

Mountain Democrat

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General contractor Steve Tyler is restoring the old, one-room Willow School House in Somerset to serve as the Caldor Survivors' Community Tool Shed. The building is getting new windows, doors and siding, the siding donated by the James Hardie Company. Courtesy photo

News

Help to rebuild: Community tool shed opening for Caldor victims

By **News release**

West Slope Foundation

"It takes a village!"

That's the idea behind the Caldor Survivors' Community Tool Shed in Somerset. The tool shed will be a library-like lending resource that will celebrate its grand opening Friday, Aug. 19, one year after the Caldor Fire destroyed 406 residences and burned a total of 221,000 acres.

The tools and equipment the West Slope Foundation has acquired through donations or direct purchase will be available at no charge to residents rebuilding homes in the wake of the devastating Caldor Fire. The brainchild of Scot Telfer and Jennifer McKim Hibbard, executives at West Slope Foundation, and Valeri Mihanovich of CalOES, the project was made possible with donations from multiple faith-based sponsors and corporate entities.

For the purpose of the tool shed the old Willow School House was lent to West Slope Foundation by the Pioneer Volunteer Firefighters Association. The schoolhouse was established in 1904 and was part of the Pioneer School District until it closed in 1965.

General contractor Steve Tyler is giving the old one-room schoolhouse the facelift it deserves. He is restoring the building by installing new windows and doors, removing and replacing the rotted siding and going as far as adding a ramp up to the front porch to ease the transport of heavier items. The new siding was donated by the James Hardie Company and will be delivered and installed by Diamond Pacific.

When WSF Advisory Committee members first began this venture more than five months ago, they never thought the partnerships they formed over the last year would be so receptive to the idea and step in with grants and sweat equity

to help establish the program.

“People just came to us and started to ask how they can help, once word got out what we were doing,” Telfer said. “We even had ToolBank USA from the East Coast partner with West Slope Foundation to develop a pilot program for all of Northern California. Their tool lending program shipped out six pallets of tools to get the program started.”

“With multiple faith-based organizations and other sponsors, we are so excited this program has become a reality and survivors like myself will soon be able to begin building their lives and homes back up in this wonderful community,” said Mckim-Hibbard.

The tool shed is located at 7960 Grizzly Flat Road. Tool requests will be processed on Fridays and tools checked out on Saturdays and Sundays.

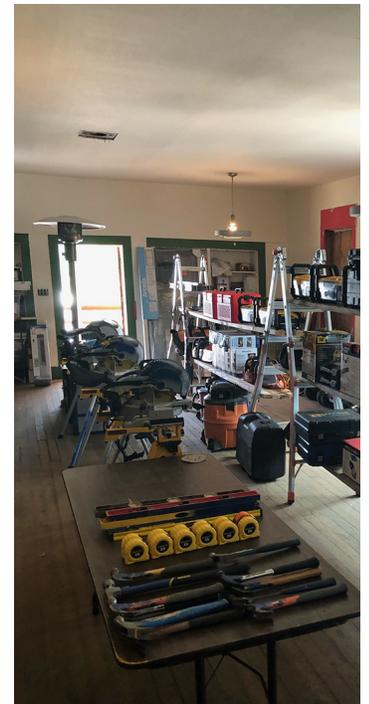
Tools available include shovels, rakes, chainsaws, log splitters, generators, power washers and more.

The tools are available to survivors who have suffered 50% or more damage to their primary residence and who have already been vetted by the West Slope Foundation. For more information about qualifying go to the West Slope Foundation’s website at westslopefoundation.org.

For more information about the Caldor Survivors’ Community Tool Shed visit westslopefoundation.org/community-tool-shed.



Hand and power tools available include shovels, rakes, chainsaws, log splitters, generators, power washers and more. Courtesy photo



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