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HearthStone Homes to Thank Hundreds of Vendors *Company's Economic Impact on Omaha Remains Strong*

Aug. 15, 2006 — HearthStone Homes will celebrate another successful year in new home construction by thanking hundreds of vendors for their contributions at a pig roast Friday, August 18, at The Digz, 4428 S. 140th St., from 4 to 7 p.m.

"This is our opportunity to thank all of the people who have helped us provide new HearthStone homes to hundreds of people this year," said Neil Smith, chief marketing officer. It's also a celebration of the company's continued success in the new home construction market: Last year, the company closed on 860 homes; this year, that number jumped to 940.

Smith said about 1,000 Omaha-area residents — from plumbers to roofers to cleaning crews to painters — have incomes that are tied directly to HearthStone homes. All are invited to attend, and those who do will have the chance to win a gift every 20 seconds.

"Because we are consistently stable and busy with construction, we can continue to guarantee work for local contractors and vendors — and this is not necessarily the case in every market in the country. It's a ripple effect, from the start of a home to its finish, through the 80-plus subcontractors we work with, on down to the 1,200-plus people they collectively employ."

Part of the company's success comes from its ability to adapt to buyers' needs, Smith said, citing its new "Gallery Floor Plans" as a case in point. "Our research showed that most first-time home buyers purchase at around \$130,000, so we met with our architects and came up with plans to meet this need. Since May, we've sold 50 of the new plans in this price range."

HearthStone's high referral rate is another signature of its success. "Ninety-six percent of our customers refer a friend or family member, and about half of those referrals end up buying a home," Smith said. "This is a direct result of the positive building experience we give our customers."