



Media Advisory

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City Begins Decorative Board-Up Pilot Program

ROCKFORD, Ill. – The City of Rockford recently started a pilot program aimed at making traditional boarded up houses less of an eyesore. The Decorative Board-Up concept uses protective materials, which have been painted by volunteers to mimic the appearance of an occupied property, to secure the house or building.

The first house using this technique was completed earlier this month at 724 Kilburn Avenue. The City teamed up with The Neighborhood Foundation, a non-profit organization that specializes in getting decorative board-up programs up and running in communities across the region.

The Decorative Board-Up Program is not a substitute for demolition. Houses and buildings that are selected are either not eligible for demolition or are eligible but not slated to be demolished soon.

Next Project Set for Decorative Board-Up

The next project set to receive the new treatment is a large commercial structure at 1920 N. Main Street. While the City continues taking legal action against the owners of the property, Decorative Board-Up should reduce the visual blight on the community. **Using this new concept and incorporating volunteers and community partners, the City is drastically reducing the cost of the traditional plywood board up.**

Here's the timeline of events and how citizens can help:

- August 1 – community organizations and volunteers will work to clean up the area around the site

- August 4 – the City will host an all-day event at the site as volunteers work to paint the material that will be placed over the windows
- August 5 to August 15 – volunteers will continue working on the site with our partner Neighborhood Foundation finalizing the installation of the boards

If you'd like to volunteer, contact Cyndie Hall, Executive Director of Neighborhood Network, at 779-348-7571 or cyndie.hall@rockfordil.gov.

Facts about Decorative Board Up

- Uses re-usable, recycled, materials to secure abandoned and blighted homes, with materials shown to last significantly longer and resist mold and other growth longer than traditional board-up materials.
- Engages partners to perform work in the community, providing area youth with hands-on experience in construction.
- Reduces the occurrences of property damage and graffiti when compared to traditional board-up efforts.
- Secures a structure which, while vacant and a blight, is not deteriorated to the point of requiring demolition; preserving the opportunity for the property to be eventually rehabilitated.
- Ideal for large buildings where demolition is not a financially viable option.

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