

Black Forest Residents Still Healing, Rebuilding

Ten months after the most destructive wildfire in state history, residents of Black Forest have made significant headway in the rebuilding process.

Today, areas where charred remains once stood are now dozens of brand new homes at various stages of construction. One hundred and forty-two homes are in process of being built, while 16 are completed. But despite the strides residents have made, there is still much work to be done. Thursday night, a non-profit group held an open house to make sure those still reeling and dealing with damaged or destroyed homes have the help they need.

Most of the speakers Thursday night and volunteers with the group are survivors of either the Black Forest or Waldo Canyon fire. Many shared their experiences Thursday night with the group.

Nancy Trosper, for example, still had a home standing after the fire was finally contained. She and her family thought they were lucky-until they realized the house had sustained major smoke damage that was making them ill.

"The first thing was the respiratory issues, not being able to breathe," Trosper recalled. "After about two weeks we kept getting sicker and sicker.

"Whatever was carried with the smoke was very toxic, and we had to move out of the house. We lived outside of the home and the house was cleaned. We moved back in and it was better for a while.

"At this point the insurance company has denied, denied...we are in an appeals process right now."

Trosper said her family is not the only one with this story, that many others she has talked to have been denied by their insurance companies.

"It's not only frustrating, but it's a sense that we may be poisoning ourselves living in the homes, so a very scary thought."

Organizers of Thursday's meeting say that's why the meetings are so important: because information is given out about every aspect of recovery.

A similar meeting will be held by the United Policyholders next month.