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The Masonry Society

Sustainability E-News

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SPONSORED EDITION

From the Editor

I thought it was very timely to have several articles on life cycle assessment (LCA) in the newsletter this month in light of the fact that in about a month LEED v4 will be out for approval. Readers of this newsletter know that many changes in the area of building products and materials are found in this next iteration of LEED, and most involve examining life cycle environmental impacts, either through material ingredient reporting, environmental product declarations (EPDs) or whole building LCA. Whether or not this is a good thing remains to be seen. One concern is the overwhelming amount of data and information that these tools provide, without any context of how they might best be incorporated into the full decision making process that occurs when selecting materials for a building. How does one balance product global warming potential with constructability or durability or any of the other aspects considered in the overall design and construction process? And what about the limitations on the data used to formulate LCAs? This topic is covered in the link below "The Mismeasure of Buildings." Read them yourself and let me know what you think.

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NOTE: Inclusion in this newsletter is not an endorsement of the products and materials featured, nor have these products been evaluated by TMS or the editor. Furthermore, the views expressed in the articles featured are those of the article authors.

GREEN BUILDING NEWS

This edition includes several links to articles on life cycle assessment (LCA), including limitations of LCA. Also below, an update from the Athena Institute with a link to a good summary of where LCA is found in today's world of codes, standards and rating systems. ~Tina

Sustainable Masonry Solutions: The Key to Thermal Mass Solutions

MASONRY MAGAZINE

While masonry's assets have always included durability, low maintenance, and good indoor air quality, the greatest sustainability benefits are found in masonry's tie to enhancing energy efficiency. The choice of masonry for design and operating solutions comes from looking beyond the material as a finish selection and, instead, matching masonry systems to the

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building's functional needs and sustainable outcomes. [Read the article](#).

From the Athena Institute

Athena Institute has released an update to the Impact Estimator for Buildings, the popular life cycle assessment (LCA) software package for building designers. The update is available for free download from calculatelca.com. Changes in this version include insulation and window updates, and adjustments to align with the latest US EPA impact characterization method and with emerging European standards for building declarations.

The Athena Institute presented a program on LCA in Design, with Arup and Perkins+Will at Greenbuild 2012. To view, click [here](#).

What's happening lately with LCA in the construction world? Read Athena Institute's take on it [here](#).

The Mismeasure of Buildings: Five Reasons Life-Cycle Assessment Will Not Give Us Zero-Impact Design

BUILDINGGREEN.COM

Whole-building LCA is found in LEED and elsewhere. It's a great tool, as long as you understand its limitations. [Read the full article](#).

Sustainable Buildings Can Bring Cost Benefits

CURBED

The additional costs of building green range from 0.0% to 12.5%, according to various studies collected by the World Green Building Council. A Venn diagram looks at the benefits of sustainable building to tenants, developers and owners. One of the reasons cited for the lower-than-anticipated increased costs is the wider availability of tools to help people build green. [Click here to learn more](#).

How Passive-Structure Standards Compare to LEED, Net-Zero

EARTHTECHLING

A passive building keeps "thermal comfort with its ventilation system alone -- heating and cooling only the amount of air you need to replace anyway for air quality reasons in an airtight house," according to the PassivHaus Institut. [In this article](#), Daniel Mathews compares passive standards to those of LEED and net-zero -- and explains how they could be used together.

GREEN BUSINESS

How Manufacturers are Going Green

HUFFINGTON POST

Manufacturers are increasingly finding that going green brings bottom-line benefits, writes Linda Mayer, CEO of Schott North America. Subaru, Honda, Ford and GM are all pushing ahead with waste-reduction strategies at their plants, Mayer notes. "[I]t's heartening to see so many examples of how business goes hand in hand with sustainability to continue

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innovating new and better manufacturing processes," she writes [in this article](#).

EPA's SmartWay Program Aims for a Greener Supply Chain BLOG

In addition to greening store operations, retailers are also searching for ways to make their supply chains more sustainable, says Cheryl Bynum, director of the Environmental Protection Agency's SmartWay program, which helps retailers calculate and manage the carbon footprints generated by their supply chains and choose the greenest carriers for their goods. The program has helped eliminate 28 million metric tons of carbon dioxide, saved 65 million barrels of oil and cut \$8.1 billion in fuel costs, according to EPA data. [Read more](#).

Managing Your Company's Environmental Impact ENTREPRENEUR.COM

Small-business owners can use several online tools to get a better understanding of the impact they are having on the environment. Businesses can shrink their carbon footprint by picking efficient modes of transportation and shipping a small number of large loads rather than a large number of small loads, said Jeff Karrenbauer, president of Insight. "The worst for carbon output is small parcel shipments by air," he said in [this piece](#).

USGBC/LEED NEWS

It's still not final, but GSA, the government's largest builder, is one step closer to confirming use of LEED for government buildings. The decision is important as many other organizations follow the lead of GSA. See the article below. ~Tina

Committee Recommends LEED for Government Buildings ECOSTRUCTURE

As the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) considers which green building rating system to use, its Green Building Advisory Committee officially recommends LEED for all GSA buildings. [Read more](#).

LEED Interpretations and Addenda Updated USGBC

USGBC has announced a new platform for LEED Interpretations and rating system and reference guide addenda including a simplified, searchable database housing all the LEED Interpretations and addenda you need for your project in one central location. [Read more](#).

PRODUCT NEWS

PCA: EPA's Cement Rules Could Cause Industry "Severe Hardship"

LEHIGH VALLEY BUSINESS

The debate continues regarding the effects of delaying the Environmental Protection Agency's new emission-reduction rules for the cement industry. Many cement manufacturers say they

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need more time to reassess their emissions-control strategies beyond 2015, the year the EPA intends to impose restrictions. Pennsylvania-based firms such as Essroc and Keystone Cement Co. are working to comply with those costly standards but these rules could cause "severe hardship" for the industry in terms of plant shutdowns and layoffs in the future, according to the Portland Cement Association and [this article](#).

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