

# Private company brings affordable houses to Indian Country

By Mark Fogarty, High Country News

Last year, in Yreka, a town of 8,000 in Northern California's Shasta Valley, Sarah Abono, a member of the Karuk Tribe, moved into a four-bedroom house in a new development on tribal land. She, her husband and three children, who had been living in a modest unit nearby, are enthusiastic about their new dwelling. "This house was a blessing, really," she said.

"Everybody gets their own room. ... We have a beautiful view," she said. "It's nice that there's a lot of young families moving in. Everybody seems to be happy." Abono's husband had been laid off, so the new house is especially welcome now.

In recent years, affordable housing creation in Indian Country has been languishing due to the decreased buying power of tribes' federal housing assistance. But one company is helping alleviate some of those woes for people like Abono and her family. One for-profit consultant – Travois, based in Kansas City, Mo. – has helped build more than 5,000 homes on tribal homelands, most of them in 17 states in the West, including the one Abono moved into. Over the past two decades, the company has raised \$650 million for affordable Indian housing by leveraging the federal Low Income Housing Tax Credit, created in 1986 during the Reagan administration. (That credit remains unchanged in the new tax legislation signed into law this January by President Trump.)

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