



Holidays come early for reservation

by Senior Airman Jason Piatek
28th Bomb Wing Public Affairs

11/24/2004 - **ELLSWORTH AIR FORCE BASE, S.D. (AFP)** -- When it comes time to think of reasons to be thankful this Thanksgiving, four families on the Rosebud Indian Reservation will not have to look far for inspiration.

Four housing units were moved from here to Rosebud on Nov. 22, where they will become new houses for 26 American Indians who have been living in condemned quarters.

The housing units from the base, which were two duplexes split up into four units, will replace housing that is in unstable physical condition and contaminated with toxic mold, said Phil Stevens, Operation Walking Shield president and chief executive officer.

"The (condemned) houses are so bad that they've been declared unfit for human occupancy," Mr. Stevens said. "The children who've been living in them all have asthma from being exposed to the mold."

Some of these families have waited 18 years to get new housing, and if base officials had not offered their housing units, the families would have had to wait until next summer, Mr. Stevens said.

"The base is always looking for an opportunity to help the local community, and with such a large Native American population in the area, we hope to be able to provide even more housing," said Karen Hoffman, 28th Civil Engineer Squadron realty officer.

Mrs. Hoffman said the base is working with Operation Walking Shield and Air Force officials to approve 110 more housing units for reservations.

Four housing units can be provided for the cost of one new house, Mr. Stevens said.

Mr. Stevens said the foundation slabs, water heaters, electricity, new siding and roofing for the new houses will be installed by Dec. 18. Furnishings and other donations have also been provided for the families, which should make for a very merry holiday season.



ELLSWORTH AIR FORCE BASE, S.D. -- Workers prepare to move housing units Nov. 22 from here to the Rosebud Indian Reservation. They will become new houses for four American Indian families who have been living in condemned quarters. (U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Jason Piatek)

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