

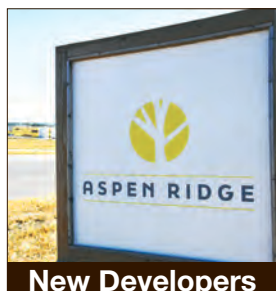


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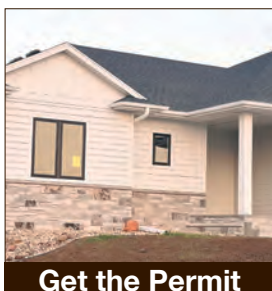
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Brandon and Michelle
Schweitzer standing on
the front porch of their
converted home.



New Developers



Get the Permit

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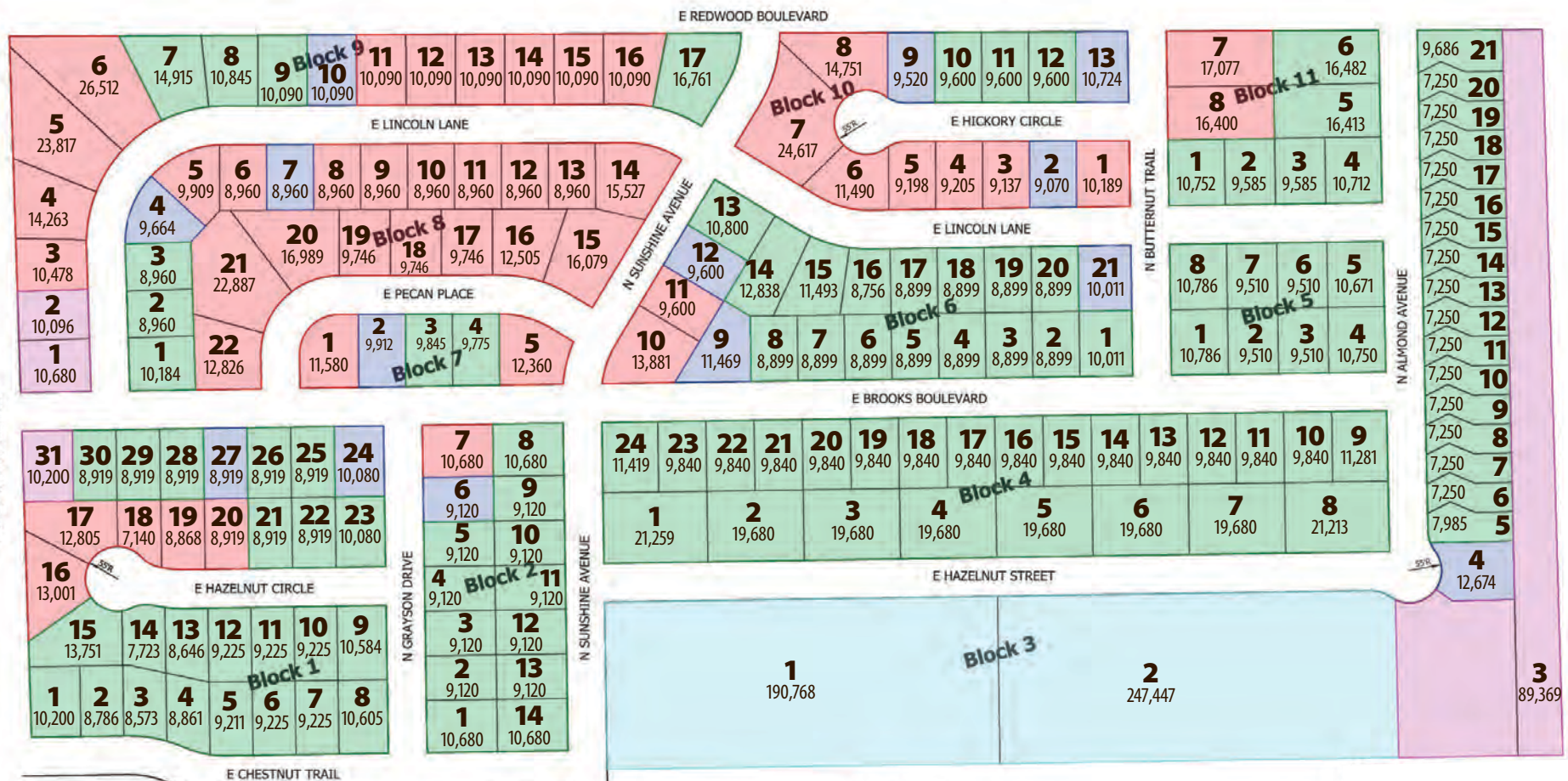
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First came the house, then came the bride **Schweitzer converts former Garretson hospital into newlywed's first home**

Jill Meier
Journal editor

When Brandon Schweitzer purchased a massive house in 2016 that was once a hospital in Garretson, he was a single man eager to tackle a project.

And what a project the more than 4,000-square foot home has been.

Prior to Schweitzer buying the home, a previous owner had come in, flipped the home and sold it to a man who owned it for a year before he could no longer financially afford it.

"He had a bunch of kids and it just got trashed," Schweitzer remembers.

Still, Schweitzer could see what the home — vacant any hint of the former hospital — could be.

Brandon Realtor Michael Gross had talked about purchasing it, Schweitzer said.



Jill Meier/BV Journal

Brandon Schweitzer constructed the window bench for the dining room's bay window.

renovate the home. Instead, his time

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SCHWEITZER HOME cont. from page 3

was consumed by a relationship that occupied his time.

“Honestly, this place was just kind of a dumping ground,” he said. “I’d stop by and throw stuff in the garage. I was rarely here for almost a year and a half.”

A second relationship followed, and once again, little progress was made on the home.

Then, he was a single man, ready to roll up his sleeves and get to work. He tore down plaster walls and put up walls of sheetrock. He pulled up carpeting, removed radiators, walls and columns. He replaced the once-weighted windows with more efficient windows, stripped down all of the doors, replumbed

the home, and put a mini-split system in the house.

“It was either that or try to HVAC the house,” he said. “There’s no way to HVAC it. You’d be building around everything, and it’s already kind of awkward enough the way it that it is in places.”

He labored over the original hardwood floors, meticulously sanding each board. He even got creative, piecing in slats of ebony-stained maple where a half-wall – most likely the counter where patients once checked in – had been removed,

“I had to improvise,” says the machinist by trade. “I ended up buying a slab of maple. Of course, I can’t do something normally.”



Jill Meier/BV Journal

The massive window in the couple’s bedroom allows them to look at the stars.

Schweitzer also constructed a bench – with storage included – in the massive bay window of what is now the home’s dining room.

He’s now turned his

attention to the home’s exterior. For weeks, he’s been working on the garage, removing old paint in preparation for primer and a new coat of paint, which he said will likely

happen next spring.

“We were like, let’s do the garage first and see how much work that it actually is,” he said.

He’s learned from his neighbor, Karen Rekstad,

that the garage in its earliest years, was a horse stable.

The former hospital-turned-home also once featured an elevator, which was used to bring patients from the ambulance garage to the third-floor operating room. The basement, although no longer detectable, also housed the hospital’s mortuary. In later years, it was converted into an apartment.

“I haven’t figured out when they decommissioned the hospital,” Schweitzer said.

A brutal South Dakota winter two years ago wreaked havoc on the home when the pipes froze and subsequently burst, shooting “black crap everywhere.”

“All this sediment and

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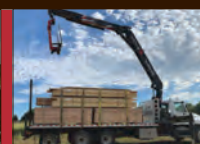


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SCHWEITZER HOME cont. from page 3

everything that was in there, it splattered up the walls everywhere. We had rooms that were completely done and looked great, and then there was black everywhere," he said.

With the home's restoration well underway, Schweitzer said he felt something was missing, more specifically, someone to share the home with. That all changed last November when Michelle, a gal he dated 20 years ago, came back into his life.

"I tell everyone that I bought this house because I was waiting for her, because I knew I was going to marry her, and I just

needed something to do in the meantime," he tells. "And then it happened."

Michelle who grew up in Crooks, was living in California when she returned to care for her father after he had fallen, and help ready his home to put it on the market.

"I messaged him, and was like, 'Do you want to get a drink?': Michelle tells.

He eagerly accepted the invitation, and from there, it turned into a whirlwind romance that resulted in exchanging "I do's" months later.

Until reuniting, Michelle had little inkling of the talents her husband has.

"When we dated 20 years ago, we both worked at Citibank, so we were both desk people. I didn't know Brandon could do carpentry and electrical and plumbing and all of that stuff. Oftentimes, I say that I married my dad," she said. "I tell my friends in California that there's literally nothing this guy can't do, and if he doesn't know how, he looks it up and he'll know it in five minutes."

Michelle's favorite part of the home is the large, north-facing window in their bedroom.

"At night, we can open it and look at the stars," she said.

Their bedroom, which features an en suite bathroom, was once the

operating and recovery room when the home was a hospital.

She's also partial to the "giant kitchen."

"I came from a 720 square-foot apartment, so that's basically the size of the kitchen," she said. "And I love having a yard, too. I haven't had a yard for 15 years, so that's been nice."

She's also embracing the old home's "quirks."

"Especially here, where it's so windy. The house shifts sometimes and the floors creak."

When Michelle first stepped into the massive home, she admits she was curious why her then-single husband wanted such a big house.

"He said it was for proj-

ects to keep him busy," she said.

When she moved in last November, she gave the home what it was missing: a woman's touch.

"She took it and made it a home," says Schweitzer's mother, Theresa.

"It was a construction zone, and I was perfectly fine living in it," Brandon

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SCHWEITZER HOME

cont. from page 6

said. “That’s probably the thing I’ve heard the most since I’ve been here, is ‘It’s actually a home now.’”

Turning the massive once-hospital into a home has been a labor of love for Brandon for the past eight years. And he’s not done yet.

“Personally, I’m never satisfied with anything. If I could go back eight years and you showed me what it was going to be, I would be perfectly happy. But that’s not to say there’s no further renovations somewhere, sometime down the road,” he said.

NEW DEVELOPERS CHANGE THE EASTSIDE OF BRANDON

Jill Meier
Journal editor

People want to live in Brandon. And developers want to develop in Brandon. Combine the two, and it’s the very recipe that’s led to new developments in the city.

Chestnut Ridge, located near the intersection of Redwood and Chestnut boulevards on Brandon’s eastside, Aspen Ridge, which is located on the south side of Aspen Boulevard – also on the city’s eastside – are being transformed into new neighborhoods.

With a mix of multi- and single-family housing option, with a pinch of commercial lots, these new developments are sure to make Brandon’s population rise even more in the coming years.

ASPEN RIDGE

In the blink of an eye, about a dozen rooftops can be seen today in the 93-acre Aspen Ridge development, which is an endeavor of Christensen Development.

Passersbys will spot the first of several two-story apartment buildings that will total out at 145 units. Mix in slab-on-grade villas, a variety of multi-family homes and single-family homes, and a couple of parcels for commercial endeavors, and before long, Brandonites will have a new area to call “home.”

Eric Harms, a Realtor Broker with Hegg, is excited by the bustling building activity there.

“We had a house on the ‘Parade’ the last couple weekends, and had a lot of people through it,” he said.



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Christensen Development will deed the pickleball courts, splash pad, and neighborhood park to the city once it's completed.

Currently, there are four different builders that are putting spades in the ground there. And Harms said he consistently receives inquiries.

“Just while I was out fishing today, I got a text message from a completely different builder, saying if I had two lots available, they were interested,” he said. “This is something that we’re excited to be able to bring to the Brandon community from the standpoint that all of our kids go to Brandon Valley. We spend an awful lot of time in Brandon, so to be able to give something to the community that is another option for them if they’re looking to make

a change with their home or they’re looking to upsize or downsize, we feel like we can fill that need for them pretty well.”

This week, Harms said they will be closing on nine additional lots for Allen Homes, which allows them to continue their villa project. Another two lots will be closed on for single-family homes.

“We’re pretty happy it just keeps moving and it’s really fun to see the variety of product that’s out there. Anytime you get different builders in there, you get different ideas, different architecture, and that’s fun to see,” he said.

Residents throughout the community will be able to utilize the recreational amenities the developer is putting in: four pickleball courts, a splash pad and walking trails. The pickleball courts opened earlier this month for play, but the splash pad is delayed for soil issues.

“We were hoping it was going to get in this year, but we had some soil issues that we’re trying to work through with the engineer,” Harms said. “We’re still hoping to get it pretty much done this year so it can be ready to go the first part of next year.”



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The developer will deed the pickleball courts, splash pad and neighborhood park to the city once it's completed.

Along Aspen Boulevard, two parcels are earmarked for commercial endeavors. One of the parcels is currently under contract with Iowa-based Casey's, which plans to bring a second location to the city there.

"I think we're pretty happy with where we are right now," Harms said. "Anytime that you do a development of this scale, you're going to run into stuff that you didn't necessarily anticipate. And so, we're navigating that, but overall, we're really happy with the trajectory that the development is on."

By mid-November, Harms said a23 new lots will be opened. That's far ahead of pace, he said.

"Our initial phase was 16 single-family lots, but we're adding 23 lots this fall, and that will include some twin home lots as well as. If I'm not mistaken, three are twin home lots and 20 are single family lots," he said.

By the end of 2027, the developer anticipates Aspen Ridge will be filled.

"Hopefully, we can find another project then to continue that growth," he said.

CHESTNUT RIDGE

"If you build it, they will come."

While that's a line from "Field of Dreams" it's just as fitting for VanOverschelde Companies' newest development, Chestnut Ridge. Located on Brandon's eastside, the development is literally rising from the ground that's surrounded by a cornfield

nearing harvest.

"The corn will be out soon, so you'll be able to see us a little better visually. It's kind of hard to see what's all going on out there from Chestnut Boulevard, but once that corn is down, you'll see us better," says owner Nick VanOverschelde.

VanOverschelde began work on the 80-acre development two years ago. The first phase encompasses 22 acres that will be a combination of single-family homes, twin homes, town homes and villa lots.

"There's kind of a nice mix for all price points. But that first phase, the first 22 acres, has all four of different use types in it, and lot of availability," he said.

Interest in these lots is gaining considerable attention currently from about 30 different builders.

"Actually, we just started marketing the lots last Thursday, and we've already got two lots under contract," he said. "We let them know the development is opening and the school has begun work on the new school that's opening fall of 2026, so now is your time to be a part of all

of this excitement."

Chestnut Ridge is not VanOverschelde's first development in Brandon. They have a 10-year history here in the Sunrise Creek neighborhood, which, he said, has only two lots remaining.

"When we first started building there, there was about 60 lots left ... and now we're starting to go north on the next 80 acres."

In all total, VanOverschelde said Chestnut Ridge will add about another 225 rooftops to the city.

"It's going to be crazy," he says. "The city's putting in that new sewer trunk line right now, and that trunk line is huge future growth out there for I believe that capacity of up to 1,600 acres. There's a ton of growth going to happen on the east side, and with the new school opening in about two years, that side of town just

going to explode."

A section in the development's northwest corner

was zoned for Neighborhood Business. VanOverschelde applauds the city for implementing the new zoning district.

"The city of Brandon has been trying to find a nice mix. In the past, it has been so much of a hard line like, this is commer-

everybody.

Chuck Moss is the broker for all lots in the Chestnut Ridge development.

"We're wearing two hats," he said. "Obviously we're a developer, we're a builder and now we're doing the development side of things as well, but any-



cial, this is residential. As rezones have come about, there's been quite a tug of war in that world trying to get land rezoned. The Neighborhood Business is kind of a fun, new mixed use, if you will, trying to marry the two together. We have a couple ideas - I can't really share them at this point that are in some design phases - to try to blend neighborhoods with businesses and what that looks like esthetically from a business standpoint that that makes sense for

body can buy a lot. We're not just keeping it all exclusive for VanOverschelde Companies and VanOverschelde Custom homes. We welcome any builders and any people that have an interest in building there."

"We have buildable lots ready to go now," he said. "I don't want to say get your lot purchase today before they're gone, but it's going to get exciting in a hurry."

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Follow the rules: Make sure to get required permit before your project gets underway

Tom A. Savage
Contributing writer

If you've got the urge to do some home improvements this fall, it's best to make sure you're in compliance with the city before taking on that task.

It's not as simple as heading to the lumber yard, nailing some 2x4s together and building a new deck, or fence, or extension to your garage, or new shingling or siding, or even an additional parking pad on your property.

The first step is making sure you're following building or zoning codes with the city of Brandon.

"We tell people that if it comes up and a light bulb goes off in your head and you think, 'Do I need a permit,' just call us and we'll let you know if what you're doing would require one or not," said Brandon Code Enforcement

Officer Paul Clarke.

Clarke said many times residents in Brandon will start a home improvement project, only to be told midway through that they're not in compliance and need to stop.

Sometimes, he said, that is done knowingly, and sometimes unknowingly.

"It depends on how informed the consumer is, whether it be a contractor or a homeowner," Clarke said. "Contractors for sure should know the rules, but sometimes they may think

that Brandon doesn't have a building department, but we do."

Clarke said Brandon has the same building codes as the city of Sioux Falls.

There are exceptions to needing a permit, such as replacing kitchen cabinets, adding new flooring or carpet. There are also exceptions, for example, when replacing broken boards in a deck. Clarke said in that in-

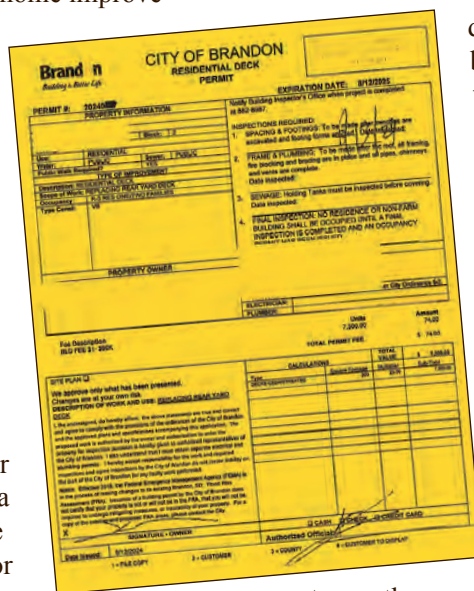
stance, there are repair maintenance issues where a permit is not needed.

"But if you are rebuilding your deck – or certainly enlarging it – you would need a permit," he said.

It's as simple as contacting City Hall to request a permit. If the project does not meet current zoning regulations, Clarke said the resident has two choices. First, they are asked to adjust their project so it does meet the regulations and city staff can issue a permit. Second, if they don't want to adjust the project, they can appear before Brandon's Planning and Zoning Commission to ask for a variance to the regulations.

If the variance is denied by Planning and Zoning, the property owner can then take the issue to the City Council to see if the seven-member board would consider reversing the Planning and Zoning's decision.

continued on page 11





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Tom A. Savage/BV Journal

Fence posts are in place at a home in The Bluffs.

GET THE PERMIT cont. from page 10

“But not many projects get to a variance,” Clarke said.

If a project is already underway and the city discovers that it is not within compliance of city codes, Clarke said they contact the property owner with a letter to give them 30, sometimes 40 days, to reverse the direction of the project in order to meet regulations.

“We don’t allow non-conformance to continue,” he said. “There’s not much blame except on the shoulders of the person who did the work incorrectly either zoning-wise or building code-wise. There could be some people who are upset, but they have nobody to blame except themselves because they didn’t go through the protocol to make sure they could do what they wanted to do.”

Clarke said there are also instances where residents can become upset after they’ve been notified to correct a project when they see a neighbor with the same



A yellow building permit issued from the City of Brandon can be seen from the street at a home in The Bluffs neighborhood.

situation.

For example, he said, a Brandon resident has an abandoned vehicle in their backyard and is asked to remove it. However, a neighbor has the same situation and hasn’t been asked to do the same.

“We tell them that it doesn’t

make yours correct,” Clarke said. “You still need to correct your problem because the zoning codes don’t allow you to have an abandoned vehicle. We’ll then go and pursue that other homeowner to make sure they come under compliance.”

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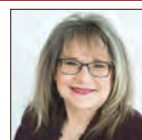
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