Home on the water

Florida home tugged to new location in Abbeville

Marsha Sills
msills@theadvertiser.com

ABBEVILLE — Mike Burdell knew he wanted to build a house, but when he saw the Riverfront Bed and Breakfast he knew he had to buy it — even if it meant moving the two-story historical home from its view of the St. Lucie River in Stuart, Fla., to a plot of land along the Vermillion River.

"It struck me," Burdell said. "I thought it would be pretty crazy to move a house from Florida to Louisiana but "can't do it" isn't in my brother's vocabulary." The renamed house, La Enchantée, French for The Enchanted, docked Tuesday.

If Burdell hadn't have bought it, it would most likely have been demolished to make way for waterfront condominiums. Burdell's brother Pat, who owns a house and building moving company based in Orlando, recommended that his brother take a look at the bed and breakfast. What he found enchanted him — a two-story Dale County pine-framed house shingled with cypress built in 1900. Individual tin shingles covered its tiered roof. A guest house fashioned similarly with cedar shingles built in the "training wheels," tires extended from the barge that help the barge roll through tight spaces. The "wheels" also helped protect parts of the house that hung over the edge.

Tuesday afternoon, the men took a break and crouched under the guest house, wanting some shade. They sipped beer and swatted mosquitoes.

"What's with these things?" asked Zar as he scratched the back of his neck.

A house that was built in 1906 is transported up the Vermillion River on Tuesday to a new site near the river in Abbeville. The house was tugged to Acadia from Stuart, Fla.

"It was a little stressful," said crew member Mike Zar, Marrero. Sometimes it was a tight squeeze under bridges, he said. The barge has

"It's finally here," Burdell told him.
The houses are probably the most photographed between here and Port St. Lucie, said the men who helped move them here.

"The whole bayou on Okeechobee was full of people taking pictures. Even the Coast Guard was going wild taking pictures," Zar said.

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Today the crew will carefully roll the house down steel ramps and up a small hill to the plot of land Burdell cleared for his new home.

The front of the house with its screened porch and second-story white-picket-railed balcony will face the Vermillion. The guest house will become Burdell's office and sit behind the house.

Looking up at the loaded main house, Burdell's eyes shined with his excitement. "It's quite a project," he said.

A small deck shoots off the back of the house from a wood-paneled kitchen. The shell of a hot tub set turned over on the small back deck. White Christmas lights draped from the back door along the side of the house. Stacked bricks wrapped in plastic sat on the barge's dock.

"Everything had to be moved," Burdell said.
The house created a stir when it arrived in town. Burdell's neighbors stopped by in the afternoon to have a look-see. One even brought his camera to document the occasion.

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