

THE DURANGO HERALD

LEED Measures Up

Green certification program leads way as unifying force for sustainable building

by Michelle Reott

Article Last Updated; Sunday, December 13, 2009 11:29AM

Green building. Sustainable design. High-performance building. All of these names have been used to describe the multidisciplinary field that results in buildings with healthy indoor environments that minimize and efficiently use resources, and that acknowledge the interdependence between the natural and built environment.

U.S. buildings use 13.6 percent of our water, generate 65 percent of our waste and consume 72 percent of our electricity. Buildings are among the heaviest consumers of natural resources - 40 percent of the raw materials globally - and account for a significant portion of the greenhouse gas emissions that affect our deteriorating atmosphere. Buildings account for 39 percent of the carbon-dioxide emissions per year - more than either the transportation (33 percent) or industrial (29 percent) sectors. These facts demonstrate why high-performance building is vital in today's world.

Yet, striving for a high-performance building and actually creating one are two different things. Projects most likely to succeed require strong, engaged leaders whose vision is translated into tangible performance goals early in the process and who select the right team for the job. This team, usually consisting of the owner, architects, engineers, contractors and assorted specialists, must work collaboratively, communicate effectively and use the right technology and tools to meet the owner's requirements.

This is where Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, or LEED, comes in - as the most comprehensive tool for measuring and verifying the green attributes of a commercial building. In use for almost a decade, LEED is a third-party, point-based certification program and a nationally recognized benchmark for the design, construction and operation of high-performance green buildings.

LEED is a program of the U.S. Green Building Council - a national nonprofit based in Washington, D.C. Industry-led and consensus-driven, the council's more than 20,000 members include 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.

With volunteer assistance from council members, LEED has been constantly evolving in order to meet the organization's vision of transforming the way buildings and communities are designed, built and operated. Since its inception in 2000, LEED for New Construction - for commercial structures - has had four major upgrades. In 2007, energy efficiency of at least 14 percent above the required national energy baseline was made mandatory for LEED certification. In 2009, a combination of energy modeling, life-cycle assessment and transportation analysis resulted in a reallocation of points and increased the relative value of energy efficiency initiatives.

The Green Building Council is currently working to close the gap between buildings' predicted and actual performance. The Building Performance Initiative was launched in August and is designed to put in place a broad data collection effort from all LEED- certified buildings, implement an appropriate analysis methodology of that data and provide feedback for building owners to use in addressing any performance gaps.

As with any human system, LEED is not perfect, nor is it the only tool for measurement. Yet its use provides focus on a destination and gives high-performance building issues a role in decisions concerning schedule, budget and quality. LEED also brings integrity by preventing "greenwashing," as it is a comprehensive standard with mandatory provisions that include minimum energy and indoor air-quality performance standards, occupant recycling and commissioning.

The third party verification component elicits team member responsibility and prevents sometimes thorny issues from being glossed over. This focus requires the entire design and construction team to work together in new and often unfamiliar ways.

These changes can be painful and are often misunderstood as to their intent. So it becomes imperative that everyone on the team understands the underlying concerns that are driving the choices and decisions that are needed to create a productive working environment for the occupants and optimum operational functioning of the building itself.

The point of LEED certification is not the points. Consider the painter who profusely thanked me because he did not go home with a headache for the first time in his career because of the non-toxic paints used on the project. His health benefited, as did that of all the subsequent occupants of the building.

Several studies, including "Cost of Green Revisited" by Davis Langdon, assert that there is no significant difference in average costs for green buildings as compared to non-green buildings. Even an additional 5 percent in upfront cost for high-performance initiatives pales in comparison to the operations and maintenance expenses over a typical 30- to 50-year building life span. Less tangible but no less important, employee productivity gains can easily offset additional upfront costs.

That is not to say that LEED certification is appropriate for all projects. The building's size, budget and owner expectations are variables to consider. However, institutional building owners have been some of the strongest proponents of high-performance buildings because of the substantial investment and long-term ownership interests they have in their buildings.

These owners realize that in order to reduce future operating expenses, they must first collaboratively develop performance goals and use them as a guide for future decisions - including whether using LEED to meet these goals is the right choice. To prevent compromising long-term sustainability principles, all those involved with building projects must engage in honest dialogue, commit to continuous learning and improvement and invest in shared responsibility for the ultimate outcome.

Michelle Reott is the owner of Durango-based Earthly Ideas LLC - a sustainable design and construction consulting firm she founded in 1992. Reach her via www.earthly-ideas.com/contact.htm.

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THE DURANGO HERALD

Sunday, December 13, 2009

durangoherald.com

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Meryl's magic brings changes to Hollywood

The cover story in the current issue of *Vanity Fair* is titled "Meryl's Magic: 30 years with America's Greatest Actress." The author is Leslie Bennetts, with a generous spread of photos by Brigitte Lacombe.



My Turn
Charlie Langdon

Bennetts begins, "In one of the more curious plot twists in recent industry, Hollywood has a new box office queen. "She's certainly not new to the industry, nor is she

young. While she is fabulous by any measure, she is a babe by the AARP. For the past 30 years, she has been venerated as the best actress of her generation, and her performances have won critical praise as well as many awards."

"Out of Africa" was among her finest roles, portraying Karen Blixon, a strong-willed woman. Streep mastered a convincing Danish accent. Her voice haunted the film. Robert Redford was her co-star, and in the Redford way refused to imitate an English accent. He spoke like an American, but it worked wonderfully. They had great rapport on the screen, so it's no surprise it won many Oscars.

Now, when aging women have traditionally been relegated to playing old crones, Streep has become a powerhouse at the box office. Last summer's "Julie & Julia," in which Streep played chef Julia Child, has earned \$120 million to date.

And a Christmas Day

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opening is scheduled for "It's Complicated," which stars Streep as the ex-wife of a cad played by Alec Baldwin, who has cheated on her, divorced her and married a very young, very gorgeous second wife with whom he has quickly become bored, whereupon he plunges into a torrid, illicit affair with his ex, who is also being romanced by an architect played by Steve Martin.

"It's incredible," Streep says, "I'm 60 and I'm playing the romantic lead in a romantic comedy. Bette Davis must be rolling over in her grave. She was 42 when she did 'All About Eve' and she was 54 when she did 'Whatever Happened to Baby Jane.'"

Audiences have already pegged "It's Complicated," directed by Nancy Meyers, as a hit thanks to an irresistible trailer that elicits laughter when Streep's character tells her middle-aged friends about her adultery and adds, "It turns out I'm a bit of a slut!"

Although her name used to be associated with such angst-ridden dramas as "Sophie's Choice," these days Streep — the recipient of two Academy Awards, as well as 15 Oscar nominations and 23 Golden Globe nominations, more than any other actor in the history of either award — can often be found in commercial crowd-pleasers that induce hilarity rather than sobbing.

"The Devil Wears Prada," released in 2008, has made \$324 million worldwide.

The movie business, which long assumed that success lay in making films aimed at

See Langdon, 3C

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See LEED, 3C

Reid prefers dirty politics to working to support minorities

SAN DIEGO — Move over, Clint Eastwood. The Senate has its own Dirty Harry. When it comes to ham-handedly exploiting the sensitive and divisive issue of race to score cheap political points, Majority Leader Harry Reid can get down in the mud and wrestle with the worst of them.



Ruben Navarrette Jr.

The Nevada Democrat has the habit of, every now and then, making a cynical but clumsy pitch for minority voters by painting Republicans as hostile to them. The message is: "You have to vote for us because you can't very well vote for them."

Reid got muddy again recently when he accused Senate Republicans of being on the wrong side of the health-care reform debate — and then drew an unfortunate comparison.

"Instead of joining us on the right side of history," Reid said, "all Republicans can come up with is this: 'Slow down, stop everything, let's start over.' If you think you've heard these same excuses before, you're right. When this

country belatedly recognized the wrongs of slavery, there were those who dug in their heels and said: 'Slow down, it's too early, let's wait, things aren't bad enough.'"

This is not a misprint. Reid is so eager make history that apparently he never got around to studying it. Republicans were the political party that ended slavery, over the stringent objections of Democrats. And for the better part of the 20th century, it was Republicans who stood beside African-Americans as they pursued their constitutional birthright to equal justice under the law.

During the modern civil rights movement, it was Democratic Gov. Orval Faubus of Arkansas who in 1957 refused to allow the court-ordered desegregation of Central High School in Little Rock. Republican President Dwight Eisenhower sent in the soldiers of the 101st Airborne to integrate the school. It was Democratic Gov. Ross Barnett of Mississippi who tried to keep James Meredith from becoming the first black student to enroll at the University of Mississippi. It was Democratic Gov. George Wallace of Alabama who made his famous stand in the schoolhouse door to prevent a group of black students from enrolling at the University of Alabama.

So Reid is wrong about the history. But that's not the half of it. The really

offensive part of Reid's racial ploy is that he thought he could get sufficient mileage from it. A few days later, instead of apologizing for his remarks, he repeated them.

Reid has shown himself to be a lazy politician who prefers shortcuts to rolling up his sleeves and doing actual outreach to minority voters. He'd rather portray Republicans as racist than take on teachers unions by giving vouchers to disadvantaged black students at failing schools or demanding more accountability from teachers. He'd rather roll over for liberal secularists in the Democratic Party who oppose faith-based social service initiatives than align himself with the black clergy who are calling for more of them. And he'd rather throw money at the array of social problems afflicting the black community than stress personal responsibility and get serious about helping African-Americans tackle the root causes.

Latinos have been down this road before with Reid. In 2006 and 2007, Reid helped kill immigration reform legislation — albeit discreetly — because it included a provision for guest workers that organized labor considered anathema, and then made it look as though Republicans were responsible for the outcome. And in 2006 when Senate Republicans made an admittedly bone-

headed attempt to declare English the national language, Reid chalked it up to racism.

In politics, you have to listen for the hidden messages. During the immigration debate, Reid was speaking directly to Latinos, telling them that they should remember who their friends are. It's the same message he's now delivering to African-Americans by invoking the issue of slavery to frame the health-care debate.

Reid is right about one thing. African-Americans and Latinos should remember who their friends are. You bet they should. And the first thing they should demand of anyone who wants to be their friend is respect — the kind that a politician demonstrates by actually going into a community and working for votes, and not simply trying to get that support on the cheap and easy by poisoning voters against one's opponent.

To approach the endeavor in any other way isn't just dirty politics. It's also insulting to the very people you're trying to court. And, in politics, insults are never a good outreach strategy.

Ruben Navarrette Jr. is an editorial writer and columnist at The San Diego Union-Tribune. Reach him at ruben.navarrette@uniontrib.com. ©2009 The San Diego Union Tribune

Letters to the editor

Fort Lewis should eliminate football

As a parent whose son received a high-quality education at Fort Lewis College, as a former employee of FLC and as a Durango resident who believes FLC is a true gem among Colorado's state colleges, it is difficult to learn of the impending budget crisis facing higher education in Colorado. FLC's administrators are preparing for the necessity of cutting a budget that appears to already have been pared to the bone. There's no more fat to cut, and so loss of faculty, staff and programs is being predicted.

In this time of financial crisis, colleges, businesses and government agencies all are making painfully difficult decisions, based on answers to questions such as, "what are the essentials

of our enterprise that most define who we are and what we do best? What are our core strengths, and how do we build on these while cutting back in other areas that aren't as critical to our mission? What do we need to let go that in better times was nice to have but now is a luxury we cannot afford?"

As I reflect on FLC's strengths, I see many excellent, highly regarded academic programs. I see top notch, highly dedicated faculty who are underpaid vis-à-vis their peers at other colleges. I see certain athletic programs – soccer being a shining example – in which FLC consistently excels, bring pride and recognition to the college and its Durango home.

Then I look at FLC's weaknesses, and what jumps out for me is a football program that ranks perennially at the bottom of its conference, spends more money than it generates and is cause for very little excitement locally and scant positive recognition for the college anywhere else.

If, as President Bartel wrote in the recent FLC Foundation Report, "all components of the college will be examined for potential reduction," I suggest the college seriously consider whether its football program is a luxury that can no longer be afforded.

The money saved could save jobs and programs more vital to FLC's mission.

Ron Pevny, Durango



"It's a cool new app called 'Keeping Up With the Joneses.' It tracks if you have as many cool apps as your friends do."

Letters to the editor

Bob Everett remembered as a friend

I moved to Durango in 1998 and spent the best 10 years of my life there until health issues and high altitude forced me to leave.

One of the first "natives" I met was Bob Everett (Obituar-

ies, *Herald*, Dec. 3) during adult fitness classes at Mercy. Bob referred to me as the California Prune Picker but treated me as a friend and educated me to many aspects of the Four Cor-

ners culture and history.

I offer my sincere condolences and sympathies to his family. I feel his loss and honor his memory.

Frank "Max" Winer, Festus, Mo.

Elites can limit their own population

Whenever I see articles from the anti-human elites – *Herald* "Population Matters!" columnist Richard Grossman, Tom Givon (Opinion, *Herald*, Dec. 6), Planned Parenthood or the ones who have the "trees and animals died to make room for your fat a - -," bumper stickers on their cars – I can't help but believe they simply do not have

the courage of their convictions.

If all of you who want to kill off the human population, other, of course, than yourselves, really want to exact change in the world, why not show the rest of us dunderheads how truly sincere you are and take yourselves out first?

Gosh, there are supposedly

so many of you who know better than the creator what the world can sustain, if you all removed yourselves from it, I'm sure those of us who actually think God knows better than you, might just be so inspired that we could really exact true change. Now there is a real possibility!

Denise Murray, Durango

Mistreating women in name of religion

In 2008, we counted 16.7 million children in this country ranging from malnourished to starving. This is an abomination. What good did the label "personhood" do these children?

We added 4.7 million children to the rolls of malnourishment from 2007 to 2008. How many do you suppose we are adding this year? The "family" of right-wing religious senators and congressmen along with their corporate cohorts and all who strive to pass laws to make reproductive health care illegal, inaccessible or unaffordable to women need to pay for the crime of funneling children into such malnourishment and starvation in this nation we claim to love.

Working to enslave women to one's religion is in violation of the First Amendment of the

Constitution. Now we see why. Those who use religious morality to justify passing laws used as a weapon against young women need to pay for the damage they wreak on children, enslaving them and their parents to their religion, and levying an unfunded mandate.

These people need to pay to feed these children now. Corporate lobbyists have spent years in the back rooms of Congress lobbying to deny women reproductive health care to create the next generation of cheap labor from malnourished, stunted brains and bodies. So this is Christian capitalism? It's also called slavery.

What happens when people stand around women's clinics calling young women "murderers?" This gives abusers such ex-

cuse to beat up women. Durango has at least four organizations to help women face life after abuse. Hasn't the world learned too many times that it should not look the other way when supremacists drag out their spiel about their "chosen ones" status in order to wreak their lust for power and control over the most vulnerable?

Will we let the "family" of congressional religious activists cause further damage they believe benefits them and their corporate friends? Will we continue to allow protesters at women's clinics wreak their lust for power and control over women? It's time to make these people pay for their policy of slavery and its consequences in our country.

Kassandra Johnson, Durango

Expect more government surprises

I received a letter from the tax assessor reminding me that as a senior citizen property holder, my 2010 taxes will double because of the actions of our dear legislators in Denver. I reckon this is the first of the blessings I will receive in the New Year from our government at all levels.

Two more presents seniors will receive from the criminals

in Washington next year are the so-called health-reform legislation, which removes \$750 billion from Medicare over 10 years to be followed by a carbon tax on business. I am puzzled by the fuzzy math used by our so-called leaders. They say cutting \$750 billion from a Medicare program already heading toward fiscal ruin will not affect care. I always suspect-

ed the people in Washington were magicians, but they really are charlatans.

Then to further improve our fiscal future, they propose a carbon tax that will lead to massive increases in everyone's electric bills and loss of more jobs to countries such as China and India. This is more change you can believe in for 2010.

William H. Taylor, Dolores

Struck dog could have been a child

Last Wednesday I witnessed a sad incident. As I walked along Colorado Highway 172 by Florida Mesa Elementary School, I watched as a beautiful golden retriever dog ran into oncoming traffic. Vehicles were going easily 55 miles an hour. The helpless dog literally flew through the air as it was smashed by one SUV, then thrown into the windshield of another SUV.

No one slowed down or even stopped. I and two other neighbors rushed to help the dog and called Animal Control. Whimpering with blood dripping from its mouth, the dog dragged itself home while waiting for Animal Control. Sadly, the dog has a reputation of be-

ing allowed to run free in the neighborhood.

The accident happened with in full view of the elementary school play yard. I shudder wondering why the SUVs that hit the dog didn't even slow down or call in the incident. It could have easily been a small schoolchild instead of a dog, even a deer. There had to be some dent damage to the vehicles.

As callous as it sounds, I am afraid that those SUVs probably wouldn't have stopped even if it had been a small child hit. Day after day, I watch vehicles speed excessively through the school zone. Day after day, I watch as neighbors let their "beloved" pets roam free, and are killed or

become lost.

As for the golden retriever, it was taken to the La Plata County Humane Society Shelter where it was cared for and survived. This time there was a happy ending, but how many times do similar incidents turn to tragedy? As for the drivers of the SUVs, every day animals run in front of vehicles, and such accidents are unavoidable, but at least have enough of a compassionate heart to stop or call in the accident so the animal doesn't lie suffering a lingering death.

Also, school zones have speed limits for a reason. A few extra minutes speeding is not worth the risk to a child.

Janet Marie Clawson, Durango

Thanks to couple with unleashed dog

I apologize to the young urban professional couple whose shiny four-wheel-drive truck was double parked in the intersection at 11th Street and Main Avenue on Tuesday morning.

After their unleashed black Labrador urinated on Alpine Bank, it pounced on my small dog recovering from an injured leg. I cursed at their dog. That was rude on my behalf.

For all of us longtime locals, I want to thank them for moving here and blessing us with their presence and their dogs, trucks, etc.

Davon Lechner, Durango

Open hearts and minds to everyone

Every day we wake up and grab the paper or turn on the news to see what is going on in our world, and every day the world news tells us and shows us events coming from the exact same people day in and day out. What and why are they filling us up with fears of worldly issues and ways that we as individuals have the options as people to choose to do what is "right" or

"wrong" or "good" or "bad"?

This day and age is a struggle for the majority of us who roam this mass Earth, and every day we walk around blinded by all the fears history has prevailed that we continue to follow. When are we going to wake up and realize where exactly are our hearts and minds on a daily basis?

They should truly be focused on every individual you see or

even hear about as if that same focus was for yourself or family. Do you know your neighbor or how are they struggling? Are their struggles something you can help with? All you could do is at least ask. And when you ask you will know amazing astonishing situations, which will bring knowledge and know-how. Really open your mind and heart, everyone.

Charles Rand, Durango

Langdon: Streep's success has forced new ideas

Continued from 1C

young men – has reacted to such eye-popping numbers with bemused consternation. Many studio executives have long been convinced that it wasn't worth making movies aimed at women, particularly older women. Hence they seem to be stunned that a series of movies about middle-aged women had racked up

such enormous grosses.

"Their problem is that they just don't know how to market them," said Nora Ephron, who wrote and directed "Julie and Julia." "What they do know how to market are movies made for teenage boys. My movie would never have been made without Meryl."

Streep's success has forced Hollywood to consider a star-

ting hypothesis: If you make movies that actually interest women, they will buy tickets to see them.

"Streep broke the glass ceiling of an older woman being a big star," says director Mike Nichols. "It has never happened before."

Charlie Langdon is the *Herald's* senior critic. He can be reached at langdons@gobrainstorm.net.

LEED: Productivity gains can offset upfront costs

Continued from 1C

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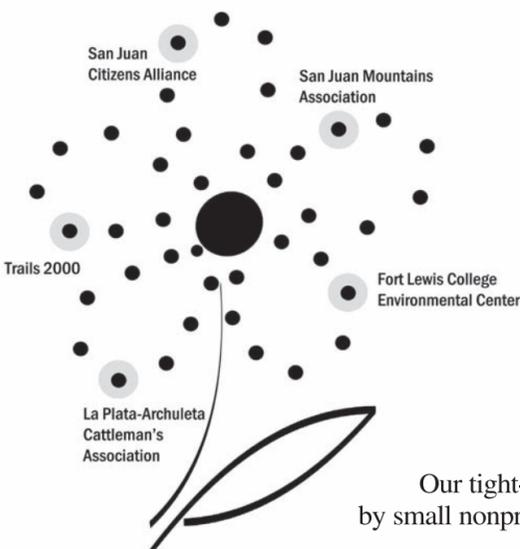
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Our tight-knit community is linked by small nonprofits that make a big difference



The Heart of the Herald connects the dots

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