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It's almost moving day for CFC

City nonprofit, bulging at the seams, gets ready to open addition

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With 70,000 people served each year, the Citizens for Citizens home at 264 Griffin St. has been busting at the seams for many years, but all that's about to change.

Faced with overcrowded rooms and a lack of privacy at every turn, CFC Executive Director Mark Sullivan said they took out a \$500,000 Industrial Revenue bond to build a secondary building to compliment the existing 10,000-square-foot former church it has resided in for decades.

"We've owned the lot next door to us for the last 35 to 40 years and we have just outgrown our own building. We do a lot of people's taxes, food stamps, fuel assistance. We're just overwhelmed," said Sullivan. "Half of us will be staying here and the other half will be moving to the new building."

The new 10,000 square foot building will house the fuel program on the first floor and administrative offices on the second level. The basement will be taken up mostly by the machinery to run the building and the attic will be used for additional storage space.

"We have 18,000 people taking part in the fuel assistance program and have been able to keep many people away from losing their homes. Many of these people are house rich and cash poor," said Sullivan, who plans to still operate the food pantry, food stamps, taxes and financial offices out of the original



Herald News Photos | Jack Foley
Liz Berube, director of CFC's fuel assistance program, speaks with builder David Megna as they look over the part of the new building that will house her program. The new building, below, rises right next door to the familiar CFC building, housed in what was once a church.

building. "There are certain jobs we do that you need some degree of peace and quiet and we are trying to segregate people in that way here. This will be a way for us to talk to people about private matters without everyone else knowing their business."

The modular building, which came in six separate sections, was pieced together all in one day — this past Saturday, said building contractor David Megna, owner of East Coast Homes. The building's foundation was laid about a month ago.

"It all came about really quick. They started the plans last year, we got the foundation in 30 days ago and gave it time to cure and we (were) here on Saturday to set it up," said Megna, who had to shut down Griffin Street to allow for the



passage of the giant modular pieces. "We have the HVAC, sprinklers and fire alarm systems yet to do, but we expect the building to be ready to go by the end of the month."

TURN TO **CFC**, PAGE **B6**

B6

CFC: Building opens soon

FROM PAGE B1

CFC Director of Fuel Assistance Liz Berube, who admitted to peeking into the windows this past weekend to get a glimpse of what will be her new office area, said she was surprised to hear they would be inside the building in less than 30 days.

"Our office is so jammed right now and there's no privacy where we are basically talking to people in between cubicles," Berube said. "I mean we do the best we can with what we have, but we just have so many clients and there's so much confidential information being shared."

Megna, whose Somerset-based company does 90 percent of its business in residential construction, said a typical "stick" building would have set the

nonprofit back another year.

"It would have taken between nine months to a year to complete it in that way," he said. "But you do better this way and to have it completed in just 30 days is unbelievable, and everything meets 110 miles per hour wind requirements."

For Sullivan, who will stay behind in the old building, it was simply time for a change.

"We've been doing this for about 45 years now, me for 37 of those. It's about time for a new building," he said. "We need to give our clients and employees some degree of solitude."

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