

Building Green and LEED-Certification

Among the many buzzwords in environmentally friendly construction is 'LEED-certified.' What exactly is LEED®?

By Sharon Tillman

According to the U.S. Green Building Council's Web site, "LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) is a voluntary, consensus-based national rating system for developing high-performance, sustainable buildings. Developed by USGBC, LEED addresses all building types and emphasizes state-of-the-art strategies for sustainable site development, water savings, energy efficiency, materials and resources selection, and indoor environmental quality. LEED is a practical rating tool for green building design and construction that provides immediate and measurable results for building owners and occupants."

While a search of the USGBC Web site turned up little specific to nonprofits and even less about churches, the organization's principles and ideas can be applied to any new construction or remodeling project.

A 2007 article from the *Billings Gazette* (Montana), *Green Building Owners Aim to Inspire Others*, reports how a local nonprofit retro-fitted an old grocery store for its new office space at a significant savings to rebuilding while reducing energy usage. The project received LEED's highest rating.

The article stated, "That's a point of pride for members who hope the building will inspire other nonprofits, small businesses and churches that have considered a green building but worried about the cost."

The link to the USGBC/LEED Web site is found in the resource list below.

Harkins Builders, located in Marriottsville, is a LEED-certified commercial builder. In its *Total Quality Management* newsletter (Nov. 2008), the company, along with Grimm + Parker Architects, discusses the value of LEED building and other environmental-building certification options. To find out more about the builder and architect, visit their Web sites.

www.harkinsbuilders.com

www.grimmandparker.com

Green Building Web Resources

Many Values – Many Voices: providing insights to congregations on church design and maintenance. This Website is produced in Canada. The article linked below is “Going Green: Promoting Sustainability within your Congregation” was posted July 31, 2008 by Michael Boreskie.

<http://www.manyvalues-manyvoices.com/newsletter/?p=21>

Green Building Elements: A Web site devoted to the construction of green buildings, from bricks to cities, both in terms of the pieces that go together to make them, and in terms of the ideas and the design behind them. Inspiration comes from completed projects, looking for new materials that will help to make future buildings more sustainable, energy efficient and green. GBE is interested in the best examples in all categories of buildings and materials.

<http://www.greenbuildingelements.com/>

The U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC): a non-profit organization committed to expanding sustainable building practices. USGBC is composed of more than 15,000 organizations from across the building industry that are working to advance structures that are environmentally responsible, profitable, and healthy places to live and work. Members includes building owners and end-users, real estate developers, facility managers, architects, designers, engineers, general contractors, subcontractors, product and building system manufacturers, government agencies and nonprofits.

<http://www.usgbc.org/Default.aspx>

U.S. Department of Energy: Money-saving tips for around the house, office and church. Download the *Energy Savers: Tips on Saving Energy & Money at Home* booklet or order them in bulk for your congregation. Also find financial assistance for energy-saving improvements. The resources here will help consumers and small businesses find financial help to conduct energy audits and make energy efficiency improvements to their homes or workplaces.

<http://www.energysavers.gov/>