

# Dunseith discovers a solution to its severe housing shortage

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Dunseith, N.D., is easing its housing shortage by moving in 10 duplexes from the Army's abandoned anti-ballistic missile site at Nekoma, N.D. — and the city is so pleased with the project that now it is trying to obtain other houses from the abandoned Air Force station at Fortuna, N.D.

Tim Shirk of the Rolette County Housing Authority said the Army donated the houses with a deed restriction that requires that the houses be used for the homeless for at least five years. The Dunseith Community Betterment Club owns the houses and has set up a committee to oversee them.

The Army had planned to demol-

ish the duplexes as part of its ongoing clean-up operation at the Nekoma site, which has a chance of reopening as part of a new land-based anti-missile defense system.

Most of the duplexes are held together only by shingles and siding, so Shirk said they will be split into individual housing units. Dunseith has already moved in four of the units, and plans to build foundations for the others and move them in starting this spring.

"They should be all up and running by this fall," Shirk said.

Fourteen of the units will be subsidized housing for which renters will pay 30 percent of their gross income. The other six units will be non-subsidized houses that will rent for \$225 to \$250 a month in order to make the project cash flow.

The houses were occupied only briefly in 1975 and 1976, when the ABM site was operating. Some of the homes were never occupied at all. Because they have been empty so long, Shirk estimated that each house will require roughly \$24,000 in improvements — a bargain compared with the cost of building new homes.

That money will come from a \$140,000 Community Development Block Grant, an \$87,000 interest-free loan from the Dunseith Community Betterment Club and a loan from a local bank of \$135,000. Dakota Prairie Opportunities, a federally sponsored community action agency that works on behalf of low income people, is giving a grant that amounts to \$1,600 for each house, and Otter Tail Power Co. has promised to match it.