



MARK MIRKO/HARTFORD COURANT

Aisling McCloskey, with husband Kevin McCloskey and their dog Klu, hoists a bottle of Champagne during a celebration in their new basement. Its crumbling foundation was repaired.

# ‘HOPE NOW REALITY’

Repairs to first home to use state crumbling foundations fund completed in Tolland

BY KATHLEEN MCWILLIAMS

Aisling and Kevin McCloskey were staring down the barrel of financial bankruptcy when they discovered their Tolland home's foundation was failing in July 2017.

“We would have been walking away from the house, financially bankrupt,” Kevin McCloskey said.

The couple had been planning to sell their two story Colonial home on Paula Joy Lane and move to another home in town when their real estate agent told them to take a lap around the house and make sure there wasn't any damage.

“That's when we saw the cracks,” Kevin McCloskey said.

What followed was what hundreds of

homeowners with failing foundations in northeastern Connecticut have become all too familiar with. The McCloskeys filed an insurance claim with their provider, which was denied.

Facing up to \$250,000 worth of repairs and no way to afford them, the McCloskeys turned to the Connecticut Coalition Against Crumbling Basements, a group of homeowners pushing for state funding and solutions to the crisis.

Eighteen months after their ordeal began, the McCloskeys and state leaders stood next to crack free concrete walls and popped a bottle of Veuve Clicquot champagne to celebrate their homecoming — and the first completion of a foundation repair with money administered by the Connecti-

cut Foundation Solutions Indemnity Company.

“I feel like we can breath again. It's such a relief,” Aisling McCloskey said.

The repair of the McCloskey's foundation took six weeks and cost the family about \$20,000 Aisling McCloskey said. It could have cost about \$5,000, but the couple decided to do extra work that drove the price up. The funds cover up to \$175,000 of repair costs. The money is provided in part by a \$100 million commitment over five years from the state.

Michael Maglaras, superintendent of the indemnity company, said 12 to 14 weeks will be a more typical time frame for the repairs

Turn to **Repairs, Page B2**

# Gov. appeals to Dems as toll foes prep

BY CHRISTOPHER KEATING

HARTFORD — In a last-minute appeal on electronic highway tolls, Gov. Ned

minutes. “I'm asking each and every one of you to cast a really tough vote — and I know that. It's going to be one of the most important votes you can cast when it comes

you, and I'm going to be standing up for you. ... I'll be working my heart out for each and every one of you.”

Lament's speech, which began and

Chair would cons



# Repairs

Continued from Page B1

and that 80 homes are somewhere in the process of being fixed.

"Nothing succeeds like success," Maglaras said. "Amid some serious doubts we'd ever get this off the ground, we did. It was progress, inch by inch. But we need more contractors and we need more funding. We need much more federal help."

While their house was being lifted and a new foundation was being built, the McCloskeys moved to a temporary rental in Tolland with their three children and dog in tow. Everything from their finished basement and garage had to be packed up and moved into the main house before the construction began.

"People could not do enough for us because they realized it could easily be them in this situation," Aisling McCloskey said. She said that strangers dropped off meals and bottles of wine for the family as they moved back into their home this week. "We can't wait to help others out."

Tim Heim, a Willington homeowner who founded the Connecticut Coalition Against Crumbling Basements in 2015, said that the repair of the McCloskey's home had not seemed possible four years ago when he first started pressing then Gov.



MARK MIRKO/HARTFORD COURANT

Beams used in foundation repair rest on the lawn of the McCloskeys' Tolland home. The McCloskey family is the first family back in their home with a replaced foundation paid for by the crumbling foundations captive.

Dannel P. Malloy to allocate state funding to assist homeowners.

"Our hope is now reality," he said. "We accomplished something they said we would never accomplish."

The McCloskey family's move back into their home was celebrated on Wednesday as a major milestone. But, Maglaras warned that the new fund needs more revenue if it wants to help all of the affected homeowners.

"The Department of Housing is our lifeline," he said. "We need much more federal help."

Maglaras said homeowners with failing foundations need to apply for

funding so that indemnity company can gauge how big the problem really is. About \$4 million in claims has been paid so far.

Malloy's administration had estimated that as many as 34,000 homes in northeastern Connecticut could be affected, but only about 600 homeowners have filed complaints with the Department of Consumer Protection.

"We need people to apply. We don't know the extent of the damage, but it will be the volume of applications that will make the case for federal funding," he said.

money. The proposal for 55 million dollars would be a clear