

# What's a 'Smart Home,' and What Elements of a 'Smart Home' Make Sense for You?

Home automation is now mainstream, thanks to a strong internet and widespread use of WiFi routers in our homes. Perhaps you've heard the term "smart home" used to describe a home with devices that can be monitored and/or controlled from your smartphone.

The most widely adopted such device is probably the Ring doorbell. You may have one on your own home. Rita and I do, plus one on the door of Golden Real Estate. If you ring our home doorbell, Rita gets an alert on her iPhone and can see and converse with whoever is there. The visitor wouldn't know if Rita is home or not as they converse, and, even if the visitor doesn't ring the doorbell, Rita's alerted to "motion at the front door" and a video of it is archived in the "cloud" for later viewing — great for identifying "porch pirates."

If you ring the doorbell at Golden Real Estate, I get the notification on my iPhone and can converse with you and perhaps arrange to have an agent meet you there shortly.

## REAL ESTATE TODAY



By JIM SMITH, Realtor®

There are countless other examples of "smart" devices. For example, we have a car wash closet on the back of our office building, and I'm concerned about the pipes freezing if it gets really cold, so I installed a WiFi connected device which tells me on an app both the outdoor temperature and the temperature inside the closet. And it alerts me when the inside temperature drops below 35 degrees.

We also have security cameras inside and outside our building which I can view on my smartphone or in the office, allowing me to go back in time to capture suspicious events, such as when a snowblower was stolen last year. I have a similar system at home.

If you subscribe to Dish Network or DirecTV, you have a smart device there, able to schedule and even watch DVR recordings on your smartphone or tablet. My Samsung TV is itself "smart" which is what

makes it possible to stream Netflix shows and movies.

Even our refrigerator is "smart." Rita and I can actually look inside the refrigerator on our smartphones while shopping!

A client of mine has an internet-connected garage door opener that alerts him when the door opens and closes, and he can open or close it from his smartphone — very useful since his detached garage faces the alley and he has no way of knowing if it is open or closed without leaving his house and walking around the garage to the alley.

WiFi-enabled (i.e., wireless) security cameras make it possible to have cameras in places not previously possible. The cameras are powered by lithium-ion batteries that last 4 to 6 months between charges and can be mounted up to 300 feet from their base station. One such application is the wireless camera on the EV charging station in our parking lot, which was once vandalized. Next time, I'll be able to identify the culprit.

Other applications you might consider are WiFi-connected moisture detectors and smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. Baby monitors are a no-brainer, too. As long as you have your phone with you, you'll be able to see *and talk to* your baby in his room.

WiFi-connected electric shades, especially on your out-of-reach windows, could help you save energy and money by opening and closing based on indoor temperature.

My solar PV system at home is internet connected, not only so I can monitor it but so the leasing company which has guaranteed a certain level of production can know when it has not produced as promised and can automatically send me a check for the under-production. (I have received two such checks.)

Nest is a big provider of smart devices, best known for their thermostat, which not only senses occupancy but can be adjusted remotely.

An alternative to lockboxes that is now widely available is the WiFi connected electric deadbolt. When someone rings your video doorbell and you want to let them into your house, you can unlock your door on your smartphone to let the person in and lock it when they go.

There are devices to make electric outlets "smart" so any device plugged into them can be powered on or off from your smartphone. A variation on that is one with dimming capability. As you can see, there's no end to what you can do to make your home a "smart" home.

If you want to check out other devices for your home, Google is your friend, or simply go to [www.SmartHome.com](http://www.SmartHome.com), which sells smart home devices from a multitude of manufacturers, including Ring, Next, Amazon, and others.

Alexa and other "smart speakers" are also "smart listeners" and, like all internet-connected devices, can be hacked, so it is important that you have strong passwords and take other precautions.

## You're Invited to a 'Climate Reality' Event

Next **Wednesday, Nov. 20th, from 6 to 8 p.m.**, Golden Real Estate is hosting a Climate Reality Project event called **"24 Hours of Reality: Truth in Action."**

Think of it as a "teach-in" where you can deepen your knowledge of climate facts. About 1,000 of these presentations are taking place within a 24-hour period across the globe. Fifteen of them are within the Denver metro area alone.

Our Net Zero Energy office at **17695 S. Golden Road in Golden** is a suitable venue for this presentation. Think of it as an example of steps you can take at home or work to participate in the mitigation of climate change's impacts on our planet.

Our presenter is **Owen Perkins**, who, like all Climate Reality Project presenters, has been personally trained by former vice president Al Gore on the topic of climate change.

Register for this event by emailing [Jim@GoldenRealEstate.com](mailto:Jim@GoldenRealEstate.com) or by **texting me at 303-525-1851.**

Refreshments will be provided. Reservations are essential, since space is limited.

Here's some more information from [ClimateRealityProject.org](http://ClimateRealityProject.org):

**"Truth in Action"** is a daylong global conversation on the climate crisis and how we solve it. You want to know the truth of what's happening to our climate. But you also want to know what we can do to solve this crisis before it's too late. You want to know what you personally can do to make a difference...

"Research suggests that one of the most critical things you can do right now is talk to others about the climate crisis. When we have conversations about the crisis, we shine a light on its importance in our own communities, and make it clear to our friends, families, and neighbors that this is something serious enough to talk about. In this way, we can shift public perception and increase support for taking swift action."



### Hopefully, the 'Post-Factual' Era Is Drawing to a Close

It's no coincidence that the founding motto of Golden Real Estate was "Hometown Service Delivered With Integrity." Raised by a New England patrician father and mother, telling the truth was ingrained in me as an essential value, and the willful lying of our current President is what has bothered me the most. And it's a trait that his Republican enablers in Congress have adopted as their own. But "the truth will out," as Dad taught me, and I look forward to that happening, beginning with this week's hearings. **NOTE:** This is my personal opinion, not shared or approved by the other brokers at Golden Real Estate. —Jim Smith



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