

'Green' homes sprout in Valley

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LANCASTER - O Bel Sole! Estates at East Ave. K and 25th Street East has become the first development in Southern California to participate in the California Energy Commission's New Solar Homes Partnership, introducing three model homes for a community of 41 solar-paneled and environmentally friendly homes.

Development owner Jennie Stabile of K Street East LLC unveiled the model homes Oct. 4, with California Energy Commission assistant executive director Claudia Chandler, SunPower Corp. account manager Addison Marks, Southern California Edison chief architect Gregg Ander and other dignitaries in attendance.

The solar-powered, futuristic houses incorporate "green" materials throughout. The development is the first in the Antelope Valley for K Street East, which has built communities in Burbank, Chatsworth and Canoga Park.

Chandler said the sleek, almost invisible solar panels will send power back to the utility.

"We were interested in this development because it integrates the solar panels into the roof," she said. "People will save up to 60% when the sunshine generates electricity through the panels. If it is not used, it goes into the utility,; then during the night you have a credit. At the end of the year, you may save more money. These homes are anywhere from 35% to 40% more efficient than what the state requires. These houses will consume less energy than other houses."

The O Bel Sole! Estates have solar panels integrated into the roofing tiles, water-efficient landscaping, weather-based irrigation controls, engineered wood products, nontoxic paints and tankless water heaters.

The solar panels are designed to blend into the rest of the roof.

Stabile said, "There were no integrated solar panels into roofs before. They finally came up with the integrated roof tiles and energy efficiency was more available, which is why we decided to build these homes now."

K Street East offers three two-story floor plans in the community: the Rimini at 2,800 square feet, the Siena at 3,218 square feet and the Brescia at 3,533 square feet.

The plans are reversible for a total choice of six designs.

Chandler said that O Bel Sole! is what the California Energy Commission wants, and the homes are an investment in California.

"We want to see green homes," Chandler said. "There are a lot of people moving to California. If we can build homes like this, it will alleviate some of the burden that we cause on the environment. We encourage this type of development. It can make a difference in the way we impact our environment."

"These houses come with a monitoring system integrated into the home" said Addison Marks, builder account manager for SunPower. "They show how much energy you are using and how much energy you are not using."

Chandler said, "These homes are great.

People will also enjoy the great savings because these homes have a lot to offer, such as triple-pane windows.

I would love to see more builders build this type of home."

Stabile said the energy-efficient homes are priced "about the same as homes that don't have the solar energy panels."

She said they start at \$499,950.

Although O Bel Sole! is the first to get on the market, Marks said his company is installing their solar panels all over the state.

"We have more than 50 different construction sites under development," he said.

"I call this home 'the home of the future.' " Stabile said. "The Antelope Valley reminded me of the San Fernando Valley in the 1950s. This beautiful valley was where I wanted to develop and build homes of the future.

"Live better, for less, live green."