

Mild weather a blessing for Auburn Meadows



Auburn Homes and Services Board of Directors

L-R: Arvin Zwart, Steve Yetzer, Merrill Ekstrom,
Gina Rowe, Bruce Shoger, Mike Senden

Though many Minnesotans were somewhat bummed that the 2011 Christmas went without snow, here at Auburn, we were rather thankful for the mild weather.

“The longer the unseasonable temperatures lasted, the more smoothly construction of Auburn Meadows went,” Mike Senden, president and CEO, Auburn Homes & Services said.

Auburn Meadows is a 62-unit facility in Waconia that will offer assisted living and enhanced assisted living as well as apartments for memory care residents. Thanks to the great December weather, it is scheduled to open in the fall of 2012.

“I know that pretty much everybody wanted some snow in December and I was in the minority but, if we would have had 34-inches like we had in 2010, that would have really slowed us down so I couldn’t have asked for better weather,” Senden added.

Construction is moving at an incredibly fast pace. Groundbreaking was held mid-November and, ever since, it has been non-stop activity.

“It’s kind of fun to watch them work,” Alfred Gale, resident at Auburn Home in Waconia, said. “There’s always something interesting happening outside my window.”

“This particular project is indicative of what is going on in the state,” MN State Representative Ernie Leidiger (R) 34A, stated at the groundbreaking. “The demographics are changing dramatically. It is getting older. This is the sign of the times and I think it’s good that we see the growth is being reflected right here in Carver County and particularly in Waconia. I think it’s a wonderful facility and I think you are going to have wonderful success with it.”



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Auburn Meadows

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Auburn Meadows is being built at a critical time. By the year 2020, according to projections, Carver County will have at least 15,000 residents who will be 65 or older. Right now there are reportedly 7,500 residents in that age category. Having enough senior housing and the proper services for seniors has been a priority for city, county and state leadership.



Miller Hanson architectural interior rendering

“This will be a great additional gem in the crown that is Waconia,” Waconia Mayor Jim Nash said at the groundbreaking ceremony.

“Auburn Meadows helps us to significantly expand the types of services we offer in the Waconia area,” Senden added. “Meadows is being built using our high standards of construction and will have a similar look and feel to Auburn Home, our long-term care and short-term rehab facility in Waconia.”

The estimated cost of Auburn Meadows is \$9.8 million. The 3-story building is located adjacent to Auburn Home in Waconia – just west of Ridgeview Medical Center. There’s a \$500,000 capital campaign underway to help make Meadows truly a place to call *home*.

“Community response to our message has been strong,” Paul David, Director of Moravian Care Foundation, stated. “People understand the need to not only have a place where seniors can live, but a place that looks, feels and acts like home. That’s what we do. We create beautiful facilities but, even more importantly, we fill them with love, compassion and excellent services delivered by an experienced and caring staff.”

Auburn Meadows will offer several floor plans which are aimed at meeting the various wants and needs of the growing, and somewhat particular, senior population.

“This is fantastic,” Nash said. “I couldn’t be more pleased to be the mayor of a thriving community with people who want to invest their energy and time and their lives into growing our community. In looking at the plans and seeing the facility, you will see that it’s going to be a great project.”

Kellie Sites of the Waconia chamber of commerce, summed it up by stating, “As president of the chamber of commerce, the best thing that anybody could say is let’s put a shovel in the ground!”

“We have spent many, many hours working on the design of the building to make sure we come through for our residents because they have come to expect a high level of design quality from us,” Senden concluded.

Those who would like to learn more about Auburn Meadows can contact Sheila Nieland-Snyder at: (952) 227-0494 or ssnyder@auburnhomes.org.

Stewardship is a life long practice



Shirley and Merrill Ekstrom

Even though the landscape around Merrill and Shirley Ekstrom's Chaska farm has changed dramatically over the last 70 years, time has not touched their convictions and beliefs.

"I was confirmed by Pastor Emil Simon right here in Chaska," Merrill Ekstrom explained. "He taught me to tithe. He said if you give at least 10-percent of what you earn, you will never be short of money. That's stuck with me and it will never leave."

Over the years the Ekstroms have been among the leading supporters of Auburn's mission. It's a connection that began years ago.

"He's been on the board at Auburn for a very long time," Shirley said of Merrill's involvement with Auburn.

Merrill continued, "When the organization moved out of Lake Auburn Home in Victoria to create the Chaska campus, I had a Bobcat and I took it down there and did all kinds of work for them. We built a retaining wall, a liner for the parking lot and we even put in a cement stairway. For all of that I didn't personally take a penny. I believe in doing work for the Heavenly Father because he does so much for me. So I wouldn't even think about charging them."

Not only has the couple volunteered countless hours, but they have consistently offered their financial support as well. They recently became one of the leading donors in *A Blossoming Legacy*, the capital campaign to create Auburn Meadows Assisted Living in Waconia.

"You can't outgive God is what Pastor Emil would tell me," Merrill said with purpose. "The more you give, the more you'll get back and that has held true for me for my entire life."

Throughout the growth, the Ekstroms have remained proud of the fact that Auburn Homes & Services was founded by the Moravian Church. It means a lot to them to see the mission of their church lived out each and every day at Auburn.

Merrill and Shirley Ekstrom also contributed to the creation of Auburn Home in Waconia by sponsoring the stained glass window in the celebration room.



The sweet life at Dolce Vita

Dan Keyport knows what it means to give back to his community.

“I’m part of this community and so is Auburn, so I want to support them,” he explained. “It’s all a community thing for me. When you have a business in town you get really connected. It’s nice. I give back as a business and also through the Chaska Rotary.”

One of the ways Keyport supports Auburn is by selling wine with the Auburn label at his store, Dolce Vita, which means ‘Sweet Life’ in Italian. The wine label says ‘Aged to Perfection’ and Keyport has been selling it for a couple years.

“All of the wine is from California. It’s pretty good stuff and sells for \$14.95 a bottle. The Auburn label has a Cabernet, Merlot, Chardonnay and California Champagne,” Keyport said. “A portion of every sale goes directly to them.”



Keyport wasn’t always a business owner in Chaska. Prior to opening Dolce Vita he was in the computer industry.

“My wife jokes that when someone came into my office with the computer business they most likely had a problem,” Keyport chuckled. “Now when they step into my office, they want to throw a party. I have to admit, that’s kind of a welcome change!”

Keyport said that he sells a lot of the Auburn brand to people who have friends or family at Auburn.

“There are a million reasons to give something like that to somebody,” he concluded.

Living the mission at Auburn



When we say we are committed to our mission of *Serving Seniors in the Spirit of Christ’s Love* we aren’t just merely saying it, we do our best to make it present in everything we do. In fact, we encourage staff to let it be known when they see employees going well beyond their usual job duties. We have a program to celebrate these acts of kindness and this is one of the letters that was recently submitted.

“Two of our employees heard an Auburn Manor resident talking about how nice it would be to get her nails done. She was reminiscing about how she used to really enjoy having her nails polished. Upon overhearing this conversation, staff took the resident to a quiet area, put on some soft music, gave her a manicure and had a delightful conversation with her.”

It’s those types of moments, happening daily, that really put the home in Auburn Homes & Services.

Music and lights to warm the spirit



“This is our debut outside of the church,” Roger Sauerbrey said as the Waconia Moravian Church Quartet was getting warmed up to perform at a *Light Up Christmas* event. “We worked up several holiday favorites so I hope everyone enjoys them.”

The quartet helped make each of the *Light Up Christmas* events that much more memorable and magical. *Light Up Christmas* involved Auburn supporters purchasing an ornament in memory or honor of a loved one and then there were two events held – one in Waconia and one in Chaska. There was music, prayer, quiet reflection, a reading of the names and then the official lighting of the tree.

Auburn would like to thank everyone who participated in *Light Up Christmas* to make it such a success. The \$2500 raised through *Light Up Christmas* will support the Chaplaincy Endowment at Auburn. Once the endowment is fully funded, it will guarantee that chaplaincy services and spiritual support will be available to everyone in the Auburn family on a consistent basis.

“Spiritual care is built right into our mission, it’s part of who we are at Auburn,” Paul David, Director of Moravian Care Foundation, stated. “That’s why this endowment is so important to the future of our organization.”

If you would like to learn more about how you can support the Chaplaincy Endowment please contact Paul David at: (952) 361-0640 or pdavid@auburnhomes.org.

A sign of her appreciation



Margie Felt

When Margie Felt of Waconia needed a place to go for short term rehabilitation following surgery, she knew exactly who to call.

“I had been to Auburn Home in Waconia before and I knew they really do make it feel like home,” Margie commented. “Their physical therapy room is just really wonderful as well. I actually looked forward to going to therapy there. I know that sounds goofy but it’s the way I felt. They always pay so much attention to me and everything they do for me is always so very nice.”

Margie and her family were so pleased with their experience at Auburn that they hand painted a large ‘thank you’ sign to give to the staff.

“I just wanted them to know how much I appreciated what they did for me,” she said. “The accommodations are first class. You put your light on and they are in there as fast as possible. I have zero complaints.”

Margie said she also thoroughly enjoyed the food — especially the cook-to-order breakfast.

“You get breakfast however you want,” she continued. “How’s that for service! Let’s see, I think I’ll have French toast today. Or, how about an over easy egg. Ha! It’s just fantastic.”

The Apple Man



Doug Bade

“I’m so very glad this place is here because we definitely need it,” Doug Bade said, speaking of Auburn Courts Assisted Living in Chaska.

Bade is currently living in Auburn Courts with his wife, Katie. Before coming to Auburn, the couple ran an apple orchard as a hobby on their farm that sits between Carver and Chaska. They would sell some of the apples to local stores but would also give them away to family and friends by the bushel.

“I can tell you pretty much anything you need to know about apples,” Doug Bade said. “We grew 13 varieties of apples over the years. The sweet cider that we made was just for family,” Bade commented. “I could get three gallons of cider out of a bushel of apples. My neighbor had a press and we had to turn it by hand, no machines involved, so we needed some help on occasion. Whatever we couldn’t drink in a few days, we’d freeze.”

His children and grandchildren fondly call him ‘the apple man’ and he has a rich family history in this area. Doug attended the historic ZOAR Moravian church on County Road 10 with his parents before moving to the Waconia Moravian Church where he was confirmed. He helped finance his education at the University of Minnesota by working at Chaska’s sugar factory. “I graduated with a degree in agriculture,” Bade proudly stated.

While attending college he admits that he ‘did a little religious freelancing’ by going to a Baptist church because it was close to campus. This is where he was introduced to an up and coming pastor named Billy Graham.

“I actually preferred it when his assistant would preach,” Bade laughed. “Billy was a little long winded for me.”

Upon graduating from college, Bade said he made one of the most important decisions of his life when he married Katie in 1948, the young woman he had met while working at the sugar factory.



Painting of the Bade apple orchard

Doug spent his life educating and guiding others as he taught at Chaska High School for 17 years and was a counselor for an additional 17 years at the school. “They say that people look forward to retiring,” Bade said. “I wasn’t like that. I was 64 when I retired and all I could think is how quick it went. It just didn’t seem like it was time to retire.”

When he wasn’t in an apple orchard or a classroom, Doug was helping to lead Auburn as a member of the board of directors for several years. Most recently, Doug and Katie decided to help create the Chaplaincy Endowment at Auburn. Their faith is apparent upon entering their Auburn Courts apartment – a large three dimensional Moravian Star hangs in their window.

“Spirituality and family are the keys to happiness, that’s what I think anyway,” Doug said.

Maybe one more thing should be added to that list to make it complete – sweet cider made by ‘the apple man’.

Auburn volunteer delivers happiness



Kermit Dietrich

“This is not about delivering the mail,” Kermit Dietrich explained. “It’s about really getting to know somebody. I’ve made a lot of friends here.”

Kermit volunteers at Auburn Home in Waconia every Monday and Friday by delivering mail to residents.

“It started with me walking in and asking if there are any old farmers living here who would like to talk about farming. They were like, oh, come on in. That was pretty much the end of it as I’ve been doing this now for about 10 years. I really don’t think they actually *need* me to deliver the mail but they like it that I take time to visit with people,” Kermit said.

His wife passed away a few years ago and coming to Auburn gives him a reason to get out of the house and be with other people.

“A guy can only do so much housework. I read, I write and I paint. But you can only do that so much as well,” he said.

Just by sheer chance, Kermit’s gift of time was paid back in December as he was the winner of the quilt raffle. When asked how many tickets he purchased, Kermit replied, “I bought the right one and that’s all that counts!”

Kermit has won a few things in his lifetime including a snowmobile and a car, but, this time around, he said, “I felt it. I just knew I was going to win. I kept telling everyone, I’m going to win that quilt and I did.”

He’s giving the quilt to his daughter who is a quilter herself. “She’s quilting all the time for everybody else so I think it’s time somebody gave her a quilt to keep,” he laughed.

The quilt raffle was part of Auburn Home’s participation in the Homespun Holidays event in Waconia in December. The raffle combined with the bake and craft sale raised nearly \$5,000.00 for various initiatives at Auburn Home in Waconia.

Kermit farmed for most of his life but says he can talk about ‘pretty much anything’. Along with his time spent dairy farming, he was in the Navy during the Korean War and was also involved in various small businesses.



Quilt won in raffle by Kermit Dietrich

“There are a lot of ladies who can get together to visit but there aren’t usually a lot of elderly men here, it’s just the way life goes I suppose. I visit with everyone I see but I think the men I talk with enjoy our time together because we can talk about guy stuff,” Kermit explained. “I truly get back way more than I leave here. These are people who built this country and their stories are incredible.”

If you would like to learn more about volunteering opportunities at Auburn Home in Waconia please contact Kay Soupir, Volunteer Coordinator, at: (952) 443-6721 or ksoupir@auburnhomes.org.



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Coming Events

Friday, February 10th, the Valentine’s Ball will be held beginning at 6:30 p.m. in the Courtyard at Auburn.

16th Annual Call to Care Golf Classic to be held on Monday, July 9, 2012 at Deer Run Golf Course, Victoria, MN.

Unity in the Community will be held on Sunday, September 9, 2012 beginning at 10:00 a.m. with a worship service.

For other daily events happening at Auburn Homes and Services check out our activity calendars on our website:

www.auburnhomes.org

Auburn Homes and Services
 Visit us on our website
www.auburnhomes.org

Foundation Office952-361-0320

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