


To LEED Or Not To LEED?



LEED accreditation can bring notable value to clients' projects. There also are myriad other ways to educate yourself about energy efficient kitchens and sustainability initiatives. No matter how you go for the Green, go for it you must.

By Donna Boss

To LEED or not to LEED? That is the question consultants ask as they take on projects with sustainability goals. As more projects become LEED certified, and since the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) recently issued LEED for Retail and the LEED Volume Program, being "in the know" about LEED is a more valuable professional tool than ever.

Each day more buildings and communities are designed, constructed, and operated to be Green. For 13 years, the USGBC has provided Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED), an internationally recognized Green building certification and benchmarking system. LEED provides third-party verification by the Green Building Certification Institute (GBCI), an independent organization established by the USGBC, that a building or community is designed and built using strategies intended to improve performance in five key areas of human and environmental health: sustainable site development, water savings, energy efficiency, materials selection, and indoor environmental quality. (See "Available LEED Ratings," page 23.)

Since its inception, LEED has issued more than 7,816 certifications and has 37,303 registered projects.

Of particular interest to foodservice consultants is the release of the LEED for Retail-specific rating system in Nov. 2010. It is designed to guide and distinguish high-performance retail projects such as banks, restaurants, and retail stores, enabling them to integrate Green building design, construction, and operation into ground-up construction, retail interior, and build-out projects.

"In today's market, savvy retailers see the value in designing and constructing environments that enhance the customer experience and nurture a more productive employee base while saving precious resources," says Scot Horst, sr. v.p. of LEED, USGBC. "LEED for Retail builds on the strengths of other commercial LEED rating systems while taking special care to address the distinct needs of retail spaces, from occupancy demands to waste streams, to energy and water use."

LEED for Retail recognizes the unique nature of the retail environment and addresses the different types of spaces retailers need for their product lines. "Compared with other commercial building types, retail has different occupancy characteristics and hours of operation, different parking and transportation considerations, different process water and energy consumption, and in some cases, prototype designs," says Nick Shaffer, LEED AP, manager, commercial real estate sector, USGBC.

Darden's new worldwide headquarters is a LEED Gold building. Kip Serfozo, associate member, FCSI, LEED AP, Camacho Associates, worked on the foodservice portions of this groundbreaking project.

“Retail projects also may be part of a larger multi-tenant retail complex, in which issues are addressed at the site level rather than by the project.”

LEED for Retail is comprised of two rating systems, LEED 2009 for Retail: New Construction & Major Renovations, and the LEED 2009 for Retail: Commercial Interiors (see www.usgbc.org/leed/retail). In the first half of 2011, LEED for Existing Buildings: Operations & Maintenance will be adapted for Retail as well.

Nearly 100 national and independent retailers and franchisees, including Bank of America, Best Buy, Chipotle, Wells Fargo, Citigroup, Kohl's, LL Bean, McDonald's, Pizza Fusion, Starbucks, and Target, participated in the pilot program for Retail since its launch in 2007. They provided valuable feedback to inform the rating systems' development, according to Horst.

After talking with restaurateurs, and with input from Fisher Nickel and the PG&E Food Service Technology Center (FSTC), changes were made in LEED for Retail that are more apropos to foodservices, according to Shaffer.

Both building water use and process water use must meet the prerequisite/credit thresholds as separate calculations. For the first time ever, commercial kitchen equipment was baselined for the purposes of integrating them into LEED. They can be seen on page 32 of the document at www.usgbc.org/ShowFile.aspx?DocumentID=7956. “Restaurants are now rewarded or penalized depending on how efficient their equipment is in energy and water usage,” Shaffer says.

Another development in the LEED process, launched at Greenbuild 2010 last fall, is a Volume Certification program. LEED Volume Program allows building owners and property managers certifying 25 or more LEED projects within a three-year window to work with USGBC to establish a prototype that meets LEED standards. Subsequently, properties developed or retrofitted according to that prototype can be certified more quickly than a one-off project. The program is designed for government, education, real estate organizations, retailers, and the hospitality industry.

According to Shaffer, 38 participants, including Best Buy, Marriott Hotels, Starwood Hotels and Resorts, and PNC Financial Services Group, were part of a pilot program launched in 2006. It resulted in 350 LEED certifications. Participants can now use the LEED Volume Program for design and

Available LEED Ratings

LEED rating systems are developed through a transparent process led by LEED committees comprised of volunteers from USGBC's 18,000 member companies and organizations. Ratings are available in:

- Building Design & Construction (New Construction, Core & Shell, Schools, Retail, Data Centers, Warehouses & Distributors, and Hospitality)
- Interior Design & Construction (Commercial Interiors, Retail, and Hospitality)
- Building Operations & Maintenance (Existing Buildings: Operations & Maintenance, Schools, Retail, Data Centers, and Hospitality)
- Homes (Home and Mid-Rise)
- Neighborhood Development

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- LEED 2009 for Retail: Commercial Interiors (See www.usgbc.org/leed/retail)
- In the first half of 2011, LEED for Building Operations & Maintenance will be adapted to LEED for Retail

Boulder Community Hospital, Colo., is a project on which Ricca Newmark's team designed to achieve LEED certification (Silver). It was the first LEED healthcare facility in the US.



construction projects, and it will be available for LEED for Existing Buildings: Operations & Maintenance in mid-2011.

To Go LEED Or Not To Go LEED?

Since LEED began, building owners, project designers, and consultants have been asking whether the return on investment to get LEED certification is worth the time and expense (Note, it's also the topic of an FCSI – The Americas education session Feb. 9, just before NAFEM in Orlando.

Researching what's needed for LEED certification, sourcing products, and completing documentation requires many hours of work. Over and above the labor hours needed for documentation, the LEED process requires you to purchase certain types of materials on projects, some of which

are more expensive, and paying a fee to become certified.

“The value of LEED is that it provides third-party verification that what you're doing internally is Green and helps meet sustainability goals,” says Shaffer. “Verification is recognized throughout an organization and by shareholders. Many consumers are shouting Green and putting their dollars with

companies that have values they believe in. They want to know that the companies they buy from are following sustainability practices.”

Incentives Hard To Resist

Perhaps the other most significant factor contributing to the growing number of LEED certifications today (and in the future) are taxpayer-driven and delivered via government mandates and/or incentives for certification. For example, city building projects in San Francisco must obtain a minimum of LEED Silver certification and building project applications by private builders who work towards LEED are given priority and faster processing.

Other cities such as Huntington, N.Y., Cincinnati, Seattle, Scottsdale, Houston, Boston, and Atlanta also issue mandates and/or incentives. State governments also are mandating certification: In California, buildings larger than 10,000 sq. ft. must be

built to LEED Silver certification; Michigan and other states have requirements for state-funded buildings; and LEED buildings in Nevada are exempt from local taxes.

In addition, there are local and state regulations for Green compliance, such as the 2010 California Green Building Standards Code (CalGreen Code), issued in June 2010, which took effect Jan. 2, 2011. Through these standards, California adopted mandatory building regulations for all new construction in the state that will achieve major reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, energy consumption, and water use.

Chains Link To LEED

One restaurant chain that actively pursued Green-build facilities and LEED certification is Anaheim, Calif.-headquartered Carl Karcher Enterprises, Inc. (CKE), operator of Carl's Jr. and Hardee's restaurants. CKE has earned LEED certification on two Carl's Jr.'s, the first in Irvine, Calif., and the second in Anaheim, which is expected to receive Silver.

“We became involved with LEED because we wanted to learn more about it—many more shopping centers are LEED-certified and require that tenants also be certified—and we believed this learning would be applicable to the imminent roll-out of CalGreen,” says David Luxton, v.p. of construction and facilities for CKE. “We wanted to know what is required to get certified, including the costs, and the benefits.” The lessons learned during the certification process will be applied to future new builds and renovations. Though remodels are exempted from CalGreen now, they may not be exempted in the future.” (See “The CalGreen Code,” page 26.)

Among the lessons the CKE team learned from the Anaheim project was the high cost to architects and their consultants to achieve LEED certification. “This was the architectural firm's first LEED project and they didn't know the real time they would be putting into the project although they were LEED accredited,” Luxton says. The team also recognized many benefits that would be the incentive to do another LEED project: vendor participation and new vendor sourcing; the public relations value; new technology-driven additions to prototype plans; getting a jump on many of the CalGreen Code requirements; and identifying materials to use in a standard prototype such as exterior and interior LED lighting. In addition,

Ricca Newmark's design for the Joe Rosenfield '25 Campus Center at Grinnell College, Iowa, is a LEED Silver. The marketplace is the college's first effort to incorporate sustainable design into its building process.



projects may result in rebates from the city and utilities, an expedited process of getting approval to build, and reduced costs for operating, utilities and maintenance.

For the Anaheim facility, a project checklist and alternate bid sheet indicate that complying with LEED would cost nearly \$22,000 more in LEED associated costs beyond a typical build-out. Documentation and certification would cost another \$28,000; however, permit fee rebates from the city of Anaheim for Silver certification offset \$23,000 of the total LEED cost. The city also provided an expedited plan check, which resulted in an earlier opening date. Due to the cost, CKE remains uncommitted about acquiring LEED certification for future projects. "Complying with CalGreen will be a requirement and we will apply what we learned from LEED certification to readily comply with CalGreen,"

Luxton says. "With CalGreen,

LEED compliance will be simpler to achieve, but unless there is a stated requirement, I don't see a benefit in committing more funds to achieve certification."

For Scott Shippey, sustainable design manager for Chipotle, LEED certification also has been a positive learning experience. In 2009, the chain's second LEED-certified store in Gurnee, Ill., received a Platinum rating, which Shippey says was possible through the focus on energy performance. The Gurnee store's annual utilities (electric, gas, water, and sewer) averaged about \$7,200 less than a nearby Chipotle, while its sales volume was 20 percent higher, Shippey said during a panel discussion at *Foodservice Equipment Report's* 2010 Multiunit Foodservice Equipment Symposium. He also noted that "LEED gives your company something to commit to while serving as a tool for leveraging your strength. The LEED process helps you gain knowledge and operate smarter."

Darden Restaurants announced a year ago that it would remodel its existing restaurants with a sustainable restaurant design initiative that will be applied to all of its future constructions. Project teams for Red Lobster, Olive Garden, and LongHorn Steakhouse will strive to meet LEED standards. For

The 2010 California Green Building Standards Code (CalGreen Code), issued in June 2010, took effect Jan. 2, 2011. Through these standards, California adopted mandatory building regulations for all new construction in the state that will achieve major reductions in Greenhouse gas emissions, energy consumption, and water use. The code requires:

- A 20-percent mandatory reduction in indoor water use, with voluntary goal standards for 30-, 35- and 40-percent reductions;
- Separate water meters for nonresidential buildings' indoor and outdoor water use, with a requirement for moisture-sensing irrigation systems for larger landscape projects;
- Diversion of 50 percent of construction waste from landfills, increasing voluntarily to 65 and 75 percent for new homes and 80 percent for commercial projects;
- Mandatory inspections of energy systems (i.e. heat furnace, air conditioner, mechanical equipment) for nonresidential buildings over 10,000 sq. ft. to ensure that all are working at their maximum capacity according to their design efficiencies;
- Low-pollutant-emitting interior finish materials such as paints, carpet, vinyl flooring, and particle board.

See www.bsc.ca.gov/default.htm for more information.

instance, the Olive Garden restaurant in Jonesboro, Ark., opened in Jan. 2010, features maximum exposure to natural light, long-lasting LEDs that use 7W of energy, and reclaimed heating from condensing units of the HVAC system and freezer/cooler system to heat hot water. The kitchens have low-flow water nozzles and automatic faucets that save water. (For more about Darden's sustainability commitment, see www.generationcommitment.com.)

Ian Olson, Darden's director of sustainability, has stated that Darden set a goal of reducing energy and water use at its 1,800 restaurants by 15 percent by 2015. Last April, The Olive Garden and Red Lobster parent became the first restaurants to join the Sustainability Consortium, an independent organization administered by the University of Arkansas and Arizona State University to improve sustainability in the supply chain.

Upon final certification, Darden's own state-of-the-art, 2009 world headquarters in Orlando, will be the largest LEED Gold building in the state of Florida. Kip Serfozo, associate member, FCSI,



What CKE learned in building its LEED Silver Anaheim Carl's Jr. unit will help the company comply with CalGreen requirements.

LEED AP, v.p. and managing director with Camacho Associates, Atlanta, was the firm's LEED project manager on the building. It includes test-kitchen versions of each of the company's brands.

LEED requirements with which he assisted included lowering HVAC requirements with the use of variable speed exhaust fans; low-flow plumbing fixtures and equipment; minimizing waste generation with the use of pulpers/extractors; and minimizing material going to landfills by reusing equipment from Darden's previous world HQ facility.



Accreditation Consideration

With all this growth in LEED certification, it's little wonder that consultants are asking whether they should commit the time and money to become accredited and receive LEED professional credentials. USGBC describes the credentials as a mark of professional excellence recognized throughout the industry. "LEED is an excellent process that helps

Camacho Associates LEED AP, Kip Serfuzo, associate member, FCSI, provided foodservice design and LEED expertise for the Navy Federal Credit Union, Pensacola, Fla. It's a LEED Gold.

corporations demonstrate leadership, innovation, and environmental stewardship," Serfozo adds.

Accreditation is available through the LEED Green Associate (LEED GA) and LEED Accredited Professional (LEED AP) in Building Design + Construction (BD+C); Interior Design + Construction (ID+C); Home; Operations + Management (O+M); and Neighborhood Development (ND). (For a handbook, go to www.usgbc.org.)

Will the process of taking a course—which ranges in price from \$195 for a webinar to \$595 for a live, two-day class (if you have previous experience with a LEED project you don't have to take a course)—studying for the rigorous, two-hour, 100-question exam and paying a \$150 (members) or \$200 (non-members) exam fee deliver a return on investment?

Some companies don't believe having their staff

acquire credentials is worth the investment. They'd rather hire consultants to help them with LEED. "We don't have LEED-accredited staff," Luxton says. Rather, he worked with architects and their consultants on the LEED projects. Luxton took a CalGreen course and will continue to keep up with those requirements.

On the other hand, companies such as Citi, Best Buy, Kohl's, Starbucks and many more, have accredited staff members who take leadership roles with LEED certification.

In FCSI - The Americas, it is estimated that about 20 members have accreditation. Kathleen Seelye, FFCSI, managing partner, Ricca Newmark Design, Denver, was the first foodservice consultant to receive LEED AP in 2003. "When I read about the opportunity for accreditation, I knew it was a natural fit for me and our company," Seelye says. "Living in Colorado, which has been ahead of the environmental front for years, I saw that designing for sustainability was the future. But, I was hesitant to go through the accreditation process because it was going to require studying for months." She took the jump and has never regretted her decision.

For Seelye, accreditation "gives me an understanding of not only the foodservice space needs, but the overall building environment and how we can contribute to its success. When I or any of the six other senior members of our firm who have LEED accreditation meet with a project's team, we can bring expertise and a perspective that contributes to the whole. We can speak the same language with other team members and collaborate in a more valuable way. It's important to understand where foodservice fits into the larger picture and help guide clients to prioritization and informed decisions."

Jim Donahoe, FCSI, principal, Dewco Food Facility Consultants, Whittier, Calif., is involved in California projects that require LEED certification and is familiar with the process. One project, in which he partnered with Webb Design in Tustin, is Metropolitan State Hospital's central kitchen and satellite rethermalization kitchen in Norwalk, Calif., which opened in July 2009 and received LEED Gold. "This was the first cook-chill kitchen in the state of California to receive this distinction," says Tamer Ahmed, state project manager for the California Department of General Services (DGS), when he spoke to *Foodservice Equipment & Supplies*

for "Project Design of the Month" Jan. 2011.

"We don't require consultants for our projects to be LEED accredited," Ahmed says. "However, depending on the project and whether it needs to achieve LEED, we put LEED *experience* as a requirement for consultants; they can cite projects they worked on and on which they achieved the desired LEED level. It becomes part of the different requirements that we assign points to in order to select the consultant with the highest points."

Richard Young, sr. engineer and director of education at the FSTC, says that MAS and kitchen design consultants could fill a much needed role because most *non-foodservice LEED* consultants and architects have no idea how much energy the commercial kitchen consumes. Failing to pay attention to it can undermine the quality of LEED endeavors, he adds. "They also do not understand how much money they can save their clients by designing efficiency into the kitchens that are part of their projects," he says. "Often, they just don't budget to build efficient kitchens or the equipment gets value-engineered out." Foodservice consultants could take the lead on closing this information gap and champion energy efficient designs.

Partners Get Involved

More manufacturers are taking the accreditation route, as well. For example, Rob Geile, CFSP, LEED AP ID+C, director, consultant services for Hobart Corp., received accreditation three years ago. "Accreditation is becoming more popular, despite the time required to study and the difficulty of the test," he says. "I passed my test with 28,000 others; today at least 200,000 are accredited."

Similar to Seelye, Geile committed to accreditation in order to understand more about all facets of building and foodservice projects rather than just foodservice equipment. His goal is to be able to contribute ideas for clients to meet LEED certification or, if LEED certification isn't a goal, to meet whatever sustainability goals may be intended. "To get LEED certification, you have to painstakingly document everything," Geile says. "We help consultants and clients write up the documentation, which is a very time-consuming task."

False Leads On LEED

One of Geile's recommendations to consultants is to beware of manufacturers who Green-wash their

deliverables. "The biggest mistake manufacturers make is telling clients and consultants that if you spec my equipment you'll get a LEED point. That's inaccurate. Companies can't offer points for LEED certification. We can help clients achieve certain certification points through the use of certain pieces of equipment. It's inaccurate to say, 'If you spec my flight-type machine you'll get one LEED point.' It's accurate to say, 'If you spec my flight-type machine we can offer you a 50-percent savings in water consumption so that when you go to get credits for water usage, you can probably get a point because the machine saves water and energy usage.' Many pieces of foodservice equipment consume water and clients and consultants need to know the savings for each piece of equipment, not just one."

Seelye also is concerned about "becoming bamboozled by Green-washing information." She warns her colleagues against "accepting manufacturers' sales literature as the most credible information versus acquiring third-party data." (There's plenty of third-party information to be had from agencies such as the FSTC.) She also advises her colleagues to be aware of the lack of third-party verification in volunteer programs such as Energy Star.

"A piece of equipment may get an Energy Star rating because of a compressor reduction, for example. But in reality, that same piece of equipment may use more energy to maintain temperature. You have to investigate beyond manufacturers' sales materials to understand what equipment does and doesn't do and how it contributes to LEED."

Seelye believes FCSI - The Americas can become the industry leader to work with NAFEM in creating a standard of information on spec sheets that includes a level of compliance about energy usage versus the connective load. "We have an opportunity to make a real difference as thought leaders. I hope we can come together to make such significant change."

The Future

With any program, the question must be asked: Is LEED a fad that will pass? Or will it be entrenched into the fabric of building and renovation projects long into the future? Geile is convinced that "this, too, shall *not* pass. LEED is entrenched and is benefiting operators because the guidelines are sound."