

Oakleaf Waste assists Habitat

Waste broker aids green building project near its Connecticut headquarters

By Jim Johnson

Oakleaf Waste Management is teaming with Habitat for Humanity to make a couple of homes in Hartford, Conn., greener.

The local chapter of Habitat for Humanity, which builds homes for low-income families in need of affordable housing, is both recycling its construction waste and using green building techniques for a pair of homes under construction.

And the construction supervisor for the project hopes to employ these green building features in more and more homes as time goes on.

"We're trying to just keep pushing the envelope and keep building better homes," construction supervisor Shea Hagy said. "I think it's critical that we show people it can be done affordably."

Oakleaf, a waste broker based in East Hartford, Conn., is donating the use of roll-off containers and recycling and disposal services for the two homes.

"All of it goes into the 20-yard [container], and it's taken to a facility where it's recycled," said Marc Okrant, director of marketing with Oakleaf. "We're ensuring that a minimal amount of the material will be disposed."

The builders anticipate generating the following amount of material for each green home: 5 cubic yards of dimensional lumber, 1 cubic yard of pressure-treated lumber, 1.6 cubic yards of oriented strand board, and 1 cubic yard of metal.

Other materials include: 1.3 cubic yards of vinyl, 2 cubic yards of drywall, 20 cubic yards of fiberglass insulation, 1 cubic yard of asphalt shingles, and 1 cubic yard of miscellaneous debris. There also will be an estimated 1 cubic yard of general trash each week.

Along with the roll-off container, Oakleaf is providing a dedicated recycling bin for cardboard.



MEASURE TWICE, CUT ONCE: Volunteers help construct two homes being built by Habitat for Humanity in Hartford, Conn. Oakleaf Waste Management is donating roll-off containers and employing a single-stream recycling system for the project.

Because of the large amount of volunteer labor that's used to construct a Habitat for Humanity home, Oakleaf chose to provide a single container for the construction debris instead of trying to separate materials on site, Okrant said. The added space needed for multiple containers also was a consideration in deciding to go with a single-stream approach.

"It's good community involvement. A lot of our employees live in Hartford, live in East Hartford," Okrant said. "It's goodwill. It's good to give back to the community. To me, it's pretty personal."

Okrant's parents, when they were first married, lived near where the two new green homes are being constructed on the

north end of Hartford, he said.

"It's something important to do, to do something for the community," Okrant said. "There are two families whose lives are really being changed by this project."

Oakleaf, along with providing the recycling and disposal services, also is planning a day where workers will be able to volunteer their time helping to build the duplex, he said.

Aside from paying attention to the waste stream, Habitat for Humanity is employing green construction techniques, Hagy said. They include using 30 percent recycled slag in the home's foundation.

The site where the homes are being constructed is a former parking lot, so the builders also are using ground-up asphalt as

base material.

Framing is being constructed using "engineered lumber" from smaller, faster-growing trees — a move that stays away from using old-growth trees. And a special framing technique is using 30 percent to 40 percent less lumber when compared to traditionally constructed homes, Hagy said.

"Sustainability starts on the local level, and that's what we're trying to do in these communities — build strong, healthier communities," he said. "You can do it in an affordable fashion and you can reap the benefits. It's not just for the wealthy. ■"

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