

Building codes continue to be reviewed

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One rafter, one duct, one wall brace, joist and section of 6 mm polyethylene sheathing at a time, the Oklahoma Uniform Building Code Commission and its technical committees lumber along.

The 12 members of the commission actually toil tweaking the specs, construction practices and techniques surrounding those and every other part of a house or commercial building in its mission to revise state building codes.

The work updates Oklahoma-fied versions of the numerous industry codes that set minimum standards for construction, such as the International Residential Code for homes and International Building Code for commercial buildings.

The mission is nearing implementation of the latest revision to commercial codes and a turning point on revision of the residential code in this go-round of reviews.

Commercial codes and commission rules approved during the last legislative session go into effect Nov. 1.

The updated residential code has to be complete by the end of October for presentation during the next legislative session.

The six-year-old state commission also reviews and revises state versions of the commercial International Existing Building Code, International Fire Code, International Fuel Gas Code, International Mechanical Code, International Plumbing Code and National Electrical Code.

It is painstakingly detailed work that results in a stack of thick books of specifications.

The commission seems to be behind. It adopted the 2009 residential code, modified, in 2011, and the 2009 commercial codes, also modified, in 2012. It didn't meet in 2013.

In 2014-2015, the commission and its committees have been working on the 2015 codes, with modifications.

Absent from codes considered for review by the commission is the International Energy Conservation Code.

Homebuilder Curtis McCarty, who leads the residential code technical committee, said the commission instead chose to rely on energy guidelines in the International Residential Code — as a starting point. That code's Chapter 11, he said, is



A crew works on a home on Commons Court in Town Park Square, a neighborhood by developer-builder Caleb McCaleb in Edmond. (PHOTO BY DOUG HOKE, THE OKLAHOMAN)

CODE COMMITTEE SETS NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Oklahoma Building Uniform Building Code Commission Residential Building Technical Committee will be at 10:30 a.m. Wednesday at the commission offices at Shepherd Mall, 2401 NW 23, Suite 2F. The office is at the southwest corner of the mall on the second floor.

The next meeting of the full commission will be at 1:30 p.m. Sept. 15 at the commission offices.

similar to the full energy code.

The full energy code has “gotten more and more stringent” to the point of “diminishing returns,” said McCarty, owner of C.A. McCarty Construction in Norman.

He said that with modifications, the new residential code for Oklahoma will be closer to the 2009 International Residential Code than the 2012 version. In other words,

industry leaders on the commission are opting for less rigorous guidelines.

McCarty said that only about one-third of the 10,000-12,000 homes built in Oklahoma last year adhered to the present code.

“There isn’t a lot of education. That needs to happen,” he said, noting that he did present an update on the state code process at the recent [Oklahoma Building Summit](#) in Oklahoma City.

According the commission, adoption of the new state commercial codes going into effect Nov. 1 should not have much economic impact.

“The only persons directly affected will be construction, electrical, fuel gas, mechanical and plumbing contractors, fire contractors, land and building owners, and state and local code administration and enforcement authorities who are, for the most part, already conducting business subject to some form of applicable building code or recognized construction standard,” the commission said in an impact statement posted at [www.ok.gov/oubcc](#).



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