

Mr. Spice,

Thank you for your informative Hot Off the WIRE column that was released this morning. As the staff liaison to the Community Sustainability Advisory Board, I'd like to provide additional information regarding the Board's efforts. It is my understanding that JCAR is asking about your support or opposition for a program to require residential energy efficiency upgrades at point-of-sale.

As you may recall from your participation in the Buildings Working Group of the Sustainability Initiative in 2006, a point-of-sale energy efficiency audit was recommended, as was an incentive-based program to upgrade existing residential homes. Currently, a point-of-sale mandate is not one of the Board's priorities. Instead, the Community Sustainability Advisory Board has been working on its top 13 priorities, one of which includes research of green building codes that could promote green construction. To date, the Board has reviewed different green building standards, such as LEED or Energy Star, but has not decided to recommend any one standard. Instead, as a first step, the Board looked to the City's building codes for opportunities to promote green construction.

Every few years, the City adopts the latest version of the International Building Codes (IBC), to remain current with national standards for safe and high-quality construction. The newest version, the 2009 International Building Code, incorporates many "green" elements such as improvements for energy efficiency, but the building codes are very different than a green building standard. As with any building code, when a homeowner applies for a building permit (e.g. to remodel a kitchen, upgrade a bath, etc.) the current building code applies. This means that for the work being done (and not for other areas of the house), the infrastructure must be brought up to the current code. The Board concluded that the emphasis on energy efficiency in the 2009 building codes is desirable and has indicated their support for when the 2009 IBC is proposed for adoption by City Council later this fall.

Additionally, to encourage energy efficiency upgrades, many of the Board's efforts provide resources to residents. Their subsidy of \$60 energy audits earlier this year, waivers of building permit fees for solar projects, and progress toward a homeowner education program are indicative of efforts geared toward incentivizing energy efficiency rather than mandates. In January, when Xcel Energy released its residential energy audit program, the Board saw it as an opportunity to benefit Golden residents. Ultimately, the program will help residents lower their utility bills and even allow some homeowners to remain in their homes. These programs are specifically designed to empower the homeowner by giving them access to information and allowing them to choose what is best for their own home. The Board will continue to analyze the costs and benefits of a potential green building standard, but as with all of their efforts, Board members are sensitive to how each of the projects could impact building owners and will thoroughly weigh the pros and cons before forwarding a recommendation to City Council.

If you would like further details or have any questions, I am available by phone or can meet with you at your convenience. Thank you for comments and for your informative Hot Off the Wire column.

Sincerely,

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