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Building A Better Community Thru
Enforcement, Education, and Customer Service
www.pprbd.org

“CAN WE TALK? ”

By Terry R. Brunette, Pikes Peak Regional Building Department August 2008

QUESTION: Can Regional Building help get the abandoned houses in my neighborhood fixed? Does that fall under the Building Codes?

CODES

It seems that there are Codes that affect every aspect of our lives. Regional Building Department enforces the Building Codes, including the State Electrical Code, the State Plumbing Code, the Fuel Gas Code, the Energy Code, the Mechanical Code, and the Elevator Code. We also enforce Floodplain and Enumeration regulations.

We are Funded 100% by permit and plan check fees. We receive no City, State, or Federal tax monies to run this Department. We also enforce the Dangerous Buildings Code, which brings in very little income to offset the costs. Once permitted work is inspected and finalized the permits are complete. After a building has a Certificate of Occupancy it falls under the Housing Maintenance Code, Regional Building does not enforce the Maintenance Code. Your tax dollars cover the enforcement of the Maintenance Codes, and are administered by the City of Colorado Springs Code Enforcement, the El Paso County Code Enforcement and the City of Fountain Code Enforcement and Manitou Springs Code Enforcement

Unfortunately not every property owner has the same Pride of Ownership, Which can be seen in your travels about the City. However, Pride of Ownership takes work and can be expensive. How do we instill Pride of Ownership? Maybe by setting a good example, or maybe by helping an elderly neighbor with some maintenance.

DANGEROUS BUILDINGS

It's a good bet that dangerous buildings and unhappy neighbors have been around since the beginning of time. The Dangerous Building Code, which is part of the Regional Building Code, includes buildings that have been burned, damaged by a vehicle running into it, or a natural disaster that may render the structure unsafe. The property owner is given the opportunity to correct the items that make the building unsafe, either by fixing it, boarding it up or having it demolished. Most times it takes an enormous amount of time to negotiate with insurance companies and attorney before repairs or demolition can begin. It is the property owner's responsibility to safeguard the public by fencing the property during the interim. I've been told that most property insurance policies will pay for this temporary emergency fencing to protect the public.

DILAPIDATED BUILDINGS

The City of Colorado Springs adopted a Dilapidated Building Ordinance in 2006. Colorado Springs Code Enforcement enforces this Ordinance. If a property is declared dilapidated there are inspection fees charged to the property owner until the problems are corrected. The fees are attached to the property tax bill for the year. The aggressive enforcement of this Ordinance is proving to be very effective. Colorado Springs Code Enforcement has 10 inspectors and responds to over 10,000 calls per year.

UNINCORPORATED EL PASO COUNTY

In 1999 the County adopted an Ordinance regarding trailer homes built before 1976. The Ordinance does not allow anyone to relocate or install a trailer built before 1976 in El Paso County. These pre '76' trailers are accumulating in the County with no legal way to dispose of them. Recently the County adopted a Dilapidated Building Ordinance to help cleanup problem properties. El Paso County has 2 Code Enforcement people to cover the entire unincorporated County. The County and our community continue to write new 'Laws' in an effort to take care of all of their constituent's problems, however any

law is only as good as the ability to enforce. The calls keep coming in to "force my neighbor to get rid of all those old trailer homes on their property." Okay we will, OH wait a minute there is an Ordinance that won't let them be moved. SORRY!

CODES Love'em or Hate'em they are here to stay, until amended or repealed.