

2021 HOMES OF TOMORROW TODAY TOUR

Tour offers peek at energy-efficient ‘Homes of Tomorrow’

Janet Eastman *The Oregonian/OregonLive*

The home of the future might be hard to visualize, but one thing is clear: It will be energy efficient.

In many ways, the future already arrived as seen in improved smart thermostats, solar panels and electric car charging stations. Kitchens are outfitted with an induction cooktop and the temperature of the whole house can be consistently comfortable year round with cost-saving heat pumps.

Portland area builders have been leading the national effort to produce high-performance, sustainable homes that offer easy livability and low utility costs, said Rachel Trice of the Home Builders Association of Metro Portland (HBA).

And remodelers aiming to reduce home expenses while protecting the planet aren't retrofitting existing dwellings; they say they are making them "future fitted."

People interested in learning more about energy-saving building techniques and materials can walk through eight exemplar dwellings in the Portland area during the Homes of Tomorrow Today Tour, which runs through Sunday.

The HBA event with Portland General Electric (PGE) and Energy Trust of Oregon lets ticket holders ask builders and suppliers about ways to upgrade a home, from replacing an inefficient water heater to installing alternative energy sources that can be used during power outages.

A sealed building envelope with controlled ventilation keeps smoke and other pollutants out, reduces allergens and the



Eight dwellings, including this home by Noyes Development, will be on the Homes of Tomorrow Today Tour, which began Friday and goes through Sunday.

risk of mold, and prevents heated and cooled air from escaping.

Added bonus: A home with double-pane windows and extra insulation in the attic, walls and floors blocks outside noise.

These processes, which use sustainable building materials and finishes that create less waste, are more efficient than the recently updated requirements of the Oregon building code — some of the most aggressive in the nation, said Trice.

"There's been a lot of progress in the last 10 years," she said. "And there are tons of rebates, product discounts and incentives. (Going green) is not as expensive as you'd think."

The eight new homes on the self-paced, self-driving tour range from converted cargo-container structures by Relevant Buildings in Oregon City to single-family residences from Happy Valley to Hillsboro.



Carl Coffman of Relevant Buildings turns shipping containers into homes that are affordable, UBC compliant and sustainable. Home Builders Association of Metro Portland

Each home has an energy performance score (EPS) issued by Energy Trust of Oregon. Scores can be as low as zero, which means they produce as much energy as they consume each year, said Mike Frey of Noyes Development Co.

Tour goers will visit Noyes Development's homes in Creekview Ridge, a 65-home community off Northwest Laidlaw Road, and the Highlands at North Bethany, a 155-home community off Northwest 167th Ave. The new structures, designed to be extremely comfortable and last 100 years, earned platinum status from Earth Advantage, a Portland-based nonprofit facilitating sustainable, quality construction.

The Energy Star-certified homes also meet strict energy performance standards set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The dwellings generate fewer greenhouse gas emissions than typical buildings.

If you go

Tickets to the Homes of Tomorrow Today Tour can only be purchased online at homesoftomorrowpdx.com/p/tickets. A \$25 individual ticket is valid for one entry for one person into all of the homes through Sunday.

Frey, who chairs the HBA's Home Performance Council, said, "Not all homes are equal and it is important for people to have opportunities to become more informed about their single largest investment in life and the place where they spend so much of their time."

He said he hopes more people can find efficient, sustainable choices when considering a home purchase, remodel or equipment upgrade.

A 2,067-square-foot home designed and constructed by Ichijo USA on the tour is expected to have zero energy costs based on its energy performance score (EPS). The well-insulated dwelling in the Happy Valley neighborhood of Pleasant Valley Villages has i-cube panelized construction invented by Ichijo USA with weather barriers and rain screens to produce net-zero, energy-ready homes in Oregon and Washington.

The company uses Forest Stewardship Council-certified wood from responsibly managed forests as well as energy smart lighting, fireplaces, refrigerators, dishwashers and other electric appliances.

Vendors such as Marvin windows and Pyramid Heating + Cooling of Portland will be available during the Homes of Tomorrow Today Tour to answer questions.



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