

# Bird City BOOM

## Spec house, other new homes being built

STORY AND PHOTOS BY ERIN MATHEWS

[BIRD CITY] Bird City residents have been watching something they don't often get to see: A new home being built. In fact, four new homes were recently underway, and a downtown building was being remodeled to include apartments.

Bird City Century II Development Foundation

Executive Director Teryn Carmichael said the foundation board voted in late 2021 to build a spec house on an empty lot near downtown. The 1,800-square-foot, five-bedroom, three-bath house with finished basement and attached garage is nearing completion.

Goodland contractor Camron Paxton and his crew are expected to put on the finishing touches in April. Carmichael said the asking price has yet to be determined, but construction costs are expected to be around \$325,000.

"It's been super exciting," said Carmichael, who drives by the house



TERYN CARMICHAEL

on West Fourth Street and checks on progress at least once a day. "I've been here almost six years, and this has been talked about ever since I was hired. It's been a long time in the works."

In addition to the spec house, several local families were in the midst of their own construction projects in November. A poured foundation awaited the arrival of one family's prefabricated home, and an older couple moving into town from a farm was building another house near downtown. A tiny house was being completed by a couple moving from a rental. In addition, a corner building downtown was being renovated into new offices for the Greater Northwest Kansas Community Foundation. Two apartments and a vacation rental were being developed in the back part of the building.

"It's kind of hopping around here!" Carmichael said.

Carmichael said if things go well with the first house, the foundation is prepared to build a second. Though plans are not set, it may be smaller to target couples who are ready to downsize. In early February, there had been interest expressed in the spec home but not yet a firm commitment from a buyer. Carmichael remained confident.

"Houses hit the market, and they're off

the market. It's insane. Houses do not sit on the market here," she said. "It doesn't seem to have slowed down even though the interest rates have gone up."

The two major employers in Bird City are the Bird City Dairy and Cheylin USD 103. It has been a struggle to fill positions in businesses because of the lack of housing in Bird City, Carmichael said.

Century II has a long history of taking calculated risks to benefit Bird City. In 2007, nearly half of the foundation's assets were committed to purchase land for and help finance a Bird City expansion of McCarty Dairy.

"In the long haul, that's been a huge blessing to our community," Carmichael said.

In 2016, the foundation paid for construction of a licensed group home for child care near the school. Paxton, who is building the spec house, previously built Cougar Cub Daycare, which continues to serve Bird City children.

"Everyone knows if you're in a rural community, you have to be very open minded and to a certain extent willing to take risks in order to make things survive," Carmichael said. "That's our job, to go out there and take risks and try to make this a better place than where we found it and keep pushing it forward." ■

Goodland contractor Camron Paxton and his crew are expected to put the finishing touches on the Bird City spec home in April.

