The Masonry Society

Sustainability E-News

Evaluating Sustainability

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From The Editor

I recently read an advertisement for a webinar by a large sustainability consulting firm. It read "Did you know that recyclability doesn't automatically correspond to sustainability? Sometimes when packaging designers focus on recyclable products, it leads to unintentional, negative environmental impacts, or it simply shifts burdens." This is a notion that extends beyond designing packaging to the broader approach of material selection. Certainly it can be true of building product selection. While the promotion of recycled content can help solve waste problems, there is no guarantee that products made with such content do not take more energy or water to manufacture, or produce fewer emissions. That is why it is always important to look at the whole picture. In the case of building product selection, ideally all environmental factors should be considered, as well as the product's durability, maintenance requirements, its contributions to building energy efficiency, and more. As I often say, there is no "Holy Grail" of building products. There are pluses and minuses to them all, and it is a challenge we face in making the best choice for the given project.

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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

I included the first article below, because while not specifically masonry-related, it discusses unplanned consequences of some green infrastructure projects. Of course this is just one opinion, but it does support the notion that consequences, and the whole picture, need to be considered when selecting sustainable design strategies. ~Tina

Green infrastructure can spread disease when poorly planned

THE STORMWATER REPORT

Green infrastructure designs that fail to consider the effects of the installation's placement or the types of wildlife it may attract can increase risks of spreading serious diseases, according to research

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published in Ecology and Epidemiology. "There seems to be a prevailing assumption among the general public that everything that is nature -- that is part of wilderness -- is good and safe," says Mare Lohmus of the Karolinska Institutet in <u>this article</u>.

Deep energy retrofits for historic masonry buildings MASONRY DESIGN MAGAZINE

Existing buildings offer the greatest opportunity for achieving energy efficiency and reducing the overall building energy use in the U.S. Buildings constructed before 1980 were built to model energy codes that were vastly less stringent than current code requirements. As a result, even minor energy retrofits can yield beneficial results. Read more on page 24 of this <u>online magazine</u>.

CODES and STANDARDS NEWS

If you've ever wondered how much LEED gets used, the LEED certification update at the link below is a useful tool. This interactive web page gives you access to the latest information. ~Tina

LEED certification update

USGBC

See the latest LEED data in USGBC's second-quarter update <u>here</u>. You can view certifications by region, LEED version, and more. This latest report shows an increase in LEED v4 and v4.1 certifications.

The power of building and energy codes

BUILDING ENCLOSURE MAGAZINE ONLINE

According to insurance broker Aon's annual report, "Weather, Climate & Catastrophe Insight," the total global economic cost of weather disasters reached \$215 billion in 2018. What can be done to protect human life and property in the face of these catastrophes? One key element in strengthening our communities is the development and enforcement of building codes. It is widely recognized that building codes are a crucial element in fostering construction practices that promote more resilient and durable designs for both new construction and existing buildings. Read more beginning on page 24 of this <u>online magazine</u>.

In the same magazine there is an interesting article, Resilient Engineering Against Natural Disasters, which begins on page 32.

GREEN PRODUCT NEWS

Advances in concrete can lead to advances in concrete masonry products. Check out some of the latest news below. ~Tina

UCLA's sustainable concrete a finalist for \$7.5M prize UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

A team from the University of California, Los Angeles is one of ten finalists for a \$7.5 million prize for creating products from carbon emissions. The Carbon Upcycling UCLA team developed a process for turning carbon dioxide waste from a coal-fired power plant into concrete blocks. Read more <u>here</u>.

LafargeHolcim-Solidia partnership to cut concrete's carbon footprint

CONSTRUCTION DIVE

Solidia Technologies and LafargeHolcim announced a commercial venture to supply EP Henry's paver and block plant in Wrightstown, N.J., with a reduced-CO2 cement that will be used to produce

Concrete Masonry Association of California & Nevada ***



Mason Contractors Association of America **



Western States Clay Products Association ***

Gold Level



Masonry Institute of America



Portland Cement Association **





Southeast Concrete Masonry Association *



Spec Mix ** Bronze Level



concrete products. The product uses a novel binder and a patented curing process that the partners say reduces the overall carbon footprint by up to 70%. <u>Read more</u>.

CASE STUDIES

Award-winning masonry adaptive reuse project MODERN STEEL

The ProMedica Corporate Headquarters in Toledo, Ohio comprises the adaptive reuse of not one but two existing buildings: a historic Daniel Burnham-designed steam plant dating back to the late 19th century and a brutalist bank building—both adjacent to Promenade Park on the Maumee River in downtown Toledo, Ohio. Built in 1896, the former building served as a power plant until 1930, when it was converted to a steam plant to supply steam heat to downtown buildings. The plant closed in 1985 and lay vacant for nearly 30 years until its transformation into a 124,000-sq.-ft office building. A new four-story office space was created inside the shell, using the existing roof and existing north, south and west masonry walls to enclose the space, with a three-story portion of the new building extending beyond the original plant walls towards the Maumee River on the east; the existing east masonry wall was demolished. Read more on page 26 of this <u>online magazine</u>.

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