



# Regina company develops new house-lifting technology



Wensel said his patented lift allows equipment such as skid steers to work underneath a house after it has been lifted. (Dean Gutheil/CBC)

## TYPICAL PROJECT COST AVERAGES OUT TO \$70K OR \$80K

Monty Wensel is the lead house-lifting technician and technical director for the company Fail-Safe House Lifting. His company has patented technology which can lift houses or be permanently installed in houses to address the issues of a foundation failure due to shifting ground. He was inspired over the years by the state of the soil in Regina. "Here in Regina, our ground is basically a clay base," he said.

Wensel explained how the ground expands when it is wet and contract when it dries out, which could wreak havoc on the foundation of a house and lead to potentially irreversible damage. "Here in Regina, we have an unprecedented amount of basement failures," Wensel said while demonstrating his structure on Sunday.

The technology is different from conventional house-lifting practices which would typically use wood, he said. The limitations of using wood meant there wasn't usually a lot of clearance un-



Wensel said the equipment is most commonly used in cases of foundation failure, such as in Last Mountain Lake. (Dean Gutheil/CBC)

derneath the lifted houses to work.

He says his house lifting behemoth — which he says weighs almost 16,000 kilograms — has enough clearance, 5 metres, for something like a skid steer to work underneath a house. The equipment will allow people to replace the more permanent structures under a house or even install new structures. It isn't designed for house transportation, however.

Wensel said he has used the equipment on more than a dozen houses in the Last Mountain Lake area, which has seen houses rendered nearly unlivable due to shifting grounds. A straight lift of a house costs between \$14,000 and \$20,000, Wensel said.

Overall costs are specific to each job. A typical overall project in Regina averages around \$70,000 to \$80,000, he added. The whole structure breaks down simply and can be transported on a single semi-truck, he said. Each lifting tower can lift around 20 tonnes, he said. The structure sitting on Albert Street can lift about 80 tonnes.

"If you're in a flood zone, we can permanently install a system where your house will go up when the flood happens and go back down when the flood (stops)."