

Realtor Magazine: Builders Need to Respond to Home Electrification Trend

It isn't in the print edition of *Realtor Magazine*, but a June 8 article on its website is titled, "The Future Is Now: Home Electrification." I will post a link for the article on our blog, www.GoldenREblog.com.

Regular readers of this column know that home electrification has been "now" for many years here at Golden Real Estate. At the **Net Zero Store** in our former building at 17695 S. Golden Road, **Helio Home Inc.** is busier than ever responding to people who want to replace their gas forced air furnaces with heat pump units and their gas water heaters with heat pump water heaters. (You can reach the Helio Home sales team at 720-460-1260.)

The primary focus of the *Realtor Magazine* article is on the need for home builders to include a larger electrical service as fossil fuels are phased out. Number one, it said, was to accommodate an electric car, since the major car manufacturers are committed to going all-electric or mostly so by 2030.

The article promotes the idea of installing solar photovoltaic (PV) systems to generate electricity for your home and car. With such a system, the author of the article correctly points out that the electrical grid can function as your home

Some readers reported difficulty finding my **Tesla Model S** to rent on Turo.com. That's because if it's rented on the dates you specify, it's not displayed.

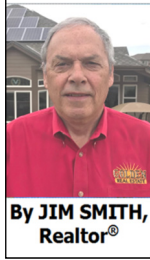
I'll put the direct link for it at GoldenREblog.com, since it's too long to print here. You'll want to rent my Model S instead of any other Teslas offered on Turo.com because it's the only one with **free** Tesla Supercharging coast-

Price Reduced on Lakewood Home Near Solterra

This light-filled home at **2384 S. Holman Circle** is in a quiet neighborhood just five minutes from both C470 and I-70. Nearby parks include Coyote Gulch (a 5-minute walk), Green Mountain, and Bear Creek Lake. Cycling and walking trails abound! The home is beautifully updated, as you'll see in the narrated video walk-through. There's a main-floor office/den, and the large loft could be enclosed to create a 4th bedroom. The kitchen is a delight with its quartz countertops, under-cabinet lighting, stainless steel appliances, and marble backsplash. The yard is beautifully landscaped, front and back. The backyard has a calming rock waterfall surrounded by a large perennial garden and mature trees. The lovely shaded deck, installed in 2020, creates the perfect no-maintenance space for outdoor entertaining and relaxing. This home has been well maintained by the seller and is in immaculate condition. You can take a narrated video walk-through of this listing at www.LakewoodHome.info, then call your agent or 303-525-1851 to see it.



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battery (thanks to net metering), but seems not to understand how it really works. He states that the utility will buy your excess solar generation but you might have to buy electricity for your car on a cloudy day. In fact, net metering allows you to send surplus electricity to the grid when you don't need it, but you get it back at full value when needed. Everyone with a solar PV system should take advantage of the "roll-over" option allowing you to be credited for that surplus production long-term rather than get a check each January for the previous year's over-production.

When the utility pays you for your surplus production, it does so at its cost of generating electricity — a couple cents per kilowatt-hour. But if you use your surplus electricity, you save the full retail rate (over 10¢/kWh) versus purchasing those kilowatt-hours from the utility.

Not understanding that process, the author promotes the idea of a home battery system, but, as I wrote before, that only needs to be considered if you have medical equipment which must run during a blackout.

The author promotes the installation of a 240V car charging station, suggesting that this could require a larger electrical panel in older homes. I disagree. The Level 2 charging station only draws the same electricity as your electric clothes dryer. If your panel can't accommodate a dedicated circuit for the car, you could use the same one as the clothes dryer and not use both appliances at the same time. (I recognize that this is not what the code dictates, but it's still safe if you have a 40-amp breaker on that circuit, because if you do run the dryer and the car charger at the same time, it

would trip the breaker.)

Also, every EV comes with a 120V cord to plug your car into a standard household outlet. Although that only gets you 4 miles of range per hour, that's still over 50 miles of range overnight, which may suffice, especially if you have other charging options during the day. Downtown Golden, for example, has ten **free** Level 2 charging stations in its garages and elsewhere.

Of course, there's more to home electrification than car charging. The article points out that there are now electric outdoor tools—lawn mowers, leaf blowers, snow blowers, chain saws and more—that you can buy online or at Lowes. **Ego Power** is the biggest brand in this field, and their various tools all use the same interchangeable batteries.

Not mentioned in the article are the biggest consumers of fossil fuels—your gas furnace and water heater. As I said, you can speak to Helio Home about converting gas units to electric heat pump units.

For cooking, I have written in the past about induction electric ranges, and I'm really fond of our electric grill. Lift it off its stand and you can use the grill on your countertop. You can't do that with a gas grill! And it plugs into a standard 120V patio outlet. We bought ours at Home Depot for \$100. Food grilled on it tastes just as good as when cooked on a gas grill.

Can our electrical grid handle the increased use of electricity over fossil fuels, given, for example, that by 2030 over 50% of car sales in America will be all-electric? You may have read warnings that widespread adoption of EVs will over-

whelm our electrical transmission systems, but I disagree. Solar panels are being installed just as quickly and perhaps more so, and that electricity is consumed within your neighborhood if not by yourself, reducing the needed distribution from the utility. And, as I said, even with Level 2 charging, an EV only draws the same amount of electricity as a clothes dryer.

Home builders can and should adapt to this trend, and are in fact required to do so in some jurisdictions. Every new home should be solar-ready if not solar-powered, by building chases into the home which could accommodate the electrical lines serving roof-mounted solar panels. Also, garages should be wired with a 240V outlet on their front walls in addition to the usual 120V outlets on three walls.

I was encouraged to see that a new 300-unit apartment complex about to break ground in Lakewood between Colfax and 15th Place and between Owens and Pierson Streets is, according to the plans I saw, going to have over 40 EV parking spaces in its garage.

One of the more interesting flaws in the *Realtor Magazine* article was the suggestion that home garages should be insulated or even heated to avoid shortening the life of an electric vehicle's battery. This is a misinterpretation of the fact that EVs lose range in the winter. It's not that the battery loses power in cold weather, but rather that heating the car's cabin uses battery power which thereby reduces the car's range, as does the heating of the battery itself to its optimum operating temperature.

Price Reduced on Wheat Ridge Ranch Home

Originally listed at \$945,000, this totally renovated brick ranch at **11000 W. 41st Pl.** is at the end of a quiet cul-de-sac across from the Clear Creek greenbelt. The price has now been reduced to **\$898,000**. You can take a video tour at www.WheatRidgeHome.info. It has an open floor plan, hardwood floors, 3 bedrooms and 3 baths. The oversized garage has a loft. Call listing agent **David Dlugasch** at 303-908-4835 to see it.



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