

The Masonry Society

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From the Editor

August often seems to be a relatively slow month, but this month is busy with activities on the sustainability front. At the forefront, USGBC has opened the public comment period on the next draft of LEED 2012. Comments are due by September 14th. Check out the link below for more information. In addition, the International Green Construction Code ([IGCC](#)) hearings are rapidly approaching, and comments on proposed code changes are due. Both of these documents have the potential to dramatically influence sustainable building, so I urge you to get involved and read the drafts for yourself, and then participate by submitting comments.

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USGBC LEED NEWS

LEED is constantly evolving and the latest draft is no exception. The LEED 2012 draft, unlike LEED 2009, contains many substantive changes for building products and materials. ~Tina

LEED 2012 Public Comment Period Opens

On Monday, August 1, the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) opened the second public comment period for the proposed update to its LEED green building rating system, coined LEED 2012. The comment period, which will close on September 14, 2011, is the next step in the continuous improvement process and on-going development of the LEED program. Learn more and comment at the [LEED 2012 website](#).

PRODUCT NEWS

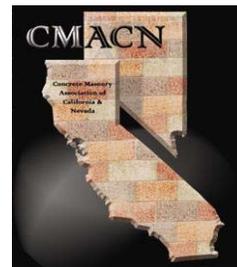
New Bricks Promoted for Disaster-related Construction

A new type of sand brick has 2.5 times as much tensile strength as concrete, says the Japanese company that developed it. It can be manufactured in a minute and takes a day to harden. The "CO2 Structure" is solidified using carbon dioxide, and an epoxy binder is added to increase the bricks' tensile strength. The bricks could prove useful in emergency situations such as building shelters for the quake and tsunami victims in Japan, according to this [Inhabitat](#) article.

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Students Use Cannon to Test Hurricane-grade Materials

Using a cannon on loan from the University of Florida, students from Florida's Seminole Community College tested the ability of various building materials to withstand a hurricane. They found that foam blocks, reinforced with concrete, and concrete blocks outperformed wood. Read more and watch the video at [WESH-TV \(Orlando, Fla.\)](#).

Wood-first Promoters Suffer Defeat in Oregon

Architects and structural-steel, concrete and masonry interests fighting the "wood first" movement are breathing a collective sigh of relief since Oregon legislators adjourned for the year June 30 without enacting legislation that would give wood a leg up over other framing materials for use in public buildings. The failed or tabled bills in Olympia and Salem varied, but all gave wood preferential treatment in public buildings. "A fair-practice approach ... open to all industries is a much better method for achieving objectives related to life-cycle cost, sustainability, energy conservation and other selection criteria," says Bob Thomas, president of the National Concrete Masonry Association. Thomas also is concerned about the U.S. Department of Agriculture's announcement that it plans to preferentially select wood in new U.S. Forest Service construction. Read [more](#).

House Bill Targets Costly EPA Concrete Manufacturing Rules

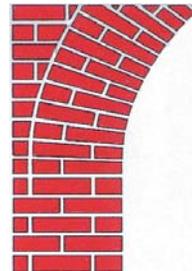
A bipartisan group of House lawmakers introduced legislation last month that seeks to ease Environmental Protection Agency restrictions on the cement industry. The bill specifically addresses three rules affecting manufacturers of Portland cement. The Portland Cement Association estimates the rules could cost more than \$5.4 billion and could potentially cause 18 plants to shut down by 2013, according to this [Manufacturing.net](#) article.

University of Wyoming Studies Cause of Mortar Shrinkage

The University of Wyoming and consultant Atkinson-Noland and Associates have joined forces in a National Concrete Masonry Association (NCMA) Foundation sponsored research project to better understand the causes of mortar/unit delaminations and cracking in order to help develop additional strategies to improve the moisture resistant properties of single wythe concrete



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masonry walls. In the study, small wall assemblies are constructed using various mortars and unit configurations and then placed in environmental chambers where temperature, wind and humidity are controlled to replicate various field conditions. For more information on this project or other foundation-sponsored projects, please contact [Nick Lang](#) or [Dennis Graber](#) at NCMA.

A LOOK AT LCA

Though the article below isn't about buildings or masonry, it illustrates I think some of the unexpected benefits of examining environmental footprints, or conducting life cycle assessments (LCAs). In order to improve upon a process or product, you first have to understand the whole picture. This story from Starbucks notes how something seemingly small (in this case whipped cream), can actually turn out to be something quite large. Similarly, the improved fuel efficiency to be required for trucks may turn out to have a significant improvement in the LCA of many building materials.
~Tina

How Starbucks Whips Up Low-Carbon Coffee

Starbucks officials were surprised to find that nitrous oxide emissions from the company's whipped-cream canisters had a greater climate impact than all of its roasting plants combined. That shows the importance of looking for hidden flaws in your emissions-busting strategy and the potential for big gains from relatively small changes, says Jim Hanna, director of environmental impact at Starbucks. "Until two years ago, we had no focus on nitrous oxide, and now we are really focusing on changing the way we provide that great-tasting whipped cream [so] that [it] doesn't impact the climate," he said in this [GreenerPackage.com](#) article.

Trucks Must Cut Fuel Consumption

New federal fuel efficiency standards have been announced and will affect trucks beginning in 2014. Three types of vehicles are affected by the measure. Concrete mixers and other work trucks must cut fuel consumption and production of heat-trapping gasses by 9 percent. Officials estimate that, in addition to improved air quality, the standards will produce a savings of 530 million barrels of oil and \$50 billion in fuel costs over the expected lifetimes of the affected vehicles. [Click here](#) to learn more.

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