



Paradise Valley Gets The First Ever LEED Certified Home

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Photo: Mark Boisclair

Scottsdale, Ariz.-based Desert Star Construction, Inc. (DSC) has placed the first ever LEED home in Paradise Valley. DSC specializes in luxury commercial properties and luxury homes in the Paradise Valley and Scottsdale areas. They stand out by doing complex projects that offer the leading green standards.

"Our clients range from local leaders to presidents of Fortune 500 companies," says Jeremy Meek, sustainability programs manager at DSC. "They recognize that green building is the future, and they welcome opportunities to consider new technologies as they build."

LEED, Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, certifications are determined by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) and are the leading, nationally-accepted, third-party verification program for green buildings.

This will be one of four custom LEED homes located in the greater Phoenix area.

"We've been building 'green' for over 30 years, but this is the first official LEED home we have done," Meek says. "We do niche commercial projects and audits for the luxury market."

In order for a home to be "green" and have the LEED tag, they must meet high design standards, rigorous construction practices and scrupulous third-party verification of all measures. The USGBC then ranks the homes as (from lowest to highest) Certified, Silver, Gold or Platinum.

The three-structure Paradise Valley LEED home includes a main house, guesthouse and casita. The guest home has been ranked "Gold" while the casita is "Platinum" Certification.

Because of the different certifications and building style, DSC has also completed houses five and six.

"We build better, implement new things on the next home and always favor the next project," Meek says.

All three buildings apply essential green-build and sustainable strategies to meet LEED requirements. In the Paradise Valley home, these include:

- Solar hot water and solar electric systems
- Reduced water use through low-flow faucets and toilets, as well as an "intelligent" landscaping irrigation system
- High-efficiency LED lighting and mechanical equipment
- Enhanced home occupant health measures, such as hard surface floors in lieu of carpet that can emit chemicals from production
- Materials that reduce the local heat island effect, such as light-colored driveways, sidewalks and patios (particularly those within 50 feet of the home) that reflect rather than absorb heat from the sun
- Recycled and salvaged materials
- An advanced home automation system that includes motion detectors that will shut off lights when spaces are not in use and gives homeowners the ability to control light intensity. At the Paradise Valley home, all lights are set to 90 percent brightness, which can double the life of bulbs.

About Desert Star Construction

For 34 years, Desert Star Construction has advanced a tradition of excellence and integrity through its commercial and luxury custom home construction and renovation projects. The company has gained honors including a Gold Nugget Best in the West award, Home Builders Association of Central Arizona Custom Home of the Year, Valley Forward 2010 Environmental Excellence Award of Merit, and the 2010 Heart of Business Award.