

# Rehab planned in Carroll

▼ *The halfway house would treat recovering alcoholics.*

By **CHRISTOPHER BROOKE**  
Staff

A Life Center employee said his life's calling is to provide extended care and support to recovering alcoholics from S.O.B.E.R. in Pipers Gap.

Mike Edwards continues to renovate a former apartment complex he owns on Pipers Gap Road to offer a facility to help people get their lives back together from what he described as a debilitating disease.

He lives in an apartment in the basement while work continues on the first floor toward turning the building into a halfway house.

Edwards will move out when the facility is complete — to a mobile home behind the building — and will operate the program to help people stop self-destructive ways and get them used to life as productive members of society, 15 at a time.

Edwards had planned that rental income from the total 6,000-square-foot building was going to support him during his retirement, but another force changed his mind.

"Back in 2002... I sort of got a feeling, or a calling, that I needed to do something with this property," he explained. "It might have been God calling me to do something with people in recovery."

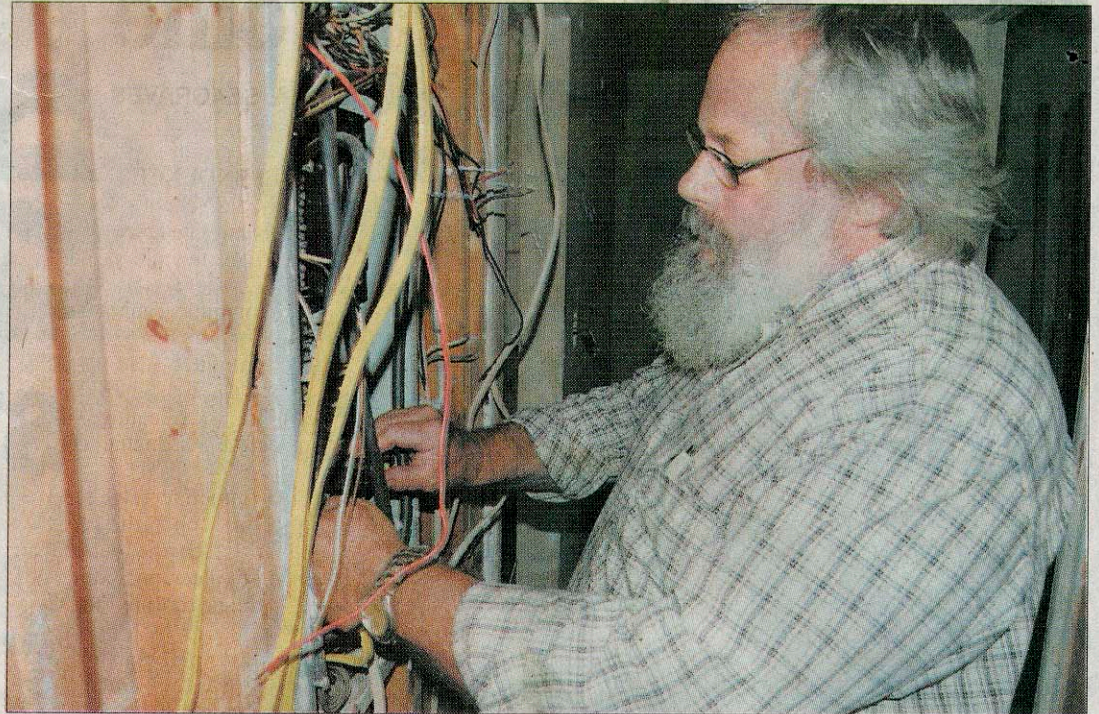
Edwards was going through recovery himself, so he knew what other alcoholics faced.

The planned 12-step, year-long faith-based fellowship residency program called the Secure Organization Building Education Recovery, Inc., or S.O.B.E.R. for short, arose from those needs.

Knowing what he knows, Edwards understands a lot of people can use the help.

He wants S.O.B.E.R. to be available for

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Gazette photo by Christopher Brooke

**MAKING REPAIRS:** Mike Edwards examines wiring at the fuse box for S.O.B.E.R., the 12-step residency program that he's working to open on Pipers Gap Road for recovering alcoholics.

## Rehab

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those who would like to recover from the "hopeless state of mind" that is alcoholism.

"This facility is for those people on the last road that have finally got done with being sick, shunned out of their communities," he said.

By itself, 28 days in detoxification is not enough, he said. Such efforts only give people the tools to work with, but they'll still have to deal with an unhealthy obsession for the rest of their lives.

Edwards tore out the apartment spaces in order to turn them into dining rooms, bathrooms and bunk rooms. He worked with the fire marshal and health department and wrote the articles of incorporation.

He continues to work from donation to donation, fundraiser to fundraiser, scraping up money to finish renovations, which he estimates are about 65 percent complete on the first floor.

People like Elvin Shupe, who also serves on the board of directors, gave a generous donation. "We've come a long way on what he give us — we still are,"

Edwards said.

Window World provided some windows at cost and donated others.

Kim Osborne provided insight on legal matters, like the articles of incorporation.

It takes faith to put something like this together, Edwards said. He recalled the time a visitor came in while he was pulling nails from lumber he had torn down to be reused.

He had to reuse those materials because he had to do what was needed to get the project done, Edwards told the visitor.

A couple days later the man returned with a load of lumber and boxes of nails to donate.

The moral is that if you continue to work towards your vision, other people will start to see it too, Edwards said.

"It's just right, straight out of faith."

When S.O.B.E.R. opens, it will provide financial, computer, arts and crafts and other programs to help get residents back on their feet.

All residents will have to find jobs in the community, pay rent,

do community service, maintain the facility and obey all the rules.

Edwards wants to have a counselor visit a couple times a week to help clients with emotional needs.

After the living space is completed, Edwards will continue to work in the basement. He is creating a rec room and an apartment there for families to visit over the weekends.

The program will not only help an individual get well, but also will affect people who feel the repercussions of someone who suffers from alcoholism.

When an alcoholic heals, the family also gets well, for example. "When one of us gets well, a whole community will get well," Edwards said.

The building that was to provide financial security for Edwards in his later years will now provide some peace of mind for others, he said. He expects that will happen "in God's time."

• For more information, write to S.O.B.E.R. at P.O. Box 1525, Galax, Va., 24333, or call (276) 236-0460.