



## Business

### Riverside to offer incentives to home builders who go green

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By **LESLIE BERKMAN**  
The Press-Enterprise

Riverside on Tuesday became the first city in California to offer incentives to home builders who beat the state's current standards for energy and water conservation and reduce construction waste.

"We are the first in the state to do so, and we won't be the last," Riverside Mayor Ronald Loveridge said. "It is very clear that a kind of greening of America is occurring."

In a joint telephone conference, city and building industry officials said an incentive program was developed by city and industry representatives over the past three months to make homes more environmentally friendly while minimizing increases in construction costs that ultimately are passed to buyers.

Borre Winckel, executive officer of the California Building Industry Association of Riverside County, said the incentives will encourage home builders to adapt more quickly to the California Green Builder Program created by the Building Industry Institute, a nonprofit industry research organization.

Winckel said the incentives are meant to be temporary to "jump-start the green movement."

By adopting design concepts such as heat-deflecting roofs and energy-efficient windows, builders participating in the program will reduce a home's energy consumption 15 percent to 20 percent, said Don Mull, director of the California Green Builder Program.

Also, by taking measures recommended by the California Metropolitan Water District, including the use of water-conserving landscaping and sprinkler meters that automatically adjust to weather conditions, builders in the program will lower the water consumption of a standard home by 20,000 gallons a year.

And builders agreeing to use more recycled and pre-engineered building materials will eliminate at least half of the construction waste that would otherwise end up in be hauled to landfills, Mull said.

In turn, builders will receive a promise from the city of priority and fast-track treatment that will shorten the plan check and inspection process by an estimated two to three months, said Riverside Community Development Director Scott Barber.

Mull estimated the green- program requirements will add between \$3,000 and \$6,000 to the cost of

building a 1,940-square-foot house, but he said much of that cost will be offset by the savings in development time and rebates and tax credits offered by various agencies to promote conservation.

Winckel said he anticipates Riverside County and Corona soon will adopt their own green-builder programs, and he is also asking for support from the Western Riverside Council of Governments.

Homeowners who buy green homes are expected to benefit from lower electric and water bills.

"Builders who sign up for the program will be marketing it," Winckel said.

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