

Look for us in the Buffalo Bill Days parade this Saturday.

## Come By Anytime for a Tour and Explanation of Our Solar Powered Office

Do you like the idea of watching your electric meter run backwards? That is literally what happens on a typical day at our real estate office.

With 5.2 kilowatts of photovoltaic panels on our office roof, it's unusual for our meter to run forward on a sunny day, even with the air conditioner running constantly.

Since installing our system last September, our typical electric bill from Xcel Energy has been \$9.12, which is the cost of being connected to the power grid.

Being "grid-tied" is a good thing, because Xcel serves as our "battery" which is charged when the sun is shining and which gives back that power when it isn't. Batteries are expensive, so paying only \$9.12 per month to have unlimited battery capacity is a good thing!

To Xcel Energy, our office building is considered a "small generat-

ing plant" which they subsidized to the tune of \$4.50 per watt of capacity — about \$23,000. As a result, the cost of installing my system was under \$10,000. It doesn't take a CPA to figure out that the payback period for that investment is very short.

If we generate more kilowatt-hours than we consume over the course of 2008, we will get a check from Xcel Energy for the wholesale value of the excess kilowatt-hours we generated.

Solar panels create direct current (DC), which is converted to alternating current (AC) by an inverter mounted to the back wall of our office building. This device has a display which tells how many watts are being generated at any given time, how much power has been generated today and how many tons of carbon dioxide would have been emitted if that amount of

power had been generated conventionally. Pretty cool!

Under their "Solar Rewards" program, Xcel reimburses home owners or businesses up to \$45,000 for the installation of up to 10 kilowatts of PV capacity. In addition, there are federal tax credits to further reduce your out-of-pocket expense by up to \$2,000. Not bad!

If you are buying a home that is not energy efficient or solar powered, there are Energy Efficient Mortgages which allow you to add the cost of specified post-closing improvements to the mortgage so that you don't have to separately finance those improvements (which could include insulation and the purchase of high efficiency appliances as well as photovoltaic or solar thermal systems).

Learning about Energy Efficient Mortgages was just one of many things I learned while studying to become a certified Eco-Broker®, which I accomplished this month. Call me if you have any questions about "going green."

### REAL ESTATE TODAY



By **JIM SMITH,**  
Realtor®

### Golden Real Estate's Newest Agent:

#### Introducing Broker Associate Carrie Ackley

Carrie Ackley is the latest real estate professional to join Golden Real Estate. Formerly with Real Estate of the Rockies, perhaps you recognize Carrie's picture from the many bus benches which she decorates in the Golden area.



A native Coloradan, Carrie was born in Black Hawk and graduated from Evergreen High School and Metro State, making her a natural fit at Golden Real Estate. She is happy to be back near Clear Creek. She was first licensed as a real estate agent in 2001, and enjoys the unique opportunities it brings. She has experience with first-time home buyers, HUD homes, mountain properties and foreclosures. Outside of work, she enjoys her involvement, along with her daughter, in the Horsefeathers 4H group.

**GOLDEN  
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ESTATE**

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