

Aurora's BonnaVilla featured in DIY Network show

By Lauren Sedam

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AURORA — Those in Nebraska might be familiar with BonnaVilla, a division of Chief Industries that manufactures modular homes.

But the Aurora-based company recently got the chance to share its name with a national audience. A BonnaVilla home was featured on an episode of the DIY Network's "Breakneck Builds" that aired in December.

Sales Manager Mike Morrow said the experience was a great chance for BonnaVilla to share more about what the company does and the modular home concept, which is growing in popularity.

"To get the exposure of a national channel with a TV show a lot of people were watching, it was definitely worth it," he said.

Those at BonnaVilla originally found out about the opportunity from Big Mountain Homes, a builder they work with in Wyoming. Big Mountain Homes had been contacted about potentially being on the show with a customer they were working with, Morrow said, and it eventually became a reality.

According to the DIY Network's website, the show follows two families as two construction teams deliver, install and hand them the keys to a new home.

"Gone are months of construction, missed deadlines and overblown budgets," the site reads. "In 'Breakneck Builds,' the house of the future sends traditional building practices straight to the past."

The episode featuring a BonnaVilla home was Episode 10, titled "Modular Home on the Range/In-Law Overload." The couple who buys the BonnaVilla home are Derek and Kristi, who turn to a modular build in order to get into a place quickly because of a construction boom in Wyoming. Also featured are Robin and David, who moved in with their daughter and son-in-law while they wait to build.

For their part, Morrow said, a camera crew came out and filmed at the Aurora plant in early August. Morrow and General Manager Dan Fitzgerald were interviewed, and the crew filmed for two days.



BonnaVilla1

Wall set and build lead man Ryan Shriner helps move an interior wall into place on a single-story 2,000-square-foot house at the BonnaVilla plant in Aurora. A BonnaVilla home being built was recently featured on the DIY Network's "Breakneck Builds."

At BonnaVilla, Morrow said, they build about 250 to 300 homes a year. They are built in modules, and the homes are constructed in an assembly-line process that is a blend of manufacturing and construction, Morrow said. BonnaVilla serves an area that stretches from about Montana down to Colorado, over to Missouri and up to Minnesota, he added.

The house featured on the DIY Network was the Jacksonville model, Morrow said, which is the most popular and is just more than 2,100 square feet. Even so, he said, it was a customized version.

“We always tell people we build snowflakes,” Morrow said. “Every one is a little different.”

It was built in two modules, he said, and took about two weeks from start to finish. It was then shipped for installation. Once it arrived at the site, a crane was used to lift the modules and place them on a foundation. The modules are built so that, once they arrive on site, they can be put together quickly, Morrow said. Builders then put finishing touches on the home, he said.

Seeing that process, Morrow said, is a good thing because it shows customers what exactly goes into a modular home and what they would be getting.

“It actually gives the homeowner a quick, but I think very good, top-level view of the process all the way through the finished process of a house,” he said.

The episode aired on Dec. 4, he said, and according to the DIY Network website, it is set to air again at 1 p.m. Jan. 16, 8:30 a.m. Jan. 26 and 4 p.m. Feb. 1.

Although Morrow said the two days of filming at the Aurora facility were condensed down to just a few minutes in the episode, the show is unique, and it gives people a glimpse of a growing trend in the construction industry.

“I think that, especially given the cost and scarcity of labor for construction and the time that it can take to build a home, especially when you’re in a fairly remote, rural setting and not in a large metro, I think people more than before are seeking alternatives and finding it’s a viable option,” Morrow said.