

A COMMITMENT TO THE COMMUNITY



Existing stock in Central Oregon is outdated or in need of significant upgrades, and there isn't nearly enough affordable housing to adequately service everyone in need.¹ Additionally, there are only a limited number of developers who keep low-income residents in mind. Local builder, RootedHomes, focuses on making homes more affordable and minimizing operational costs to help reduce the disproportionate energy burden on this segment of the community.

Advanced, high-performance techniques allow the company to build upon the successes of previous design strategies for the interior and exterior of each home. Rather than using the typical 2x6 with 24-inch-on-center wall framing, 2x8 studs are used to improve thermal performance and make room for thicker insulation. In turn, wall insulation graded above R-30—which far exceeds the current Oregon Residential Energy Code requirement of R-21—is installed for greater efficiency.

“Our homes have about double the thickness of wall insulation, compared to an average home,” said Jackie Keough, executive director of RootedHomes. “That, along with high-quality framing, essentially results in a passive home.”

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Instead of spending so much of their income on utilities, our homeowners can go back to school or invest in their kids' college savings plans.

- Jackie Keough,
RootedHomes

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Thanks to an airtightness of approximately 2.5 ACH50, homeowners are also less likely to be impacted by seasonal weather events. In summer 2023, smoke from regional wildfires greatly impacted air quality. One RootedHomes customer reached out to share how they fared. “They said they would have been sweltering in their old rental with the windows taped shut to keep the unhealthy air out. This was the first summer in a few years they were able to feel comfortable in their home and not be afraid of expensive energy bills,” said Keough.

Other practices that help the homes achieve net-zero status include energy-saving appliances such as heat pump water heaters and ductless heat pumps. Each home is exclusively powered by onsite solar generation, which makes the electrical hookup fee the only energy utility bill for owners.

PAVING THE WAY TO HOMEOWNERSHIP

Using advanced techniques and materials isn’t the only way RootedHomes strives to make ownership more affordable. Subsidizing their developments through a community land trust model that relies on local partnerships and acquired funding provides an opportunity to residents who fall below 80% of the Deschutes County median income level. This helps working families and individuals who qualify for a mortgage but cannot make a sufficient down payment on a quality home in a rising market, while their wages remain low. “We essentially fill the gap and finance the homes between what the client can put toward their mortgage and the cost to build it,” said Keough. “Our team on the client side helps get people ready.”

By combining design innovation with affordability, RootedHomes wants to be the gold standard for residential homes, setting a new benchmark for what’s possible, creating homes that are built to last, and designing them with the future in mind. While their deep commitment to excellence may require a little more time and effort, the company believes the results are not only worth it, but will continue to serve the community long after the initial investment is made—one high-performance home at a time.



Jackie Keough speaking at the ribbon cutting for RootedHomes’ Crescita community in Bend.



RootedHomes’ Crescita community, composed of five permanently affordable, single-family homes.

LEARN MORE

Want more insight on the latest techniques in Zero Energy Ready construction for safe, resilient high-performance homes? Take the no-cost online training: [Zero Energy Homes: Updates & Cost-Effective Approaches training](#), brought to you by BetterBuiltNW and Earth Advantage.

¹Sources:

[Urban Renewal Memo](#). Bend Urban Renewal Agency (BURA), July 29, 2024