

Hope House project moving forward

By **STEVE SCHULWITZ**
News Staff Writer

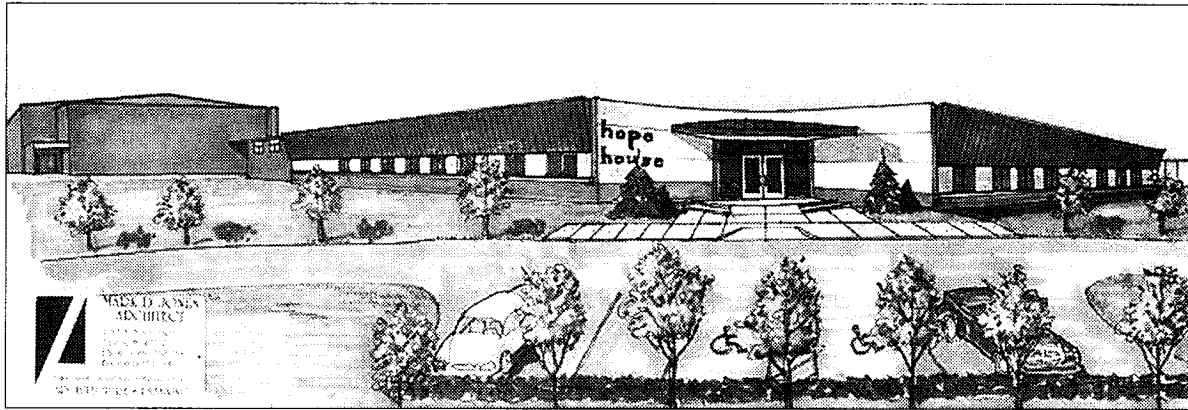
The former Alpena Catholic Central building continues its transformation that ultimately will allow it to be used to aid in the treatment of troubled youth. A portion of the building is being revamped so it can more efficiently house the girls of Hope House.

Child and Family Services Executive Director Lyle Dorr said the \$1.2 million project is moving ahead on schedule and the overhaul should be complete early next year.

"Things are going along really well right now," Dorr said. "The detailed drawings were completed last week and all the document details are being forwarded to contractors. We will then host a pre-bid conference for the contractors on (Thursday) so they can get more information and have questions answered. We'll issue a contract in mid-July and also know the true cost of the project then. We anticipate construction being done in January and the girls should begin to move in sometime in February."

Some of the demolition and cleanup work already has begun. Area volunteers and The Home Depot spent four days tearing out carpeting and removing old pipes. Home Depot also is expected to offer some monetary relief as well. Bill Hanson, team leader of Team Depot, said he hopes the company will donate as much as \$8,000 toward the project. He said he thinks he can get Dorr and his staff as much as 10-15 percent of needed supplies.

"We are going to apply for two different grants and I am pretty confident we will receive them because



Purpose of the project

- Improve the quality of treatment
- Increase capacity
- Improve the quality of treatment with better designed space including adequate staff offices and better layout of the living/treatment space.
- Improved and expanded individual, group and family meeting space.
- Improved and expanded bathroom facilities.
- Improved kitchen and dining facilities.
- Adequate staff offices.
- Open, roomy layout for efficiency and esthetics.
- Adequate short and long-term storage.
- Improved leisure and recreation space.
- Better community access with the new location.
- Direct access to an adjacent gymnasium, adjacent soccer fields, and river walk system.

The Home Depot is usually pretty generous for projects like this," Hanson said. "The first grant we are asking for is for \$5,000 and it can be used for anything they need. They will have a classroom in the facility, so they will need computers and desks and things like that, so maybe they can use some of the money for that. The second would be a \$3,000 'green grant' that must be used to anything that improves energy savings. That could be new appliances, or trees and shrubs to provide shade to the building, but the money must be spent in a matter that will provide energy savings."

Dorr said the new facility is going

to be welcome for the residents and staff. He said the current facility is cramped and hinders the effectiveness of the treatment offered.

"Essentially the old facility is old and it just doesn't have adequate space to do the types of treatments we want," Dorr said. "The new one will provide the girls a little more breathing room and help make our treatment more effective. Right now we have only three showers for the 13 girls. The new place will allow us to house as many as 15 residents. We will have four showers and a tub. It will make it easier to get ready for school and stuff like that. For the administration it will offer

room as well."

Funding for phases I and II has been acquired, but there will be a third phase down the road that will allow the girls a little more freedom in a home setting.

"It's called the independent living program and it will be for 17- and 18-year-old girls who get out of the home and have nowhere to go after they leave Hope House," Dorr said. "The building will have eight beds and will help them get accustomed to living more or less on their own."

Steve Schulwitz can be reached via e-mail at sschulwitz@thealpenanews.com or by phone at 358-5689.