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Ice Box Challenge Comes to New Mexico

Groundbreaking Project Aims to Showcase Energy-Efficient Building Science, Open Trades Pathways for Local Youth, and Offer a Housing Solution for Northern New Mexicans in Need

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Santa Fe, NM — A coalition of housing, educational, and community care organizations, including Santa Fe Area Home Builders Association, Santa Fe Habitat for Humanity, Esperanza Shelter, Santa Fe Community College, Youth Works, Early College Opportunities, B. Public Prefab, and National Association of Home Builders, announce the Northern New Mexico Ice Box Challenge for 2025.

The Northern New Mexico Ice Box Challenge, set to take place in Summer 2025, is a building science demonstration project to highlight energy-efficient building practices, open pathways to trades-careers for local youth, and offer one solution for urgent housing needs. As part of a global initiative, Santa Fe will join a list of cities worldwide that have hosted this innovative event.

The IceBox Challenge will feature three tiny homes constructed and exhibited by youth with coaching by local trade professionals. Each tiny home will be constructed to different building efficiency standards - from ultra-efficient passive house standards, to a 2021 modern code, and a 1950's era construction standard.

All three tiny homes will be displayed near the NM State Capital building and loaded with approximately one ton of ice for the demonstration. Exposed to the summer sun, the amount of ice left in each house after the exhibition will demonstrate how different construction methods drastically impact energy consumption and how changes to building codes contribute to climate solutions.

Empowering the Next Generation

For the first time in IceBox Challenge history, high school-aged youth will participate in the construction work, gaining hands-on experience in cutting-edge energy-efficient construction techniques. The challenge not only educates but also opens up pathways toward careers in construction, design, and skilled trades.

Community Impact

Post-challenge, the tiny homes will serve as safe emergency housing for the Esperanza Shelter, reinforcing the project’s commitment to social impact and community well-being.

A Collaborative Effort - The IceBox Challenge unites a diverse team of contributors:

- **ECO High School:** Constructing a tiny home that meets New Mexico Residential Building Codes (2021).
- **Santa Fe Community College:** Building and then Retrofitting (after the exhibition) a lower-performing 1950s-era home with energy-saving upgrades.
- **YouthWorks and Habitat for Humanity:** Building tiny homes to the Passive House standards using advanced construction and insulation techniques.

This hands-on public event invites the community to witness the power of energy-efficient design, helps open pathways into the trades for young people, and assists with emergency housing for a local women's shelter. Sponsorship opportunities are available to support youth involvement and sustainable housing initiatives.

Subject Matter Contacts for Press - Ice Box Challenge-related topics:

<u>Workforce Development</u>	<u>Green Building Science</u>	<u>Housing Security & Affordability Issues</u>
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