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Construction company rebuilds Schoharie landmark for free

By: Megan Cruz

The old Borden Creamery building in the Village of Schoharie is not only a preservation of the area's history, but it's also come to be a kind of community center for residents. And on Saturday, it finally received the \$15,000 worth of work it needed to reopen after Irene.

Our Megan Cruz has this story.

SCHOHARIE, N.Y. -- We lost three feet of our walls, our kitchen, the floors were covered with mud," said Joan Marciniak, a board member of the Schoharie Colonial Heritage Association.

Also on the board is Ruth Anne Wilkinson. She said, "I had to walk away from it. There were just so many other things that needed attention."

For over four months, the old Borden Creamery sat untouched after flood waters from Irene destroyed its first floor.

But on Saturday, people were busy sawing, taping, and drilling away.

"I was thinking I wasn't doing the right thing by not helping a family but now, I'm helping an entire community," said James Amsler, the Vice President of BCI Construction.

Amsler said he'd planned to rehab a home in Schoharie County, but once he received a letter from the Schoharie Colonial Heritage Association, the not-for-profit that manages the Creamery, he said he'd gladly take on the \$15,000 project for free.

"I reached out to all my employees and here they are," said Amsler.

"They do hard labor the whole week and now they come here to do this on their weekend," said Marciniak. "It's just a blessing."

And as for the supplies, Amsler says he reached out to companies he usually works with - all of whom were glad to help. Like Bellevue Builders in Schenectady who donated all the kitchen counters and cabinets.

"It's fantastic to be able to do our part and help a community out that's been devastated by the effects of Irene," said Bellevue Builders Sales Manager Jason Lafountain.

Marciniak is grateful for the help.

"We never could have done it in this time frame," she said. "It probably would have been the end of summer. When maybe we would have enlisted a bunch of teachers that'd be off but this is amazing. We'll be up and running in a month."

Which is great news for the hundreds of residents who use the Creamery.

"The girl scouts, the Depot Lane singers, the kids' theater group," Marciniak listed.

People here hope help keeps coming to Schoharie County.

"I'm hoping we're the catalyst to get more companies down here," said Amsler.

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