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Brighton discounts permit fees to spur newhome construction

By Monte Whaley
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BRIGHTON — Officials here are slashing permit fees and deferring other costs in an attempt to ignite the stagnant home construction business.

Building, electrical, plumbing and mechanical fees will be cut by 50 percent starting Dec. 1. Those reductions — including the virtual elimination of the residential standards processing fee — would result in builders saving \$1,000 on a \$250,000 home, said Mayor Jan Pawlowski.

Other fees totaling \$30,000 — including the drainage impact fee, water plant investment fee and the community park impact fee — will be deferred until the home is actually sold.

Other cities along the Front Range have waived

fees for home improvements. In Denver, city officials this year waived permit fees for home renovations that sparked a jump in permit applications.

But Brighton is the largest city to waive permit fees for new homes, officials said Wednesday.

"It's not a problem solver, but it's a shot in the arm," said Mayor-elect Dick McLean.

In good years, Brighton has issued as many as 700 building permits. But so far in 2009, only 29 have been issued for residential units, said Marv Falconburg, the city's economic development director.

Meanwhile, the city hopes to see as many as 4,000 new jobs outside of the construction industry develop over the next 18 months.

"The incentive here is to bring about more housing development," City Manager Manuel Esquibel said. "We need everyone moving here to work in Brighton, to live in Brighton."

The city will assess how the new fees are doing in six months, Esquibel said.

Monte Whaley: 720-929-0907 or
mwhaley@denverpost.com

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