

THE FORT IRWIN COMMUNITY HAS COMBINED SCIENCE AND SOUTHWEST STYLE TO BUILD A VERY SPECIAL NEIGHBORHOOD. ENVIRONMENTAL CORRESPONDENT JAVIER HERNANDEZ REPORTS THERE'S MORE TO THESE HOMES THAN MEETS THE EYE.

THIS IS NEW HOUSING AT FT IRWIN CALIFORNIA. NO, NOT OFFICER HOUSING, THESE HOMES ARE AVAILABLE TO PRIVATES FIRST CLASS AND UP.

“IT FEELS GOOD WHEN YOU COME HOME BECAUSE IT'S NICE HOUSING, IT LOOKS DECENT.”

BUT THERE'S MORE TO THESE HOMES THAN THEIR GOOD LOOKS. THEY CONSUME 50% LESS ENERGY THAN PREVIOUS DESIGNS.

“IN THE EARLY 90'S WE TOOK A JUMP TO, CALIFORNIA, WHAT WE CALL TITLE 29 STANDARDS, WHICH REQUIRED A CERTAIN LEVEL OF ENERGY EFFICIENCY ABOVE AND BEYOND THAT WHICH THE ARMY HAD.”

OVER FIVE GENERATIONS OF HOUSING, FT IRWIN OFFICIALS LEARNED WHICH DESIGNS WORKED BEST IN A DESERT CLIMATE AND GATHERED INPUT FROM SOLDIERS. THE RESULT IS THIS SOUTHWESTERN DESIGN. EACH HOME FEATURES TILE ROOFS THAT LAST UP TO 40 YEARS, SPECIAL SCREENING ON THE WINDOWS, OVER HANGS FOR SHADE, LOW HEAT FLORESCENT LIGHTING, AND A GROUND SOURCE HEAT SYSTEM.

“GROUND SOURCE HEAT SYSTEM IS A SYSTEM THAT DRAWS HEAT FROM THE EARTH FOR HEATING PURPOSES IN THE WINTER TIME, OR SENDS THE HEAT FROM THE HOUSE INTO THE GROUND IN THE SUMMER TIME.”

AND EVEN THE LANDSCAPE IS LOW MAINTENANCE AND ENERGY EFFICIENT. UNDER GROUND SENSORS MEASURE THE SOIL'S MOISTURE LEVEL AND CAN TRIGGER THE WATER SYSTEM, SO GRASS AND PLANTS GET WATER ONLY WHEN THEY NEED IT.

ACCORDING TO QUINONEZ WORKING WITH THE ENVIRONMENT IS THE KEY TO BUILDING AN ENERGY EFFICIENT HOUSE IN THE DESERT. BUT STYLE AND QUALITY ARE WHAT'S IMPORTANT FOR FAMILIES LIKE THE CASTROS WHO ARE ALSO BUILDING A HOME, JAVIER HERNANDEZ, FORT IRWIN, CALIFORNIA.