Derby community preparing for upgrades

By AMY GATLEY agatley@timesnews.net

DERBY. Va. — In the last 50 years, residents of the Derby community have seen a number of changes as the mines that the coal camp depended on slowly declined and then eventually closed.

But in the last year, Derby residents have banded together to not only save their community but also make it a feature attraction as an historic location

Wise County has been granted almost \$2 million to bring sewer service to about 100 homes in Derby and complete housing rehabilitation for 30 to 40 of those homes.

Wise County Administrator Ed Sealover said the Derby rehabilitation project is the largest self-help project on record in the commonwealth of Virginia.

self-help project because residents will actually get out and help with the installation of sewer lines and hookups. A is also donating equipment for the residents to use, Sealover added.

While residents tourism officials have expressed interest in developing Derby as a tourist attraction because of its coal camp roots, the main thrust of the project Sealover said was to bring sewer service to residents.

"Probably the basic thrust of it was providing public sewer. That has been a problem that has plagued a lot of the old coal camps here in the county. Right now it is pretty The rehabilitation is a much going into the ground and into the creek," Sealover said.

The town of Appalachia has agreed to provide sewer serprivate business. Roda Coal. vice to the community, with each resident who hooks up to the line receiving a "grinder pump."

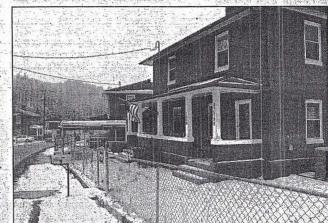
For those who may not be able to afford the cost of hooking up to sewer service, grant money will help fund the cost.

Sealover said organizers expect that work on sewer line installation will begin in May or June and finish by the end

of the calendar year. Most of the housing rehabilitation will be done in spring 2003.

"They will be doing some of the housing rehab while the sewer installation is being done, but probably the bulk of the housing rehab won't be done until after the sewer project is complete. Housing rehab has a lot to do with code requirements — it is not just aesthetics, but it is meeting code requirements and weatherization aspects and stuff like that," Sealover said.

Wise County is also working with Norfolk Southern Railway to acquire an abandoned rail line that runs through the community. The county would like to turn the rail-line into a walking trail.



The Derby, Va., rehabilitation project is the largest self-help project on record in Virginia, say government officials.