

# This Year's Opportunity to Visit Solar & Sustainable Homes Is October 7th

Golden Real Estate is pleased to be a co-sponsor of a tour of solar and sustainable homes, held each fall. I'm honored to serve on the tour's steering committee, which works year-round to select homes for participation in this event on the first Saturday of October.

What used to be called the "Golden Solar Tour" is now the Metro Denver Green Homes Tour (look for their ad). It features five clusters of solar and sustainable homes in Arvada/Westminster, Littleton, Denver, Lakewood and Genesee/Evergreen. Tickets are \$10. Register at [www.MetroDenverGreenHomesTour.org](http://www.MetroDenverGreenHomesTour.org) (pre-registration closes at 3 p.m. on Friday, Oct. 6th). You may also register and pick up your guidebook in person the day of the tour at the Jefferson Unitarian Church

(JUC) at 14350 W. 32nd Avenue, about a mile west of I-70 and Youngfield Street, or at 9988 Hoyt Place in Westminster, or 6281 S. Cedar Street in Littleton.

This metro Denver tour is part of a national event sponsored annually by the American Solar Energy Society (ASES). ([www.ases.org/about-tour/](http://www.ases.org/about-tour/)) Last year, over 30,000 people toured solar and sustainable homes in tours like ours in over 60 cities.

At Golden Real Estate, we care a lot about sustainability (we power both our office and automobiles from the sun), but each year this tour teaches me about sustainable options of which I was previously unaware. If the topic of sustainability interests you — whether for its economic or save-the-planet benefits — I encourage you to sign up for this tour.

Tour hours are 9am to 4pm on Saturday, Oct. 7th. You can start anytime, but all the houses close to visitors at 4pm, after which you're invited to return to JUC for the reception (offering free food and beverages) and a Green Expo featuring various vendors and non-profit organizations whose on-site representatives can help deepen your understanding of what you may have learned during your tour of the homes.

One stop that you will not want to miss is in the

## A Couple Important Facts About Flood Insurance

The flooding in Texas and Florida finds many of us wondering how we're covered in case we experience a similar disaster.

Here's some of what you need to know:

1) Your homeowner's insurance covers you for water damage only when the water enters the home *before* hitting the ground. If the water hits the ground first, it's considered flooding, and you have to buy flood insurance to be covered for it.

2) Flood insurance does *not* cover a flooded basement except for items in the basement (such as furnace and water heater) that serve the above-grade floors.

REAL ESTATE TODAY



By JIM SMITH, Realtor®

Arvada/Westminster cluster. It's the GEOS Community of net-zero homes, a 300-unit development that was under construction when it was featured in last year's

tour. It's on the tour again this year so you can see the finished product. The homes are heated geothermally, without any forced air furnaces, and each home has enough solar panels to power both the home and one electric car. (Every carport has a 240V charging station.) There is a 12-minute YouTube interview I did last year with builder Norbert Klebl, describing the homes' sustainable features. (Find that video by Googling "GEOS Community Arvada.") In the interview, Norbert explains the elements of net-zero home construction built into the homes — walls, insulation, windows, conditioning energy recovery ventilators (CERVs), ground-source heat pumps, and more. You might need to watch it more than once to absorb it all!

Other special homes on this year's tour include a straw bale home in Genesee and a "smart home" with no furnace (thanks to extensive passive solar features) in Westminster. There's a 1985 passive solar remodel in Arvada and another passive house in south Denver. You'll find homes with both thermal and photovoltaic systems in Lakewood, and you'll like the xeriscape gardens you'll see in Littleton.

Again, this is a *self-guided* tour. Pick up your guidebook during sign-in, decide which homes you want to see and go to them in any order you wish. Volunteers will be at each location to help explain the solar and/or sustainable features of that house and

answer your questions.

An impressive number of new products and technological breakthroughs are introduced regularly in the field of sustainable home-building. Even if you've been on this tour before, don't hesitate to come again this year. I promise that you'll learn something new!

Be prepared to learn much you didn't know about how to make your *existing* home more economical and sustainable through smart retrofits, not just how to build a sustainable home from scratch. Enjoy the experience, and let me know how it was for you!

## Boulder Has a Great Tour, Too!

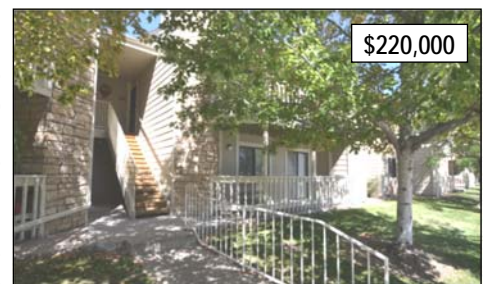
Another ASES tour that I make a point of attending each year is the one sponsored by the Colorado Green Building Guild. Fortunately, they schedule their tour on a different day, so you can attend both. Their date is **Saturday, Sept. 30th**. Sign up for their tour online at [www.BoulderGreenHomeTour.org](http://www.BoulderGreenHomeTour.org) or in person after 9:30am at 6400 Arapahoe Road in Boulder. Their tour runs from 10am to 3:30pm and is followed by a celebratory after-party. The cost is \$15. Seriously, you don't want to miss their event, even if you're planning to attend the metro Denver tour the following Saturday, Oct. 7th.

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Many people no longer read newspapers. If that describes you or someone you know, join the readers who get this column by email. Send your request to [Jim@GoldenRealEstate.com](mailto:Jim@GoldenRealEstate.com). An archive of several years' worth of previous columns can be found online at [www.JimSmithColumns.com](http://www.JimSmithColumns.com).

## East Denver Condo Just Listed by Jim Swanson

You'll like this south-facing condominium at 8225 Fairmount Drive, #5-103, with 2 bedrooms and 2 full baths. This unit is located on the quiet southwest corner of the Woodside Village complex with outdoor pool. Close to Alameda Avenue with its downtown bus route, the location adjoins the old Lowry Air Force base. All appliances are included — refrigerator stove/oven, microwave, dishwasher, and washer & dryer. There is a cozy rock-faced wood-burning fireplace in the large living space with wood floors and outer patio area. The unit has been refurbished, and is near the Highline Canal bike/pedestrian trail. It is also convenient to the Lowry Center and library. There is one assigned parking space plus plenty of additional parking spaces. You'll find more pictures plus additional information at [www.WoodsideVillageCondo.info](http://www.WoodsideVillageCondo.info), then call Jim Swanson for a private showing at 303-929-2727.



Jim Smith

Broker/Owner

Golden Real Estate, Inc.



CALL OR TEXT: 303-525-1851

OFFICE PHONE: 303-302-3636

EMAIL: [Jim@GoldenRealEstate.com](mailto:Jim@GoldenRealEstate.com)

WEBSITE: [www.GoldenRealEstate.com](http://www.GoldenRealEstate.com)

ARCHIVES: [www.JimSmithColumns.com](http://www.JimSmithColumns.com)

17695 South Golden Road, Golden 80401

