

Sheridan Scenic



The Sheridan Press/Michael Sullivan

A small herd of elk grazes in the pasture above Kendrick Park on Thursday evening.

Green House Living of Sheridan battles economy to meet \$9.7 million fundraising goal by March 31

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About a year and a half after the Green House Living for Sheridan project was introduced to the city of Sheridan, the group trying to complete the project is struggling to raise construction funds.

"Had we been in a normal economic situation, the money would have been raised," said Kay Wallick, project coordinator.

Total building cost for the project is estimated at \$9.7 million, according to Wallick. While the project's board and task force members say they have raised \$2 million and secured some financing, there is still a \$2 million gap in donations.

"Our deadline is March 31, 2010," said Barbara Walter, a member of the Green House Living task force with Wallick. "If we don't raise the money

by then, we essentially lose \$1 million" in state money.

Green House Living fundraising successes include an \$891,217 State Loan and Investment Board grant for infrastructure. The West Fifth Street property where the facility is to be built was also donated to the organization by local developer Don Roberts Jr.

The SLIB funding was contingent on completion of the fundraising campaign and secured financing by the end of August.

Because the fundraising goal was not met, project organizers say they requested and received an extension until the end of March.

"This is a great project and somebody's got to make it happen," Wallick said. "It is going to be us."

Green House Living of Sheridan will be a long-term-care facility that focuses on "elders continuing their

life journey with dignity and respect," according to the organization's mission.

The Sheridan project would include four homes, with 12 elders living in each home. A small administrative building would also be constructed.

The homes would be licensed nursing homes that accept private payments and insurance, as well as Medicaid and Medicare reimbursements.

"These homes really represent a culture change in our caregiving," Wallick said. "It gets past the quality of care and focuses on the quality of life. It is about empowering those people to continue to be in charge of their lives."

According to Wallick and Walter, the organization's board and task force will be making a big push to meet their fundraising deadline.

"We're going to take a field trip up to Billings to see their Green House Living facility to help show people the kind of project we're talking about," Wallick said.

She added that space on the bus to the Billings facility will be limited and primarily by invitation only, but she hopes that those who attend will spread the word.

In addition to the tour, the organization will begin taking pledges from individual donors.

"We will not take money," Wallick said. "Just pledges. If something happens and this falls through, we do not want to have to give money back."

Wallick also added that while the events have not yet been planned, the organization will hold two more fundraisers before the March deadline.