



# The Valley

## Home Stretch gains another resource

### First-time home buyers' program partners with handyman service

By Dylan Thomas  
Free Press Staff Writer

**MANKATO** — A local program for first-time home buyers is partnering with a Mankato business to answer new homeowners' repair and maintenance questions.

The Home Stretch courses sponsored by Partners for Affordable Housing already walk

future homeowners through the home-buying process. Now, PAH Home Stretch will partner with House Doctors Handyman Service for a new follow-up session.

"There's definitely a need for it," said Steve Macgregor, co-owner of House Doctors with his brother Randy. "You see a lot of new home buyers who don't know what you're supposed to

do."

Macgregor says new homeowners may not have the skills or knowledge for around-the-house maintenance work.

"They may do a kind of a Band-Aid approach, but it really doesn't fix the problem," he said.

In other cases, a new homeowner may not realize a leaky roof, for example, should be dealt with sooner, rather than later.

"The longer you wait to fix something, generally, the more repairs you have to do, and it's going to be more expensive," he said.

Kathie Davis, PAH Home Stretch coordinator, said the course already covers some general maintenance issues, such as caulking around windows for weather-proofing or changing a

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**Home Stretch offering scholarships**

PAH Home Stretch, the home buyer education program, will provide 10 scholarships to households participating in June or July.

For more information, contact Kathie Davis at 345-3029.

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furnace filter.

But many homeowners encounter unique maintenance issues after they spend a few months learning the quirks of their new home. This follow-up session will give those new homeowners a chance to ask specific questions and get a professional opinion, Davis said.

Macgregor said many new homeowners need to learn just the basics, like cleaning the gutters regularly or checking for leaky plumbing.

"There's so many people who

I run into who (say), 'Oh, I wish somebody would have told me that,'" he said.

Davis is still in the process of seeking grant money to launch the program. The follow-up session may not be available until early next year, she said.

Home Stretch classes are offered across the state, but the class sponsored by PAH is the first to propose this new program.

Davis anticipated the class would be offered free to graduates of the PAH Home Stretch course and for a small charge to the general public.