

Mansion construction looms

■ Diane Nelson says the renovation is progressing, but a lot of work remains to be done.

By TED TAYLOR
Senior Reporter

The basement needs paint and has no carpet. The first-floor kitchen is a mess, and the living room ceiling has very large holes in it.

No, it's not the inside of a fraternity house on campus, it's the Governor's Mansion. And help is on the way.

Nebraska first lady Diane Nelson said in a news conference Wednesday the mansion's renovation project, which began in March, was moving along splendidly.

New windows have been installed throughout "Nebraska's House," work on Gov. Ben Nelson's office has

been completed, and the lower-level kitchen is ready for use.

"But basically the whole house is under construction right now," she said.

The big holes in the living room ceiling are waiting for a sprinkler system, and construction workers were sanding and sawing in the basement Wednesday morning.

Already, she said, two-thirds of the \$1.3 million goal to help with the renovations has been raised through private funds. Nelson announced Wednesday that efforts to raise the rest of the money have been stepped up, thanks to the Nebraska Banker's Association.

The NBA, a statewide organization that represents 323 of Nebraska's 326 community banks and four of the state's 14 savings and loan institutions, will be handing out literature to customers as well as filling more than 250,000 bank statements with information on how to donate.

George Beattie, NBA executive

director, said the renovation project was something with which all Nebraskans could get involved.

"Now, as many Nebraskans as possible will have the opportunity to restore a piece of Nebraska history," he said. "Once again we will have a first home that we can be proud of."

Bill Orr, the husband of former Nebraska Gov. Kay Orr, was actually one of the first to begin raising money for renovating the mansion by publishing a cookbook in 1989. Proceeds went to the renovation project.

During the news conference, he took a moment to plug "The First Gentlemen's Cookbook," saying there were 2,500 left to sell, and to applaud the efforts of the first lady. "With her enthusiasm and hard work, the project is moving along," he said. "She has certainly led the team. And if it's going to be a winning team, it will be largely because of the great work of Diane Nelson."

Amputee trains for competition

HEIM from page 1

jumping, third in the 200, and had to drop out of the 100 because of fatigue.

The competition was classified by disability. Heim competed against other athletes who had lost a leg below the knee.

"That meet was awesome," Heim said. "I got to compete against the fastest guys in the world."

At the competition Heim was a big hit with local news and the fans.

"The local news wanted to see how my leg worked, so I did a back flip on camera," Heim said. "The next day people were asking for my autograph."

As a result of his performance at the meet Heim qualified for the ParaOlympics and picked up three corporate sponsors - Novacare, Mayflower Transit Agency and World Gym - that provide Heim with free legs, clothes and any other help he needs. A new prosthetic leg costs about \$12,000.

"When people say that something cost an arm and a leg, they don't know what they are saying," Heim said.

The accident

The afternoon of the accident, Heim skipped football practice to go water-skiing. While he was in the water, the driver of the boat circled around to pick Heim up and accidentally ran him over, causing the propeller to hit his leg.

The propeller cut through Heim's leg almost entirely, leaving the foot just barely attached.

"As I lay there bleeding to death I just kept thinking, 'I haven't done much yet. I want to live,'" Heim said.

In the hospital, Heim struggled to deal with the reality of losing a leg.

"I cried for hours in that room with my mom," Heim said.

Then Heim received some inspiration from a few visitors. U.S. Sen. Bob Kerrey, former Cornhusker Johnny Mitchell and someone Heim's age with a prosthesis all came to visit.

"I saw what they could do and it inspired me," Heim said. "I had Kerrey show me how he could hop up and down on his leg."

"I love to run past someone and see the look of disbelief on their faces when I go by ... I worked hard, and now I can sprint faster than anyone with two legs."

SHANE HEIM
UNL special education major

Heim also had strong support from his friends and family during the 28 days he spent in the hospital.

Both feet on the ground

Heim spent his first week out of the hospital at home playing Super Nintendo video games and feeling sorry for himself, he said.

"Then I realized that I just had to keep going and have fun, not feel sorry for myself," Heim said.

While he was stuck at home, Heim began to teach himself how to play the piano. He never used printed music, preferring to play his own compositions.

"When I play my own (music) I go off into my own world and play for hours," Heim said.

Less than a month after he left the hospital, Heim was walking without crutches and returning to his active lifestyle.

He started lifting weights again, and that winter Heim tried out for the wrestling team. In the spring he, played on the golf team.

Heim continued to wrestle and golf in high school as well as compete in taekwon do and weightlifting.

He had always been active, but the accident just made him want to work harder.

"When I lost my leg I just got on this kick to work out even harder," Heim said. "The more I worked out the more addictive it got because I started getting results."

Going to the gym is never a chore for Heim because he enjoys working out so much.

"The gym is my party," Heim said. "I'd rather work out than go drinking."

Working out and competing give

Heim a chance to show others what he can do.

"I love to run past someone and see the look of disbelief on their faces when I go by," Heim said.

His love of working out eventually spread to jogging and then sprinting.

"I worked hard, and now I can sprint faster than anyone with two legs," Heim said.

In everything he does, Heim never lets his disability affect his performance or attitude.

"He is outgoing about everything," junior exercise science major Matt Kataoka said.

Kataoka has been friends with Heim for the past three years and lives on the same floor as Heim in Selleck Hall.

People may not even notice Heim's leg at first because of his attitude.

"I lived (on the floor) for three weeks before I knew," sophomore English major Neil Bernier said. "Then one day I saw him hopping down the hall to the shower, and I wondered what happened."

Heim is intense and determined, friends said.

"He moves at the speed of light and is always full of energy," Kataoka said.

Heim decided to become a high school special education teacher after he had an opportunity to see a classroom in action.

His experiences have taught him how to make the best out of the worst in his life.

"You have to do whatever makes you happy," Heim said.

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