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Exclusive: First zero-energy, green apartment development opening in Scottsdale

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Doug Bowden and Ed Gorman are putting the finishing touches on the first zero-net-energy multifamily development in the state.

Gorman, president of Modus Development, said the Equinox apartments might be the first true zero-net-energy apartment development in the U.S.



VIRIDIS GROUP / MODUS DEVELOPMENT

And Modus and Bowden's Viridis Group are looking to take the zero-energy development concept to California, Texas, Colorado and other states as sustainability and renewable energy take root in public policies and consumer tastes.

Net-zero energy or zero-energy developments means the energy consumption at a project is roughly equal to renewable energy produced at the same property.

Gorman said the 41-unit Equinox development will have more than 1,100 solar panels on its residential building and parking structures.

Modus and the Bowden family's Viridis Group are building the Equinox apartments on a parcel near Hayden and Thomas roads in Scottsdale. It sits on Scottsdale's Indian Bend Wash Greenbelt behind the Church of the Holy Cross Lutheran church.

Construction crews are finishing up the property.

Doug Bowden, Viridis's CEO, said a couple of tenants have already moved in the complex.

One- and two-bedroom units range between 556 and 1,212 square feet and rent for between \$1,000 and \$1,600 per month.

Gorman said the project is the last open property on the greenbelt.

The complex also features other sustainable features, including:

- Low-energy efficient windows
- Water-saving dual flush toilets
- Energy efficient heat pumps
- Electric car charging stations.

Andrew Bowden, Viridis's president, also said the complex's fitness room has all manpowered treadmills, cycling and rowing machines.

All of Equinox's lighting is outfitted with same LED lighting.

"People told us it couldn't be done," Gorman said of outfitting all the units and property with same LED lighting.

Zero-energy developments, especially for apartments, aren't that common.

Gorman said there are a couple net-zero-energy projects in San Diego but those received government help to get built and they also benefit from a Pacific Ocean climate that often doesn't require heat or air conditioning.

Units also have 10-foot ceilings, USB outlets in each unit, composite quartz counter tops and vinyl wood plank flooring.

The latter is popular with apartment and condo builders. Gorman said it also has a sustainability component because landlords don't have to continually replace carpeting when tenants change over.

He said the costs of developing Equinox weren't more than traditional developments going on in Scottsdale.

Gorman said pulling off the 41-unit complex in Scottsdale could set the table for larger multifamily developments with the net-zero-energy theme.

Doug Bowden said the Scottsdale venture could set the stage for additional green developments with Modus. Bowden sees the concept being popular in progressive markets where millennials and others put a premium on renewable energy and sustainability.

He also likes being hands-on with his company's partnership with Modus.

"We're here everyday," Bowden said. "That's part of our mojo."

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