

Magna Project Building Efficient, Affordable Homes

Jun 19, 2009 by Elizabeth Ziegler, KCPW Newsroom

(KCPW News) A new affordable housing development under construction in Magna will feature some of the nation's most energy efficient homes, with solar water heaters and energy efficient windows, among other things. Lieutenant Governor Gary Herbert said at the development's unveiling yesterday they're just the type of homes that Utahns want and need.

"What I find unique about what we find here today is: we have homes that are affordable and homes that are easy to maintain, they're energy efficient, which means we can save money in our living conditions as we acquire these kinds of homes," Herbert said. "That's what the typical Utahn wants to find: affordable price and easy to maintain."

The five homes in the Webster School Cottages Project are being built to exceed the U.S. Department of Energy's Builders Challenge goal of being at least 30 percent more efficient than the typical American home. There are currently only four homes in Utah that meet this target. They're expected to save five low-income Salt Lake County homeowners between \$200 and \$800 per year.

Green building materials are becoming more common in affordable housing projects because of their ability to lower utility costs for residents in the long-term.

Ed Pollock with the U.S. Department of Energy said the homes are part of a national movement toward more energy efficient housing.

"We now have the tools and the technologies to truly transform the national housing market and are moving forward swiftly to get to the point where we will be able to build net zero homes: homes that produce as much energy as they use," Pollock said.

The Webster School Cottages project is being funded through a public-private partnership that includes 28 different organizations, businesses, utilities and state and federal agencies. Two of the five houses are nearly finished.