

Vail Daily

Mansion with a mission in Cordillera

Mountain Living magazine reaches for lofty green building standards

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[Vail CO, Colorado](#)
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CORDILLERA, Colorado — High in the mountains of Cordillera, a luxury home is taking shape.

Unlike the other sprawling mansions dotting the hillsides, this roughly 8,000-square-foot house will push the boundaries of green building.

It is “Mountain Living” magazine’s natural dream home 2008.

A team of professionals designed the home with natural, reclaimed and organic materials. Their ultimate goal: Meet a set of rigorous standards outlined by the U.S. Green Building Council. The team will reach for Achieve Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design Gold certification.

The public can learn more about the house during a presentation tonight at the Edwards Ambulance Center.

Some of the home’s environmentally-friendly features are already in place. Massive woods beams add a log cabin feel. Loggers plucked the pines from the woods after the trees had already died from beetle infestation. That means they weren’t sacrificing live trees, project manager David Huffman said.

Windows overlook snow-splotched vistas. They are made from triple-paned glass designed to stop air leaks.

Foreman Bill Von Handorf, center, examines plans while working on the construction of a home in Cordillera on Friday. The eco-friendly home is



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Mountain Living Magazine’s “Natural Dream Home 2008.” Beetle-killed pines provide much of the wood for the house.

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Other green building touches are in the works. Solar panels will appear above the garages. These photo-voltaic panels will transform sunlight into electricity for the house. Excess electricity will flow back to the local power grid. “Let’s say this house is consuming less energy than it’s making,” Huffman said. “That surplus energy goes back to the grid and then you and I get to use it.”

These are just a few of the green features that could help the team score LEED certification. Builders set their sights on a gold rating, the second-highest level the program offers. Platinum is the highest level, followed by Gold, Silver and Certified. Huffman said the large size of the house prevents it from achieving Platinum. But builders have their reasons for building big in a resort town where mansions are the norm.

“We’re not going to change the market,” Huffman said. “Let’s change the way the market consumes energy,” he said.

The Green Building Council launched the LEED for homes pilot program about a year ago. LEED for homes graduated to an official program in December. Of the 10,041 homes enrolled in the LEED for Homes program nationwide, 548 have been certified. To date, no homes in Colorado have earned Gold status. Three homes in Colorado have reached Silver status, while a fourth achieved certification.

Project leaders also plan to land Built Green Colorado and ENERGY STAR certifications.

Construction began in June and should wrap up by mid-October, Huffman said. The six-bedroom, six-and-a-half bathroom house is presently selling for \$5.45 million, according to Slifer Smith & Frampton Real Estate, the company selling the home. Proceeds will flow to Habitat for Humanity of Eagle and Lake Counties.

Tonight’s presentation will feature talks with developer Margie Hamrick from Ecoexistence in Edwards, along with Huffman, from Boles Construction in Edwards.

The presentation is the final installment in a green building speakers series hosted by the Eagle Valley Alliance. The alliance is a community group devoted to eco-friendly projects like recycling drop-off sites.

Alliance Executive Director Matt Scherr said he expects the presentation to shed light on what green building really means. Audience members will get the scoop

on the challenges and opportunities associated with the process, he said.

“And hopefully be inspired to do their own green things within their homes, whether new or existing,” he said.

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