

Record number of residents rebuilding high-performance homes after Marshall Fire

Boulder County

41% rebuilding to standards that earn incentives for energy efficiency

Boulder County, Colo.- Record numbers of residents impacted by the Marshall Fire are choosing to rebuild high-performance homes that use less energy and little to no fossil fuel energy. 41% of homes that have been permitted to rebuild after the Marshall Fire are building to standards that qualify for energy efficiency rebates.

This milestone comes after financial incentives from the State of Colorado and Xcel Energy developed programs to reduce the costs of rebuilding high-performance and electrified homes. An August report from EnergySmart and the Energy Efficiency Business Coalition reported that, with incentives, actual home building costs for certain types of high-performance homes being rebuilt after the Marshall Fire can cost less to rebuild than homes built to code minimum standards. Homeowners facing underinsurance issues may be able to reduce upfront building costs.

“The Marshall Fire is changing the way we look at building in Colorado and across the nation,” said Zac Swank, Boulder County Built Environment Coordinator. “More than ever, residents are looking to build ‘climate ready’ homes that are more comfortable, healthier, energy efficient, and resistant to future wildfire and smoke damage.”

Compared to the adoption rates of similar programs after other disasters — like the Advanced Energy Rebuild after the Tubbs Fire in Sonoma County, which only achieved a 6% adoption rate — Boulder County residents are on track to rebuild homes at higher performance levels after the Marshall Fire disaster.

“Insurance limitations and budget constraints can make it hard for households to achieve energy efficient rebuild goals,” said Valerie Brown, Deputy Executive Director of United Policyholders. “We commend the residents and local government officials for the extraordinarily high number of rebuilds that are succeeding at meeting them. We believe 41% is a record among all the communities we’ve served since 1991.”

“After losing our home in the Marshall Fire, we plan to rebuild with a goal of constructing a net-zero energy home,” said Louisville resident Greg Harms. “The last thing anyone needs are construction hurdles and added expenses during the rebuilding process, however, I am confident that after rebates, incentives and discounts, we will be able to reach this goal with no, or nominal incremental expense. And the resulting reduction in utility costs will pay dividends for years to come.”

As of late September, in total, 39 homes in Louisville, Superior, and Unincorporated Boulder County are building to 2021 International Energy Conservation Code (IECC), ENERGY STAR, Zero Energy Ready, ENERGY STAR Next Gen, or Passive House Standards

STANDARD	NUMBER OF HOMES
2021 IECC	8
ENERGY STAR	8
Zero Energy Ready Homes	14
ENERGY STAR Next Gen	6
Passive House (PHI/PHIUS)	3

	NUMBER/PERCENTAGE OF HOMES
Total high-performance home rebuilds as of 9/23/2022	39
Total homes permitted as of 9/23/2022	95
% of homes that are eligible for energy incentives as of 9/23/2022	41%

To learn about free support services and financial incentives for Marshall Fire impacted residents, visit RebuildingBetter.org or contact an EnergySmart advisor at 303-544-1000 or info@energysmartes.com.