

Sustainability, Starting With Solar Power, Can Be Your Key to a More Affordable Life

The first Saturday of October is when the **Metro Denver Green Homes Tour** happens, and this year the tour is better than ever because it's virtual. What that means is that instead of having to visit some or all of the homes between 9 am and 4 pm on a single day, you can watch short videos of each home. It's possible *you could "visit" all 16 homes and the one business* in just one or two sittings at your computer and likely learn more about their sustainable features than if you had visited them in person. That's what I call a *green* tour of *green* homes!

Since I shot all those videos myself and thereby learned all those homes' sustainable features, you can consider me an expert on what's *new and exciting* as well as what's *old and proven* when it comes to making a home sustainable.

The theme this year is the **Best Homes From the Last 25 Annual Tours**. The home owned by Rita and me is on the tour, and since I just turned 73 I'd like to share with you how making our home sustainable also secured for us an affordable retirement — if and when I retire!

It all starts with solar power. Nowadays you can install enough solar panels on your home for under \$20,000 so that you never pay Xcel or your other electrical provider more than the cost of being connected to their electrical grid. With Xcel Energy, that's under \$10 per month. The electricity you use is free, created from the sun.

You need to be connected to the grid, because the grid functions as

REAL ESTATE TODAY



By **JIM SMITH, Realtor®**

your "battery." Your electric meter runs backward during the day when you're creating more electricity than you use, and it runs forward at night. Your goal is to have it run backward more than it runs forward.

Plan ahead and buy enough electrical panels so that over time you can replace your gas-fired appliances with electrical ones — a heat-pump water heater, a heat-pump system for heating and cooling, and an electric range — and replace your gas-powered car with an electric one. Now everything in your life is sun-powered!

You can buy a used electric car for under \$30,000 or even under \$10,000 (Google "used electric cars" and see for yourself) and never buy gasoline or pay for an oil change or tune-up again and probably never have an expensive car repair either. Buying a used electric car is smarter than buying a new one because there's hardly anything to go wrong with an EV — no transmission, timing belt, motor or hundreds of other expensive parts that could fail. See the article at right about our electric vehicle event. It's the only in-person part of the tour.

So there you have it. Once you've paid off your mortgage (or

transitioned to a reverse mortgage), the only costs of living in your home will be your property taxes and water bill, plus \$10 per month for being on the electrical grid.

Be sure to "attend" this year's tour of green homes. Register at www.NewEnergyColorado.com/home-tour. It's free, although you will be asked for a donation. Another feature of the tour this year is three video presentations.

Hear Bill Lucas-Brown from GB3 Energy on "Reducing your Carbon Footprint with an Electric Mini Split"; John Avenson, from PHIUS.org and Steve Nixon from the National Renewable Energy Laboratory discussing "New Home vs Renovation: 2 alter-native Paths to Zero Energy"; and Peter Ewers from Ewers Architecture Golden presenting "All Electric Buildings, the Key to our Energy Future."

Find Out If an Electric Vehicle Is in Your Future

For the 7th consecutive year, Golden Real Estate is pleased to host an Electric Vehicle Round-up in our parking lot this **Saturday, Oct. 3rd, from 2 to 5 pm**. It's part of the **National Drive Electric Week** in addition to being the only in-person component of the **Metro Denver Green Homes Tour**.

20 owners of EVs have registered at www.DriveElectricWeek.info to bring over 10 different models of EVs and answer the questions of people who may be considering the purchase of an electric vehicle.

EVs already registered include 3 Tesla models, 3 Chevy models, an Audi e-Tron, both Nissan Leafs, a Fiat 500e, and the Hyundai Kona. I expect others to register, too.

In addition, we expect to have some electric bicycles and a unique electric tricycle, which you'll be able to test drive. I'll bring my 2012

Chevy Volt (242 lifetime MPG), which Rita and I have decided to sell for \$7,500. (It cost \$40,000 in 2012, and runs as well as new.)

We'll observe state rules regarding COVID-19, taking the temperature of all visitors on arrival and requiring masks, which we'll provide if necessary. Everyone will get a shot of hand sanitizer, and we will get contact info of all attendees solely for the purpose of contact tracing (another requirement for such events).

If you drive a car for business, you *really* need to look into buying an electric vehicle. Why? Because the only cost of driving an EV is 3 cents per mile for electricity (unless you get it free from the sun, as we do) and the wear on your tires, yet the IRS is happy to give you the same 57.5 cents per mile deduction when you use your car for business.

Price Reduced on Townhome

Originally priced at \$350,000, my 3-BR townhome listing at **416 Gladiola Street** is now priced at \$344,000. It has many virtues, including the best mountain view in the subdivision. See video tour at www.GladiolaTownhome.info.

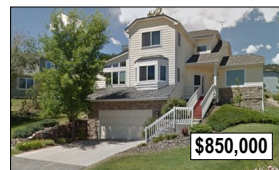
Just Listed: 5-Bedroom Northeast Arvada Ranch

This ranch home at **5362 W. 83rd Ave.** has 5 bedrooms and 3 bathrooms. It is located between Denver and Boulder with easy access to mass transit. The basement is finished with a 37'x13' carpeted room to use as you wish plus two bedrooms (non-conforming), a three-quarter bathroom and laundry room. On the main floor, the living room and three bedrooms are carpeted with hardwood floors underneath. The eat-in kitchen opens to a large deck and park-like backyard. The wood deck is 36'x19' and is a great place to entertain. There is an oversized one-car garage and outside space for a camper, RV or another car. Take a narrated video tour at www.ArvidaRanch.info, then call your agent or **David Dlugasch** at **303-908-4835** for a private showing. **Open this Saturday, 11am to 2pm.**



Just Listed: Great Golden Home Behind Hogback

Tripp Ranch is a 1990s subdivision located in South Golden between Heritage Dells and Stonebridge at Eagle Ridge. This home at **515 Crawford Street** is located across from the Kinney Run trail and a short walk from the Apex Open Space trailhead. Shelton Elementary School is just a few blocks south. US Highway 6 and Interstate 70 are less than two miles away, providing convenient access to Denver, Boulder and the mountains. Inside, this home has some great improvements, including hardwood floors, a gourmet kitchen with slab granite countertops, and two offices. The backyard features a large deck with included hot tub. Best of all it's super quiet here because of its setting behind a hogback. Homes here sell quickly, so check out the narrated video tour online at www.TrippRanchHome.info, then come to the open house this **Sunday, October 4th, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.** Or call your agent or **Jim Smith** at **303-525-1851** for a private showing.



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