



Hutchinson Building Dept. Annual Letter

January 2010

“Every town has there own code.”

The MSBC is now the standard for construction throughout the State of Minnesota, even in areas without code enforcement.

2009 Updates to MN State Building Code

During 2009, the State of Minnesota has adopted several new construction codes as part of the 2007 MN State Building Code.

The new codes include the MN Residential and Commercial Energy Codes, the MN Plumbing Code, and the MN Mechanical Code. The two new energy codes were adopted on June 1, 2009 as MN Rule Chapters 1322 and 1323 respectively. The MN Plumbing and Mechanical Codes were adopted on October 26, 2009 as MN Rule Chapters 4715 and 1346 respectively.

The new MN Residential Energy Code and the new MN Plumbing Code can be viewed or downloaded in their entirety at

www.dli.mn.gov as they are stand alone documents written by the State of Minnesota. Only the MN amendments to the new MN Commercial Energy Code and the MN Mechanical Code can be viewed at www.dli.mn.gov because they are based on other model codes and standards that are copyrighted.

The MN Commercial Energy Code is based upon ASHRAE Standard 90.1 which provides prescriptive design requirements based upon the climate zone the building is to be built in.

The MN Mechanical Code is based upon the 2006 International Mechanical Code and the



2006 International Fuel Gas Code. We have been told in a recent seminar that most of the changes in the new Mechanical Code are removal of MN amendments to the 2000 IMC and IFCG as they are now within the 2006 editions of these codes.

Inside this issue:

New Energy Code	2
Contractor License Renewal	2
Building Dept. Inspects HRA Projects	3
Utilities Data Needed At Time of Application	3
Contractor License Periods To Change	3
We Build To The Code!	4

Gas Line Inspections Outside Of City Limits

The fall of 2009 has brought an arrangement between the Hutchinson Utilities Commission and the Hutchinson Building Department to provide inspections of gas piping and appliances connecting to natural gas services provided by the Hutchinson Utilities outside of

the Hutchinson city limits.

Prior to a gas meter being installed by the Hutchinson Utilities, the homeowner or installing contractor must obtain a mechanical permit from the Hutchinson Building Department and complete the re-

quired 25 psi air pressure test/inspection on the gas lines that will be using the natural gas service. Upon successful completion of this pressure test, the Hutchinson Building Inspector will contact the Utilities company and request the new gas meter to be installed.

Changes to the MN Residential Energy Code

“What do I have to do to meet the Code?”

The new residential energy code gives more prescriptive requirements.

As noted in the cover story, 2009 has seen the adoption of the new MN Residential Energy Code. In the past, contractors have repeatedly requested an energy code that would simply “tell me what I have to do”. The 2009 Residential Energy Code is a large step in that direction.

While there are still numerous terms and technicalities that must be considered in the design of a new home, the new energy code provides clear requirements based upon the type of wall construction (wood frame, concrete block, or poured concrete), the type of insulation proposed to be used, and the location of the insulation in relation to the foundation wall (interior, exterior, or integral).

As we move up through the building envelope, we continue to follow prescriptive requirements for the U-factor of doors and windows, the ceiling R-value, the wall R-value, the floor R-value, the foundation wall and rim joist R-value, the slab-on-grade R-value, and the crawl space R-value. There are two separate sets of requirements for these prescriptive items based upon which climate zone you plan to build in. Hutchinson is in the Southern climate zone.

Some contractors have been caught off guard by the fact that the energy code contains some specific requirements for the mechanical ventilation system of the home that need to be addressed prior to a building permit being issued. These requirements are in place to ensure there is enough fresh air being circulated through the home not only for the health and comfort of the occupants but also for the health and durability of the structure itself. As homes have become more and more tightly constructed to make the home energy efficient, it has also become more and more important that adequate ventilation is provided to

eliminate the excess of humid, stale air that is produced by breathing, cooking, bathing, heating, etc. The ventilation requirements are based on square feet of conditioned space, number of bedrooms, and air movement capacity of the forced air circulation system of the home. While these items are a bit technical, once the builder determines what type of HVAC system will be used, the builder can identify what is required by the prescriptive tables provided in the code.

Another new and important item in the Residential Energy Code is the requirement to post a building certificate in a permanently visible location inside the building. This certificate is to contain specific information about the components of the home for the homeowner and future contractors. Information required to be on this certificate includes: posting date; address of building; contractor’s name and license number; type and installed R-value of ceiling, wall, slab-on-grade, and floor insulation; type, location, and R-value of foundation wall and rim-joist insulation; fenestration (windows/doors) U-value; me-

chanical ventilation system type, location, and design ventilation rates; make-up air and combustion air systems type, location, and size; heating system specifications; water heater specifications; cooling system specifications; and type of radon control system installed. Again, this is a significant new requirement.

The last item on the certificate is also a new requirement of the Energy Code. Passive radon control measures are now required to be included in the construction of any new home in the State of Minnesota. The basic components of this are a soil gas retarder (provided by the below slab vapor retarder), a minimum 3” vent pipe extending through the roof of the home connected to a tee fitting and 2-10’ perforated pipes in the sub-slab base. The radon vent pipe must be labeled so it is not misused in the future as a plumbing drain. The contractor must also install a power source for a future in-line fan should it ever be needed to complete an active radon control system. As you can see, there are a number of changes in the new energy code.



Residential Building Contractor License Renewal

Contractors, it is getting close to that time of year again when you must renew your licenses.

The MN Department of Labor and Industry has posted a license renewal schedule on their website: www.dli.mn.gov. This year the DLI is requesting at least 5 weeks to process the 15,000 license renewals that they receive annually. This

means to have your renewal application considered timely, you must submit it by March 1, 2010. Remember, Residential Building Contractor Licenses expire March 31 of each year.

As has been our practice in the past, the Hutchinson Building Department will be comparing our active contractor list with the MN DLI’s website list of

building contractors who have a valid license. This is done to help avoid any permits being issued to contractors who no longer have a valid license.

Please take a few moments and make sure you have all of your associated paperwork in order to help expedite your contractor license renewal process and avoid any delays in the future.

Building Department Joins HRA Rehab Program

On June 1, 2009 the Hutchinson Building Department began providing inspection services for the Hutchinson Housing and Redevelopment Authority's local residential rehabilitation program.

This arrangement has benefited local contractors working through the HRA by providing the convenience of having inspectors available within the community in which the project is located.

The focus of these projects is

somewhat different from typical building department code inspections in that they are geared more toward correction of life safety features and improvements to increase the energy efficiency of the homes. These increases are typically through the installation of new energy efficient windows, doors, water heaters, furnaces, etc.

Energy efficiency improvements to homes also benefit the community over time by helping to provide a housing stock that is ultimately less costly to live in

due to the decrease in energy consumption. The safety of these homes is also improved by adding features such as code compliant handrails, egress windows, and smoke and carbon monoxide alarms to name a few .

If you are interested in this rehab program and would like more information, contact Judy Flemming in the Hutchinson HRA office at 320-234-4251.



Utilities Data Necessary At Time Of Application

When submitting a permit application packet for new construction, be sure to remember to include the Hutchinson Utilities service size worksheet.

This worksheet is often overlooked by contractors and homeowners but it is very important that it be completed. Providing accurate data regarding the Btu/hr input and electrical service size required for

your project is the only way the Utilities Commission can provide properly sized gas and electric service to your property.

If you are unsure of the service sizes for your particular project, contact your mechanical contractor or equipment supplier to verify what the actual gas and electrical needs are for your equipment.

Another important fact to re-

member is that the Hutchinson Utilities Commission provides only 7" w.c. gas pressure to residential buildings. This is important to consider when calculating gas pipe sizing to ensure enough gas will be available for all of the equipment in your project.

Your building site must also be within 6" of final grade before gas service will be trenched in.

*"Hutchinson
Utilities
Commission
provides only 7"
w.c. gas pressure to
residential projects.*

MN Plumbing and Building Contractor License Periods to Change

The Minnesota State Legislature made some changes this past year to the length of time which plumbing and residential building contractor licenses are valid.

These licenses are being changed to a 2 year cycle rather than the current 1 year cycle of renewal. This change is in large part to help reduce

the annual surge in the workload of the MN DLI staff who must process thousands of renewals.

Renewal of journeyman plumber, restricted journeyman, water conditioning contractor, and water conditioning installer licenses will transition to the 2 year cycle 1-1-2010. Master plumber and

restricted master plumber licenses will transition to the 2 year cycle 1-1-2011.

Residential building contractors whose original year of licensure was in an even numbered year will transition to the 2 year cycle 4-1-2010. Contractors whose original year of licensure was in an odd numbered year will transition

to the 2 year cycle 4-1-2011. These changes will cut the annual renewal volume in half each year.

A further explanation of this change and the associated fees can be reviewed in the Fall 2009 of the CCLD Review newsletter available at: www.dli.gov.mn/CCLD/Review.asp.



Hutchinson Building Department

City of Hutchinson
Building Department
111 Hassan St. SE
Hutchinson, MN 55350

Phone: 320-234-4216
Fax: 320-234-4240
www.ci.hutchinson.mn.us/bldg.htm

**Please visit our website,
www.ci.hutchinson.mn.us/bldg.htm, to
download updated and current versions of
our permit applications including:**

**Building/Land Use Permits; Residential
Building Set Fee Permits; Land Use Set Fee
Permits; Plumbing Permits; Mechanical
Permits; and Fire Sprinkler Permits.**

The City of Hutchinson Building Department strives to provide a valuable service to the community through education and code enforcement. The Building Department has numerous information handouts that may be of assistance with many residential building projects from decks and garages to basement finishes and remodeling projects. These handouts are available at the City Center building or on-line at www.ci.hutchinson.mn.us/bldg.htm.

The Hutchinson Building Department has the capability to receive applications and process payments via e-mail and credit card payment on certain fixed fee permits, plumbing permits, and mechanical permits. Contact our Permit Technician, Deb Crooks, to determine if this option is available for your project at 320-234-4216.

“We Build To The Code Requirements”

This is a statement often heard from residential building contractors. We hear it and take for granted that it means this building is being built as good as it can be. Is that really the truth?

The fact of the matter is that according to MN Rule Chapter 1300 “the purpose of this code is to establish minimum requirements to safeguard the public health, safety, and general welfare through structural strength, means of egress facilities, stability, sanitation, adequate light and ventilation, energy conservation, and safety to life and property from fire and other hazards attributed to the built environment ...”. In es-

sence, a home “built to the code”, is actually the poorest or least restrictive construction design and methods allowed by the law. Now that doesn’t sound as good as “built to the code” but that is what it’s saying.

Since the code is only a minimum, it shouldn’t be used as a prescriptive design book for a project. While a home may meet the minimum requirements, it may not necessarily be built in a manner that will give the future owner the most durable and healthy building that could be provided. There is a big difference between good and adequate.

We encourage builders to con-

sider what will provide the most durable and sound homes that are built to last, not only to meet the code.

