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New Nonprofit Seeks to Spark Green Residential Rebuilding Efforts

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Rebuilding efforts after the wildfires of 2007 can include the use of fire-resistant materials and building methods as well as environmentally friendly features, according to a local nonprofit launched after the October wildfires that destroyed 1,500 homes in San Diego County.

Green-Spark.Org, focused on providing sustainable and renewable information alongside fire-resistant facts, figures, resources and incentives to homeowners, says it helps homeowners make green choices in rebuilding.

“Green-Spark’s mission is to demystify the process by providing a team of green building professionals, volunteering their time and expertise to assist homeowners through the rebuilding process,” said Jennifer Owens, chairwoman of Green-Spark.

Owens, a former engineer with San Diego-based Rick Engineering Co., says the goal is to provide answers to residents who want to go green but may not have the information and resources to make those decisions.

Expert Advice

The nonprofit assists homeowners whose houses were damaged or destroyed navigate the rebuilding process and connect them with experts in the green building industry. Green-Spark assigns a consultant from its team of volunteer architects, engineers and environmentalists to each homeowner seeking guidance.

The team includes architects Drew Hubbell and Juergen Zierler of San Diego-based Hubbell and Hubbell and Jennifer Potter, a landscape architect and Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, or LEED, accredited professional.

“Rebuilding a home that is fire-resistant and energy-resource efficient not only benefits the occupants, but also benefits society and the environment that we all share,” said Malia Durand, co-chairwoman of Green-Spark.

Recycled steel framing and compacted straw bale insulation are just two examples of environmentally sensitive and fire-resistant products. The Green-Spark.org Web site provides contact information for homeowners looking to incorporate alternative products, including adhesives, cob building, countertops, driveways, flooring, furniture, insulation, lighting, siding, roofing and windows.

No Shortage Of Info

The site also hosts information on the local, state and federal financial incentives available to homeowners who use alternative or efficient-energy systems.