

**STATEWIDE BUILDING CODES - EFFECTIVE OCTOBER 1, 2010
(WILL MAKE TENNESSEE HOMES SAFER, MORE ENERGY-EFFICIENT)**

The Department of Commerce and Insurance will be implementing its state residential building codes program on October 1. The 2009 IRC with some amendments (such as there is no fire sprinkler system requirement) and the 2006 IECC were adopted by rule. Contractors may choose to apply the 2009 IECC instead of the 2006 IECC. The state fire marshal's office will require a state building permit for new residential construction in areas of the state *except* those where an exempt local government is enforcing a residential building code or where the local government has notified the department it has opted out of the law. Single family and two family residences, townhomes and site built construction for manufactured and modular homes will be required to have a building permit prior to commencing construction.

Permits will only be required for new construction or a change of use to residential and NOT for renovations. Permits must be placed on site during the construction until the certificate of occupancy is issued and are valid for two years. The department will verify contractors' licensure as part of the permitting process. Owners' permits will be limited to one in a 24 month period.

Permit fees will be based on the estimated cost of construction, with a minimum fee of \$100 for up to \$5,000 and then a fee of \$350 for up to \$100,000. The permit fee then increases by \$50 for each additional \$50,000 or fraction thereof in the estimated cost of construction.

Inspections will be performed, like with the electrical inspection program, by contract inspectors. An inspection may be waived if an inspection letter approving the work is signed and submitted by an architect or engineer currently registered in the state. If one inspection in a project fails, the permit holder will be allowed one free re-inspection. Subsequent re-inspections will have a \$100 fee.

To implement this program, the state is currently seeking to contract with issuing agents around the state. A list of issuing agents around the state will be posted online and, additionally, building permits applications may be completed and submitted online by going to the state fire marshal office's residential building codes website, at <http://homebuilding.tn.gov> The online applications will be verified by a phone by the department.

Requiring homes to be built to the adopted code will result in safer, better built homes for the citizens of Tennessee. Enforcement of minimum energy-efficiency construction standards contained in the adopted residential building codes will ultimately save the consumer in energy costs in amounts that, over a relatively short period of time, will far exceed the additional construction and permitting costs.