

## MiniMotives.com

### *Basic Stats:*

- What is(are) your name(s)? **Macy Miller**
- What do you do for a living? **Architectural Intern**
- How many people do you/will be living in your tiny house? **One to start, it is designed for two adults though with the potential for a infant...with a little more construction.**
- What part of the country do you live in? **Just outside of Boise, Idaho.**
- How many square feet is your house? **196 s.f., 232 s.f. if you count the sleeping area.**
- When did you start your build? **December of 2011**
- Is your house complete? **Negitory**
- Have you been documenting your tiny house build and if so, where can people find that information? **Yes, Here (MiniMotives.com)**

### *Background:*

- Why did you decide to build? **I was initially studying for my Architectural Registration Exams (A.R.E.s) when I realized that all the schooling I went through taught me nearly nothing about actually constructing something. It taught all sorts of design but without that integral part of constructing I don't feel I can be as successful at my career as I would be WITH that skill. This build is an attempt to teach myself how to build things, and an opportunity to test out some sustainable features in a real life scenario AND, I don't like paying rent or the idea of going into hundreds of thousands of dollars of debt to a bank.**
- What was your life like before your tiny house? **Were you fairly active, have you always had 'projects' going on? Were you fairly sedentary and looking for a change? Did you tend to work too much? (This question is an effort at trying to figure out WHO gravitates**

to the tiny house lifestyle) I have always been a person who has 'projects', I had several going into this build (learn to garden, figure out how solar power REALLY works, write a thank you letter every day for a year, etc.) and several planned for after it's completion (go an entire year without creating more than a shoe-box full of trash to the landfill, get a Great Dane, start my own business, become a teacher etc.) I never know which projects will come all the way to fruition, I just go as far as I can/want with each of them. I learn best by trying things out, that is the sort of person I am.

- How did you come to hear about the movement, figure out it was right for you and get started? I actually didn't know it existed, I had a dream one night that I lived in this tiny little house that had everything I needed and nothing that I didn't... I got obsessed with the idea and started Googling things looking for other examples and found this whole community of people that think the same things. This community has been the most open and friendly people I've ever 'met'. It really is amazing to meet people with common interests, our friendships span the country. Once I started talking to people who were curious about the same things as me I got more confident it IS possible and that it IS the right path for me.
- What is/was your design inspiration? I love designing, form fascinates me, to me this project has two far more important factors though that drive my design, cost and weight. My goal was to build this with one year's worth of rent money and because it is on the bed of a trailer I have to keep the weight minimal, THEN I get to design around that. My house is 100% my style and 100% my original idea/design.

*Technical:*

- How do/did you find the time to work on your house with a job, kid(s), relationships, AND building a house? Did you do anything special to keep the balance? **OMG, I have no idea.** I am currently working one full-time job, one part-time job, chairing a committee and acting as the president of a local Leadership group. I try to fit 'building my own

house' in there however I can. I have definitely bitten off more than I can chew and I have to admit my friendships are suffering because of it. I have really had to prioritize, I make time for my boyfriend and my family whenever I can, I try to stay balanced by having at least one family night/night off per week, my family plays trivia at a local pub on Tuesdays, that helps me stay grounded. I think it is necessary to maintain those relationships and not let your whole life become about building, no matter the timelines and goals you set.

- Have you run into any problems with your local codes? How did you solve them? I have not yet, I fully intend on running into code issues and disputing them... I want to maintain an urban lifestyle with my house.
- Where did you get the tools that you use? Were they yours, borrowed, rented etc.? I am very fortunate to have a family who likes to collect tools. They literally have three different tools for any job you might have. If my dad doesn't have something my brother will. Except a truck to move the house... which I will have to pay a tow truck to do.
- How long did (are you expecting) construction to take? I expected, naively, for construction to take 6–8 months, I am now in my 10th month and hoping to get done in the next 2 months, realistically though it will probably be closer to 4 more months...
- Have you/were you able to stay on schedule? Ha! At times, overall.... not even close! 😊
- What is/was the most time consuming portion of your build? I am using recycled pallets for siding, in order to do this I have to disassemble the pallets, plain them down, cut them to vertical size and then measure each one to cut it to horizontal size... it was known from the start it would take a while... and it is.
- What is/was the most limiting factor for your build? I am REALLY fortunate to have worked myself into a situation where I have nearly no limiting factors. I have always been really good at saving money so I had cash in hand, I don't HAVE to work on a tight schedule, though I should probably work on one a little faster... I have all the tools I need and more and a place to stay while I build. I suppose that makes my limiting factor hours in the day and having over-committed myself to other things.

- Is your house on a trailer? If yes, how do you attach to the trailer? How do you move your tiny house? (Do you have a truck, do you hire it done?) **Yes it is. I painstakingly drilled 180 3/8" holes through the steel frame in order to incorporate my floor system in with the steel deck. I did this as opposed to just bolting the floor onto the deck because my trailer is taller than most and I wanted enough insulation in the floor to reflect my radiant floor heat back into my house. If I had not done this my, already 30" high front door would have been closer to 40" and the height requirements would have been pushed to the DMV limits. I will have to pay a tow truck to relocate my house for me.**
- Do you have accessory houses/dwellings that you use to supplement storage/working/living? **I do not though I do plan on eventually building a shop to run a business out of, mostly to house various tools. I also plan on building a greenhouse (possibly incorporated into my tiny house) AND a chicken coop (possibly incorporated into my tiny house).**
- Where did you get your plans? **I created my plans from scratch.**
- Have you consulted any 'professionals'? (structural, mechanical, plumbing, design etc.)? **I have not, I have intended to at points but then I worked through issues on my own. I DO however have my dad who is a licensed plumber, he has done all of the plumbing for me.**
- Are you insuring your house? With who? **I am not, when this is done I will have invested approximately \$10,000 plus my belongings, none of which are life altering (I have not always felt this way, I have drastically minimized my life over the last 2 years), I don't feel it is worth the risk to pay someone a bunch of money in case something happens to stuff that holds relatively little value to me. I suppose I would feel differently if we were talking about 40-50k but I am willing to risk it without insurance.**
- Have you been using any sponsorships to help fund your house? How do you go about finding that sponsorship? **I have had several sponsors, most of which I just talked with about the project and they offered up a product, some of which I will be calling directly to approach about sponsoring.**

*Specifics:*

- What sort of items do you have for cooking? **I will have a recycled, 4-burner, small oven 100% gas stove from an old camper and a microwave, as well as a BBQ on my patio 😊 .**
- Are you tied to the power grid or are you off grid? **I will initially be tied to the power grid with the long term goal of being able to be off the grid. I have designed a closet in the initial design for my electrical components including solar batteries.**
- Are you going to have a washer and/or dryer? **Yes, I will have a combined washer and dryer unit in my kitchen.**
- Where does your water come from? **I will have a plain old hose hook-up (all potable water in Boise) which will be run through a filtration system and an on-demand, propane water heater system to my two sinks (kitchen and bathroom) as well as my shower.**
- What kind of toilet are you going to have? **I have purchased a composting toilet so that it will be easier for me to find an urban location to park.**
- What do you use for a heat source if anything? **I have an under floor electric radiant heat system (under tile for thermal mass). This system will not work once I am off-grid so any number of other heat sources will be used.**
- What are some of the space savings tricks you used? **I have incorporated every single 'dead space' as storage. The steps leading to my bed will have drawers, the space above my pantry is sunken to have storage, behind my fridge is more storage, I have built in book shelves and I have plenty of cupboards and space under my bed for storage. I have opted to leave open shelving in the kitchen to make it feel 'bigger' and more open but will be using shelving that maximizes the amount of storage space available.**
- What do you have for insulation? **I am using 4" of rigid, closed cell insulation in the walls and ceiling adding up to an R-20 in those assemblies. The floor has 6" plus a radiant barrier and an airspace, adding up to an R-42 in that assembly.**
- Where are you planning to park your tiny house? **I am not certain as of yet, my goal is to find a place downtown to park.**

**Personal:**

- How much will/did your tiny house cost? **I have been aiming for a number between 10-12k, I am easily on track for that number so far.**
- What is/was the most expensive part of your house? **My composting toilet – \$2,000**
- ‘Best’ injury story (worst injury)? **Breaking my heel and back falling off the roof, taking the tip of my dads finger off, stepping on a rusty nail, hammering my ring finger pretty good... and a few misc, other ones.**
- What has been your biggest accomplishment with your tiny house? **POWER!!! Wiring the house was my biggest scariest thing, I felt SO proud once that was done successfully, by me!**
- What is/will be the biggest benefit to living in a tiny house? **Paying \$93 a month in bills, TOTAL! (cell phone included!)**
- Is there anything you’ll miss about living in a standard house? What will you miss the most? **A bath tub, I rarely take baths but I am sure there will be a night or two that I miss having that option... but with all the money I save I could rent a hotel room with a jetted tub!**
- What has been the scariest part about building your own house? **The fact it may all fall over and be ‘all for not!’ I am confident that won’t happen but I’m not sure I could stop myself from having a stroke the first time I go to move it.**
- If you could change one thing about your house what would it be? **It seems too big honestly, I may have been better off to try to find a smaller trailer – I have a 24’ flatbed goose-neck with a 5’ dovetail. The entire trailer is approximately 35 feet from hitch to end.**
- Did you have cash in hand to complete your build, pay as you go or take out a loan to construct your house? **I was able to save enough money to pay with cash outright.**

- Have friends and family been skeptical or supportive of your ideas? **Surprisingly I have not had a single friend or family member be skeptical, at least to my face 😊** . I am very fortunate to have very supportive friends and family members!
- Is there anything else you would want other people to know about your house and build? I have really tried to push the boundaries of how a tiny house can look/be, I have incorporated a rain-screen wall system, TPO Roofing system, radiant barrier, and even a green roof system – without all the weight. I have fallen in love with the entire tiny house concept and will definitely be using this amazing adventure in my future life endeavors. I really encourage people to give it a go if you're curious, push your comfort level, find a way to make it happen rather than reasons that it can't. I am so grateful for everyone who is reading this. You have all encourage me! Thank you!