

My Favorite Home Improvements When Purchasing a New-to-Me Home

This column is adapted from my July 18, 2019, column on this topic.

Energy efficiency is very important to Rita and me, so the first thing we did when we purchased our current home was to pay for an **energy audit** to identify opportunities for making the home more air-tight. One result of that test was to blow **additional cellulose insulation** into walls and ceilings and to **caulk** around windows. We considered installing an **energy recovery ventilator (ERV)** to bring fresh air into the home using a heat exchanger that warms outside air in the winter and cools outside air in the summer. Instead we installed a fan in our powder room that runs 24/7 at a very low volume, but higher when occupied.

I love bringing sunlight into a home, with **sun tunnels**. Rita and I had Mark Lundquist of **Design Skylights** install a **Velux sun tunnel** in our garage and another one in our laundry room. (He installed

four more at Golden Real Estate.) Speaking of sunlight, we replaced every light bulb in our home with **LEDs** which are "daylight" color.

Installing **solar photovoltaic panels** is a no-brainer now that the cost has dropped so much. Your roof doesn't have to face due south. Southeast and southwest are good enough. Since everyone will be driving an electric car eventually, install as much solar PV as Xcel Energy allows to cover that future load.

Don't you hate climbing a curb to enter your driveway? Developers install mountable curbs the entire length of residential streets, because they can't know where each driveway will be. One of the first things we did at our home was to **remove the mountable curb in front of our driveway**. It cost about \$2,000 for our 3-car-wide driveway, but we love it every time we enter from the street!

When your gas forced air furnace

needs replacing, consider replacing it with a **heat-pump or hybrid furnace**. And when your gas water heater needs replacing, I recommend buying a **heat-pump water heater**. We bought a 50-gallon Rheem unit for \$1,200, but it came with a \$400 rebate. Once you've replaced both, you will have eliminated the most common sources of carbon monoxide poi-

soning in your home.

Other improvements I'd recommend: Replacing any bathroom carpeting with **ceramic or porcelain tile**; replacing regular double-pane windows with **Low-E windows** on south-facing windows; replacing fluorescent fixtures (as we did in our garage) with **flush-mount LED panels** sold at Lowes for about \$100. Love 'em!

REAL ESTATE TODAY



By JIM SMITH, Realtor®

Electric Cars Are Your Best Cold Weather Choice

It's that time of year when I like to remind readers about the advantages of electric vehicles (EVs) in cold weather. Here's what you need to know.

1) **No warming up is needed.** Put the car in Drive and go! Also, the cabin will be warm within 1/2 mile because it doesn't require an engine to warm up first. In my Tesla I can turn on the heat with my phone app a few minutes earlier so the cabin, steering wheel and seat are all warm when I get in the car. Also, I can leave the heater on when I park the car so it's warm when I return, if I am just going into a store for a short time. (I do the same thing on hot summer days, so it stays cool!)

2) **Your car will never break down**, stranding you in a freezing car on the side of the road. The only time you see an EV on the

side of the road is if there's a flat tire or an accident. Stuck in a snow drift? The EV's heater will keep you warm as long as you need, consuming only 3 to 5 miles of range per hour — and producing no carbon monoxide!

3) Because of its low center of gravity, an **EV handles snow-covered (and dry) roads great** — better than any car I've owned.

4) **Used EVs are your best buy.** The older (pre-2018) Tesla Models S & X are a great buy because most come with **transferrable lifetime free supercharging coast-to-coast** when purchased privately, **not** as Certified Pre-Owned from Tesla. Ask before buying.

5) There are **federal and state tax credits** and various rebates to be had. See the following website for a full list: www.electricforall.org/rebates-incentives

Here's More About Our Planned 'Net Zero Store'

By the time you read this article, Golden Real Estate's move from 17695 S. Golden Road to 1214 Washington Avenue will be well underway.

Last week I announced that we will be transforming our old office space (which Rita and I own personally) into the home of a new venture Ty Scrable and I are calling **The Net Zero Store**. It will be a **one-stop shop for "all things sustainable,"** selling and/or brokering products and services designed to reduce your home's carbon footprint.

Among the products we will be selling or promoting are the following:

- Solar Photovoltaic and Solar Thermal Systems
- Sun Tunnels
- Heat Pump HVAC Systems
- Heat Pump Water Heaters
- High-Efficiency Windows
- Various Kinds of Home Insulation
- HRVs and CERVs for Home Ventilation and Air Quality
- Induction Cooktops
- Condensing Clothes Dryers

Sustainable Countertop Choices
Electric Vehicle Charging Stations

Among the services we will offer directly or through vendors are the following:

- In-Home Consultations With a Sustainability Coach
- Energy Audits
- Blower Door Testing
- Testing and Mitigation for Mold, Radon, Asbestos
- Advice Regarding Electric Vehicles ADUs and Tiny Homes
- Webinars and In-Person Events on All Aspects of Sustainability
- Reading/Video Lists for Further Study
- Styrofoam Recycling

Unlike other stores, everyone you encounter at **The Net Zero Store** will be knowledgeable in all these areas. Ty and I are in the process of creating partnerships with vendors of these products and services. If you have a product or service you think should be featured in our store, please call Ty at 720-281-6783.

We are also recruiting volunteers to serve as sustainability coaches.

Our Truck Goes the Extra Mile for Our Clients!

Our clients have put a lot of miles on this box truck, saving them thousands of dollars on moving costs. They also get free moving boxes, packing paper and bubble wrap, paying only for the gas used. The truck is also used twice a week by **BGoldN** to pick up food from Food Bank of the Rockies and by other non-profits, including **Family Promise of Metro Denver** and the **Golden Chamber of Commerce**. We also use it ourselves every couple weeks to take truckloads of Styrofoam to a reprocessing center in Aurora, keeping over 200 cubic yards of the material out of landfills every year. People from all over Jefferson County (and beyond) bring their block white polystyrene to the Styrofoam Corral at 17595 S. Golden Road, where our truck will still be parked following our move to 1214 Washington Ave.



Every element of this ad is also posted at GoldenREblog.com

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