

## ■ BUSINESS

# Area company combatting ground movement with unique levelling system

**Sarah MacMillan**

Reporter/Photographer

For many, their home or cabin along Last Mountain Lake was set to be a retreat. But for some, that retreat is becoming less relaxing and more taxing as they deal with home damage caused by ground movement. Ongoing damage has made some worried they may just have to walk away.

But an area company has developed a unique house-levelling foundation system that can combat ground shifting for years to come.

FailSafe House Lifting Systems Inc. has created a series of patent-pending systems that can be permanently installed under houses to address issues related to foundation movement. And the levelling systems can be adjusted, some at the touch of a button.

"No one else is really doing what we're doing" said Monty Wensel, president of FailSafe.

The company began lifting houses in Regina, assisting homeowners with failing basements. They first developed a house-lifting system to lift homes to safe heights, high enough to drive machines underneath to remove old basements.

"We ended up with a patented lift system," he said.

And then the company began to create unique systems to address the

needs of home owners who live in areas subject to active ground movement.

"We're faced with coming up with foundation repair solutions, either retrofitting existing foundations when possible... and sometimes we're going right from new," he said.

In Saskatchewan Beach, a bungalow along the water's edge had sunk more than one metre to one side. But with the jacking and levelling system installed, the home is once again level. And soon to be a two-storey residence.

At the waterfront property, Wensel emphasized that the technology is a stand-alone house lifting system.

"So it can continually go up and down over time," he explained. "So the ground can do whatever the ground is going to do and we just stay on top of it and stay level," he said.

The system has 16 paired jacks, all of which can be actuated to go up or down to keep the frame level if the ground moves.

Wensel said for those who believe they may have to walk away from their home because of ground shifting, the FailSafe technology could be a solution.

"There's ways to deal with (ground shifting)," he said. "I want to get across to people, 'don't give up.'"

"The idea's to put something under (the home) to fight back against hill

movement. Because you will never stop the hill from moving."

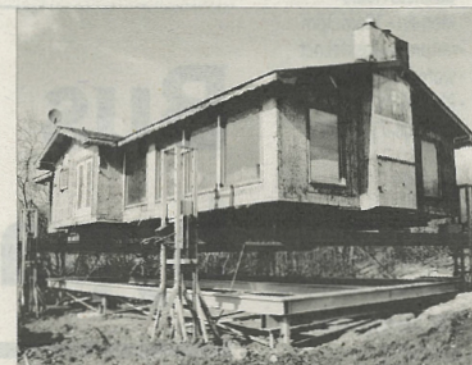
Wensel estimated FailSafe has completed approximately 40 projects in the valley with varying systems, the company constructing and adjusting their systems to fit the needs of each home situation.

The company president said they are planning to approach the Saskatchewan New Home Warranty Program to have the systems available for new home builds.


He recognized construction has been stopped in some areas because of active ground movement, but with the unique house-levelling system, those areas could be re-opened.

"We're going to try and open that back up so people can have an option for building new on active ground," said Wensel.

The company also has a high lift system that can be permanently installed under homes in flood zones, the system elevating the house to safe heights in the event of high water flooding.



**A house in Saskatchewan Beach sits on FailSafe's adjustable foundation levelling system, created for areas with extreme ground movement.** Once sunk more than one metre on one side, the home is once again level and being transformed from a bungalow to a two-storey home. Photo by Sarah MacMillan.



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