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Green Building Council Compares Building Performance Predictions to Reality

▶ New initiative for comprehensive data collection and analysis methodology development will be shared with LEED building owners and project teams to help close performance prediction gaps.

WASHINGTON, DC (Aug 25, 2009) – The U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) today stepped up its commitment to improved building performance with the launch of the Building Performance Initiative, designed to put in place a comprehensive data collection effort from all buildings that have achieved LEED certification; implement an appropriate analysis methodology of that data; and provide feedback to building owners so they have better information with which to address any performance gaps that stem from predicted building performance versus actual performance.

This initiative complements the announcement earlier this year that will require ongoing performance data from buildings as part of their certification under the latest version of LEED and beyond.

"This initiative is about gathering knowledge about building performance in a way no one has ever done before," said USGBC LEED Senior Vice President, Scot Horst. "The information that we collect from our certified projects is a workable, holistic approach for achieving better performing buildings."

Horst noted that the LEED green building program was created to transform the way buildings traditionally have been designed and constructed with the goal of reducing the building's impact on the environment by being more energy, water and resource efficient, but a building's day-to-day operation has a dramatic impact on its performance. Without better information, an owner or facility manager won't know where the gaps are and be able to act on them.

Numerous things affect the ability of a building to deliver high performance, including energy modeling tools, properly timed energy models, quality building commissioning, proper goal setting/benchmarking, and coordination between design and operation. The biggest issue by far is how the people use the building day to day: Do they forget to turn out the lights when they leave the room? Leave the water running in the sink? Do the facility managers have protocols for checking automatic controls? Do they know when those controls are malfunctioning?

"Plenty of people are content to simply point to these longstanding issues without offering a constructive way to address them. We're going to take them on and engage practitioners and thought leaders alike in establishing a national roadmap to optimize building performance," continued Horst.

That engagement mechanism is four Building Performance Initiative summits to be held across the U.S. this September and October. Participants will have a chance to preview USGBC's data collection agenda and proposed analysis methodology and provide other feedback.

"The local summits are a way to gather people's input for our vision and also for them to share their performance stories, successes and challenges," said Horst.

The inputs from these meetings will be reported on at the First Annual Building Performance Summit at Greenbuild, Nov. 11-13, 2009 in Phoenix. An important part of the Building Performance Initiative includes collecting data from thousands of LEED-certified project; USGBC will be working with highly experienced real estate research organizations, including Kingsley and Associates, in this effort.

"Establishing the importance of the connection between the landlord and tenant; the designer and operator; and the owner and the occupant will be one outcome of this initiative," said Horst. "Everyone has a contribution to make to

how the building ultimately performs. With the right kind of information, it will be much easier to see what areas are really driving performance and what areas need to be addressed. The Building Performance Initiative is a great step in that direction."

U.S. Green Building Council

The Washington, D.C.-based U.S. Green Building Council is committed to a prosperous and sustainable future for our nation through cost-efficient and energy-saving green buildings.

With a community comprising 78 local affiliates, more than 20,000 member companies and organizations, and more than 131,000 LEED Accredited Professionals, USGBC is the driving force of an industry that is projected to soar to \$60 billion by 2010. The USGBC leads an unlikely diverse constituency of builders and environmentalists, corporations and nonprofit organizations, elected officials and concerned citizens, and teachers and students.

Buildings in the United States are responsible for 39% of CO2 emissions, 40% of energy consumption, 13% water consumption and 15% of GDP per year, making green building a source of significant economic and environmental opportunity. Greater building efficiency can meet 85% of future U.S. demand for energy, and a national commitment to green building has the potential to generate 2.5 million American jobs.

LEED

The U.S. Green Building Council's LEED green building certification system is the foremost program for the design, construction and operation of green buildings. 35,000 projects are currently participating in the LEED system, comprising over 7.1 billion square feet of construction space in all 50 states and 91 countries.

By using less energy, LEED-certified buildings save money for families, businesses and taxpayers; reduce greenhouse gas emissions; and contribute to a healthier environment for residents, workers and the larger community.

USGBC was co-founded by current President and CEO Rick Fedrizzi, who spent 25 years as a Fortune 500 executive. Under his 15-year leadership, the organization has become the preeminent green building, membership, policy, standards, education and research organization in the nation.

For more information, visit www.usgbc.org.