

Resource Conservation: A TEAM EFFORT

by Heather Braithwaite



What do Archimedes, the renowned Greek scientist (267–212 B.C.), and Boulder County resident Mick Follari have in common? They both have roots in Sicily, the Island of Sun. Mick proudly acknowledges his Sicilian heritage and says, “Sun worshipping is in my blood.” They both excelled in math and physics, and they both creatively devised plans to harness the power of the sun. While Archimedes used the sun’s power to defeat a fleet of Romans, Mick decided to harness the sun’s power with photovoltaic panels for a solar hot-water heater and electricity.

Mick grew up in New Jersey and earned an engineering degree from Brown University. He arrived in Boulder in the mid-nineties to pursue his love of climbing more seriously. Along with climbing came climbing companions, and these new friends trusted each other on difficult climbs and with important life decisions.

Straw-bale building, solar, and the energy-independent “earth ship” in Emerson Gulch are examples of projects Mick associated himself with in Boulder. He also worked as the first yard manager and then director of the ReSource Yard, a program of the Center for ReSource Conservation (CRC) that promotes waste reduction through innovative landfill diversion. One of Mick’s favorite activities is “making things from junk.” This made the ReSource Yard the perfect project for him in Boulder, embodying the profound value he places on the environment and Boulder’s movement towards sustainability.

To balance out his engineering side, Mick is also passionate about travelling and photography. These passions took him away from Boulder to travel to South Africa with National Geographic. After returning from this journey, he decided to teach math and physics at a Waldorf school, passing on the same education he received as a child. He also worked in landscaping

and construction, and he interned for Natural Capitalism Solutions Inc., where he assisted in the development of the Climate Protection Manual for Cities. He primarily focused on the building portion of this manual, which ultimately led to his passion for energy efficiency.

Three years ago Mick purchased an older, single-story, inefficient home on 14th and Alpine in the north Boulder area. In order to obtain permits for his remodel, he was required to have an energy audit by a certified professional. This is when he became educated about the CRC’s Residential Energy Action Program (REAP) and the Solar Domestic Hot Water Systems (SDHW) Rebate Program. He said the energy audit provided a series of very helpful non-binding recommendations that would make his home more energy efficient. Mick said, “The auditor wanted to make sure I did things right.”

.....
According to Mick, “The rebate process is very easy and uncomplicated.” The Center for ReSource Conservation, Colorado Solar Energy Industries Association (CoSEIA), and the Governor’s Energy Office (GEO) make the process for harnessing the Colorado sun simple and educational for residences and businesses.
.....



Mick Follari demonstrating the location of a future solar pv array on his home

Next Mick received a call from J.C. Martel, the CRC's REAP Manager, who notified him that he had been selected to participate in the SDHW Rebate Program. According to Mick, "The rebate process is very easy and uncomplicated." The CRC, Colorado Solar Energy Industries Association (CoSEIA), and the Governor's Energy Office (GEO) make the process for harnessing the Colorado sun simple and educational for residences and businesses. Now confident about understanding all the possible efficiency measures for his home, and with government-funded support for efficient technology, all Mick had to do was find an architect and a solar installation company.

This is where Mick's climbing buddies re-enter the story. Willie Mein, owner of Custom Solar in Boulder, and Corey Nielsen, owner of Corey Nielsen Design, are Mick's close and trustworthy climbing partners. Willie made sure his friend and client understood everything about the solar process, step by step and choice by choice. He thoroughly explained all the possibilities, not just high-end options. Mick and Willie trust in their climbing relationship, and they trust in their professional capacities. The same is true for Corey and Mick. Corey helped him create a vision that

incorporates sustainability principles into every facet of this creation.

One final example of Mick's commitment to reuse and conservation is the considerable amount of material he was able to reuse or purchase used for his remodel. He purchased 120-year-old wood from an old barn in Connecticut to use for siding and flooring, and rare chestnut for the treads of the stairs. He also salvaged wood from the existing structure to use in the remodel. Mick commented, "With more experience, I will become even more efficient with my materials." Mick's commitment to sustainable development is admirable and something we can all learn from.

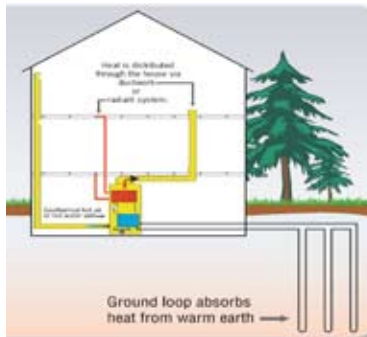
The solar panels have not been installed yet, but when they are, Mick will rest assured that he made the best decisions with the help of his friends. The Center for ReSource Conservation, Willie, Corey, and Mick worked as a team built upon trust and a common desire to make our communities more sustainable. If you walk down Alpine this summer and smell the delicious aroma of Italian pizza wafting from an outdoor brick oven, feel free to join Mick and his friends celebrating the completion of his new, beautiful, energy-efficient home. •



Boulder County homeowner Mick Follari

What is the most energy-efficient and comfortable heating & cooling system you can buy for your home?

GEOHERMAL HEAT PUMP SYSTEMS



Use the earth's energy to heat & cool
Dramatically reduces energy use by 50—75%
Big savings on heating and cooling costs
Take advantage of new 30% federal tax credits



WWW.BLUEVALLEYENERGY.COM
303.993.2645
BOULDER, CO

Solar Clean Colorado Solar Panel Cleaning

Maximizing the efficiency of your solar panels



Call for a free estimate
(720) 985-7602 • solarcleancolorado@gmail.com