

BUILDING GREEN



By Bruce Poe, cole-poe

Mr. Poe's over 20 years of experience in architecture has primarily been in leadership roles using a "hands-on" approach to the process of programming, design, and project management. He actively engages clients in order to evaluate their needs and then translates those needs to the built environment. As a Principal Architect at cole + poe architects, P.A., the intensity of his day-to-day involvement and commitment to clients significantly contributes to a project's success.

Bruce has been on the forefront of sustainable design in Idaho. His goal is to take people's specific concerns and address them with real solutions that green buildings can provide. Private sector developers, City of Boise officials and Ada County officials have joined cole + poe architects, P.A. in planning and designing sustainable buildings—more specifically the Boise WaterShed, future Barber Park facilities, Tumble Time Gymnastics and the Front 5 Building. Bruce was also the project leader on the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) LEED-EB (Existing Building) Study of the Ada County Courthouse, which is the first building in Idaho to be LEED Certified by the USGBC.

Bruce is the founder and recently elected President of the USGBC Idaho Chapter and serves on the national USGBC Chapter Steering Committee. Bruce's advocacy for high performance buildings was recognized in October 2005 when he was named the winner in the Architect category for the annual BetterBricks Idaho Sustainable Awards. Bruce is also a member of the American Institute of Architects, partner of the Rebuild Ada County Five-Year Energy and Resource Use Action Plan, serves on the Idaho Power Community Advisory Committee and is President of Preservation Idaho.

I was asked to write this article shortly after returning from Atlanta, Georgia where I attended the United States Green Building Council's Greenbuild International Conference and Expo as a member of the national USGBC Chapter Steering Committee. Each year my experience at Greenbuild reinforces my belief that every building owner, manager and tenant will eventually be impacted by the USGBC and the implementation of its LEED products (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design). LEED is in the forefront as a benchmark for assessing building performance and meeting sustainability goals. Implementation of the LEED system positively impacts bottom-line profits by decreasing operating costs and helps maintain a competitive edge in the market by creating a healthy environment for building tenants.

Five years ago, I was one of 600 people who attended the USGBC National Summit, the precursor to Greenbuild. This year in Atlanta, Greenbuild drew more than 10,000 people from around the world. Idaho was represented by individuals from Hewlett Packard, Albertsons, cole + poe architects, p.a., Developing Green LLC, the City of Post Falls, the Idaho National Laboratory and others. Next year's Greenbuild will be held in Denver, with projections indicating that

the conference will surpass Atlanta's record attendance.

Greenbuild is the largest event of its kind. The wide diversity of the conference attendees and the more than 6,000 member organizations reflects the exponential growth that the USGBC has experienced since its formation over 10 years ago. It started with a small group of dedicated individuals focused on creating an organization that represented "the nation's foremost coalition of leaders from across the building industry working to promote buildings that are environmentally responsible, profitable and healthy places to live and work". While the USGBC has grown into an organization with an annual budget of around \$50M, it has continued to respond to the marketplace and evolve, successfully remaining focused on this mission.

The USGBC's influence has spread worldwide with the formation of the World Green Building Council. Australia, Canada, India, United States, Mexico and Taiwan make up its current membership. Brazil, Chile, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Israel, New Zealand and the United Arab Emirates round out the group of countries that have expressed an interest in joining and are considered to be "Emerging Green Building Councils".

The exponential growth of the USGBC has spurred the development of USGBC chapters. Along with the USGBC Idaho Chapter, over 60 others have been organized around the country, with more in line to be officially recognized. To keep pace with the demands of chapter growth the USGBC has recently regionalized, dividing the US into eight areas. The boundaries between each region is roughly based on an ecological model, separating the country into areas that have similar characteristics. The boundaries are not rigid and can be adjusted based on the needs of adjacent regions.

This new decentralized framework is allowing the chapters within each region to easily communicate and share information. It also relieves some of the administrative pressure on the Washington, D.C. based national USGBC office. Regional representation will encourage balanced input regarding the development of the LEED products and future developments may include a USGBC office in each region.

Idaho is located in the Western Region, which includes Montana, Wyoming, Utah, Nevada, Colorado, New Mexico, and Arizona. Each year individual regions will meet to organize and elect two representatives to the national Chapter Steering Committee. Two people will represent the

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USGBC Idaho Chapter at the Western Region's first regional conference to be held March 2nd and 3rd in Denver.

USGBC's LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) products provide a complete framework for assessing building performance and meeting sustainability goals. LEED emphasizes state of the art strategies for sustainable site development, water savings, energy efficiency, materials selection and indoor environmental quality. There are six categories:

- 1) LEED NC (New Construction);
- 2) LEED EB (Existing Buildings);
- 3) LEED CI (Commercial Interiors);
- 4) LEED CS (Core and Shell);
- 5) LEED H (Homes);
- 6) LEED ND (Neighborhood Developments).

The Ada County Commissioners and the Boise City Council have adopted resolutions supporting the implementation of LEED in their buildings. The Ada County Courthouse has the distinction of being the first and only building in Idaho that has achieved a LEED Certification, but more certifications are on the way. A few of the local buildings that are targeted for LEED Certification include the Front 5 Building (Oaas-Laney, LLC), the Banner Bank Building (Christensen Corporation), the Boise Watershed project (Boise City), Barber Park buildings (Ada County), and the Title One Building (Oaas-Laney, LLC). Boise State University, the City of Post Falls and the Idaho Engineering Laboratory have projects in the planning stages that are being considered for LEED Certification.

An interesting side effect of LEED has been the development of the "Integrated Design Process".

Traditionally, the path of the building design process is initially determined by the Architect's interpretation of the building owner's needs. The Integrated Design Process "integrates" a design team that involves the interested stakeholders, which includes the architect, building owners, tenants, and engineering consultants. A design charrette (work session) is scheduled within the context of the team environment, establishing the goals of the project. LEED credits that can be used to attain those goals are then identified.

The Integrated Design Process is a holistic approach to design. Identifying the core values of an organization and defining goals that express those values creates a baseline for communication and design. Design that is inherently based on values provides an opportunity to express them in the built environment. How the built environment impacts and interacts with the natural environment is a reflection of the people who represent and define those values. The integrated design process, inspired by LEED, can be used to achieve these goals, but it is more than a simple tool. It provides a common platform for communicating shared values, which has practical and humanistic implications. It involves the acceptance of the concept that stakeholders in the project are integral to the design process and the recognition of the intercon-

nectivity between the built and natural environments. A successful project is one that expresses those core values.

Every building owner is interested in profit and trying to maintain a competitive edge when marketing their building in a competitive leasing environment. Profit can be increased by raising lease rates or by reducing operating costs. Building owners can differentiate their building product and operate them more efficiently by incorporating strategies that the LEED Certification process promotes. LEED Certified building owners are also finding that there is added value to their product as the market becomes aware of the benefits to the bottom-line, health of occupants and productivity of workers.

Other products are on the market now that claim to be equivalent to LEED or better. Most of them are self-grading and do not require a rigorous review by an independent third party. In response to this competition, the USGBC has decided to hold course, continue the refinement of LEED products and allow the marketplace to determine the winners and losers. Looking at the world-wide impact of LEED, it appears that it is here to stay.

To learn about the USGBC and LEED, visit the USGBC web page www.usgbc.org, the USGBC Idaho Chapter webpage at www.usgbcidaho.org and the USGBC Western Region webpage at www.usgbcidaho.org/westernregion.



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