

'Extreme' TV in Bastrop County as local firefighter gets picked for new home

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Many things raced through Mizzy Zdroj's head when "Extreme Makeover: Home Edition" host and designer Ty Pennington knocked on the door Wednesday morning to tell the volunteer firefighter that in a week, she will be getting a new house.

"Overwhelming' comes to mind," said Zdroj, whose lost her home while she was fighting the wildfires that began Labor Day weekend.

Thanks to the ABC show and Bastrop homebuilder EFC Custom Homes, the member of the Heart of the Pines Volunteer Fire Department is getting a \$250,000, 2,500-square-foot home to replace the 724-square-foot recycled bungalow that burned .

"When they came to the door, I had to ask myself if this was happening. My kids will be in a home for Christmas," she said.

The Zdrojs are temporarily staying nearby in the guest house of fellow firefighters. Before the fire, the Zdrojs were subsistence farmers, raising their own vegetables. Chickens provided eggs. They ate rabbit, chickens and deer. The family had planned to move into an 8-by-20 shed on their 7-acre property on Cottletown Road this weekend.

Surrounded by media, neighbors, 85 "Extreme Makeover" staffers and various volunteers, Zdroj, husband Chris, 8-year-old twins Ash and Raistlin and grown daughter Whitney Niemann were blown away by the attention. After the media event, the family was flown to New York for a free vacation.

When they return on Wednesday, their house will be finished. "Before long, we'll be canning pickles, gathering eggs and planting a garden," Mizzy Zdroj said. "There are lots of changes in our lives, but we have a lifestyle that we want to pass on to our kids."

Eric Christophe, president of EFC Custom Homes, said he'll be done in 4 1/2 days. "Normally, a house like this takes 60 to 90 days to build, but we have 100 men working on it plus all the community volunteers," he said.

George Verschoor, the show's executive producer , said more is in store. "We also have something planned for the Heart of the Pines Volunteer Fire Department," he said.

Courtesy of JB Goodwin