

# Habitat Builds Its First Solar Powered Homes Without NREL Sponsorship

Some Habitat for Humanity enthusiasts, including myself and electrician **Pete Beverly** of IBEW, have long urged the Denver affiliate to make solar power a standard feature on all the many Habitat homes it builds each year here in metro Denver, and we were given the opportunity this fall to showcase that concept right here in Golden.

Thanks to solar panels, inverters and other equipment provided at cost by **Namaste Solar**, and thanks to installation donated by **Golden Solar** (with professional and non-professional assistance from Habitat volunteers), the out-of-pocket cost to the Habitat affiliate after Xcel's "Solar Re-

wards" rebates will be under \$1,000 per home, compared to about \$10,000 under normal circumstances. I sweetened by pot further by pledging \$2,000 per house for the two Golden houses in return for being considered their "solar sponsor."

To their immense credit, both **Namaste** and **Golden Solar** have indicated their willingness to contribute on the same level to future Habitat homes built by the Denver affiliate. And, fortunately for me, the Denver affiliate has reportedly found a "solar sponsor" for the next 100 homes, so **Habitat for Humanity of Metro Denver** may well be the first Habitat affil-



installed equipment, leaving only the cost of professional installation. My own out-of-pocket cost on each of my properties was about \$10,000 after receiving a combined \$60,000 in rebates from Xcel Energy. Every property owner with a southern exposure should take

advantage of this phenomenal program which Xcel introduced to help it meet the requirement imposed in 2004 by voters (and then reinforced by the General Assembly) to provide 20 percent of its power from

renewable sources by 2020.

*The picture at left is of last weekend's installation at 920 McIntyre Street. The other house is 935 Lu-pine Street. Below, electrician Mark Lane installs mounting rails for the photovoltaic panels. You can reach Golden Solar at 303-955-6332.*



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By **JIM SMITH, Realtor®**

ate to build only solar powered homes starting in 2008!  
In 2006 the Denver affiliate built a "net zero energy" home with sponsorship from Golden's **National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL)**, but the "Solar Rewards" program of **Xcel Energy** now makes it affordable for everyone to add photovoltaic systems to their homes or office buildings, as I have done with one of my homes and with my office building on **South Golden Road**. Under their program, Xcel pays \$4.50 per watt of installed solar capacity, which covers the cost of almost all of the

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