

June 16, 2008

Green projects will have edge, Inland local officials say

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The Press-Enterprise

Leaders in Riverside County and several of its cities say developers who go green are more likely to get the go-ahead on projects than those who don't incorporate energy and water conservation into their proposals.

"Our council has been real conscious about our planning to make it as green as possible," said Daryl Busch, mayor of Perris, where solar panels help energize City Hall. Busch said city leaders are encouraging developers to follow their example.

"We let them know that anything they do will help their project in the eyes of the City Council," he said.

Today, Riverside County supervisors are poised to ask their planners to develop comprehensive green guidelines to aid in future decision-making policies during the next five years.

Some of those principles are expected to be wrapped into the county's general plan during its update, which is under way, said Supervisor Marion Ashley, who was

joined by Supervisor Roy Wilson in asking for the green guidelines.

For example, Ashley said, the county and the Coachella Valley city of Palm Springs are contemplating the formation of a sustainable-development zone near Indian Avenue and Interstate 10, where major industrial developments would be required to use wind and solar energy.

Palm Springs Mayor Steve Pougnet said the zone would be one of the first of its type in California.

"It's the right thing to do," Pougnet said, adding that intense sun and wind in the desert area make the location ideal.

Ashley also said that a \$300 million regional county jail slated for construction in the next few years will rely on sustainable energy.

The county already has adopted water-efficient landscaping requirements.

One reason for the push is county leaders want to get a jump-start on compliance with Assembly Bill 32, Ashley said. The state law set mandatory caps for significant sources of greenhouse-gas emissions beginning 2012.

Before local governments started going green, the private sector was already making subtle strides in response to a public that wants smarter, more energy-efficient homes, said Borre Winckel, executive director of the Riverside County chapter of the Building Industry Association.

Winckel said building homes that use less water and energy adds \$5,000 to \$7,000 to the cost of each one.

The housing market in its current downward spiral is unable to support the costs, but Winckel predicted in the near future, state building codes would mandate developers to build conservation-conscious housing.

"The real bang for the buck, the true greening process, will

come from retrofitting
existing homes to greener
standards," Winckel said.

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