

A photograph of a wooden building with a large tree in the foreground, serving as a background for the text. The building has horizontal siding and several windows. The tree is large and has many bare branches, suggesting a winter or late autumn setting. The overall tone is somewhat somber due to the muted colors.

**Building  
trades students  
learning more  
than just skills**

*Story and Photos by Jan Youngquist*

*For the past seven years, Building Trades instructor Justin Dietrich has been trying to teach students more than just building skills. Craftsmanship has become a lost art, he says. Craftsmanship is more than just knowing how to do something like build a wall, install a cabinet or a light fixture and that everything looks nice.*





*You might say that Mr. Dietrich was raised in the trades way. Beginning at about age 10, he recalls helping his father, a building craftsman, by maybe sweeping up in a house on a Saturday, and learning other skills as he got older.*

*Mr. Dietrich remembers when he was young, and they would be driving down a street. His father would be pointing and saying, "I worked on this house, and in this house" and recalling just what was done in each home that made it a better place to live.*



*As the years passed, the younger Dietrich found himself riding along with his father, and each would be recalling the work they'd done in various homes as they passed by. "That's something I always enjoyed."*

*And, Mr. Dietrich wants that for his students. He hopes that members of the class this year will drive by 250 Southgate one day and tell with friends or family the great work they did in this house. "I want them to be proud of what they worked on."*

*He encourages his students to put forth their best effort as they work, and know the changes they are making "are going to last a long time."*





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*This year's LTEC home at 250 Southgate in Mayfair Subdivision is right next to the home students transformed and was sold last year. Both homes were purchased out of foreclosure and will be sold when completed, which won't be too long from now.*

*In addition to general freshening up with new materials throughout, some design changes have been made to improve the home's desirability. The biggest is the addition of an upstairs laundry room, which adds convenience.*



*The floor plan has been revamped in several ways to create a sense of lighter spaciousness. New light fixtures and recessed lighting have been added, as well as baseboards, trim work, and paint throughout the home.*

*The living room features new built-in bookcases, and an electric fireplace will be added.*



*New cabinetry and flooring spark up the kitchen. With the removal of a wall, the kitchen and dining areas are more open, and a snack bar area is being added.*



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*The full-sized basement has been dry even during last summer's extreme rain events. It will offer an enticing area for children's play or an entertainment area. Several smaller rooms offer space for a study or an additional bedroom, another bathroom could be added, and it also offers plenty of storage room.*





*The Building Trades program is part of the Lincolnland Technical Education Center hosted by LCHS, which offers classes to students in surrounding school districts. Besides LCHS, four students are coming in from Williamsville, Hartsburg–Emden, and Mount Pulaski.*

*Work at the site is speeding along with two classes totaling 22 students cycling through each morning.*



*Students are taught many different skills in the scope of the project -- carpentry, electrical, tile flooring, construction framing, wall materials and finishing work. They've hung doors, installed fixtures, plumbing and more; they get it all in the total renovation process. Nearly every surface inside the home is addressed in some fashion giving it a newer, cleaner feel, but design craftsmanship and quality work is a big part of the appealing transformation.*



*LCHS Superintendent Robert Bagby has enjoyed being the director of the LTEC Building Trades program for the past two years and is proud of the program and its instructor, Mr. Dietrich.*

*The house at 250 Southgate marks over 48 houses in the last 50 years constructed by students of the LTEC program.*





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