equity on their homes to move on over a short period of time.

"That seems to be Classic's philosophy throughout all this is not just to get people into a home, but recognizing home ownership is one of the best ways to create personal wealth," he said.

Rud explained the cost of a



Image submitted

An official with the Medicine Hat Community Housing Society has high praise for affordable housing projects in the city constructed by Classic Construction similar to one proposed for High River.

Classic Rental unit in Medicine Hat is less than what people would pay in rent for a similar unit. In Medicine Hat, a three-bedroom unit is sold for \$650 per month, which includes condo fees.

"If you were to rent one of these units, they would easily go for over \$1,000 month," he said.

Officials from Classic Construction told town council, the High River units would be sold for higher prices because of differences in the local market.

Rud also works with the resident condominium corporation to ensure appropriate matters are taken care of. He has also put together a home ownership guide.

"For many of these people, this is their first time as homeowners," he said.

He said Medicine Hat's housing situation may not be as "dire" as in some communities in the province, but the development addressed a real need in the city for affordable housing.