

The Masonry Society

Sustainability E-News

"Green" Tools

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From The Editor

There has been a proliferation of what I call "green" tools. Whether tools to measure environmental impacts of buildings or products through life cycle assessment (LCA), green building rating programs such as LEED and WELL, or the latest trend, embodied carbon tools, the choices can be overwhelming. There are two things to keep in mind when considering your options, particularly for those that are calculator tools. When considering *which* to use, understanding the database(s) used is very important. Some may include U.S.-centric data, while others include global information. Some may be dominated by information from only a few manufacturers for a given product type. These and other data influence the results in the calculator. The other thing to keep in mind is *when* to use these tools. Many calculators are best used early in the design process to inform global decisions in the design, rather than to compare specific products or materials. Others intended for product comparison should only be used once the functional performance of the product or assembly is known so that a more apples-to-apples type comparison can be made.

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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

Most often sustainability focuses on the environmental impacts, but sustainability also includes societal and economic components. The first three articles below address these less common topics. ~Tina

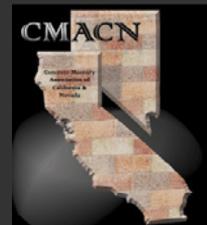
Integrating social equity into green building

SWINTER.COM

Built on the premise that buildings are only sustainable if they are equitable and accessible for all occupants, this third and final part of Steven Winter Associates' ["Integrating Social Equity Into Green Building" blog series](#) outlines ways in which one can integrate principles of social equity into the design, construction, and operations phases.

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Platinum Level



There are more than 40 million people in modern slavery

GREEN BUILDING LAW UPDATE

A report by the UK Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner is both a wake-up call and a useful guide on preventing modern slavery and human trafficking. In the Western world there are low levels of awareness of the prevalence of modern slavery. Yet today there are more than 40 million people in modern slavery worldwide. Modern slavery exists in every industry, in every country in the world. [Read more.](#)

Concrete masonry cost competitiveness highlighted in comparison study updates

NCMA

According to results of updates in 2020 to the [Initial Cost of Construction Study](#), concrete masonry construction provides the best value and lowest initial cost compared to other building materials. Over the past several weeks there have been many stories in the news about skyrocketing costs for wood and steel, while concrete masonry costs have remained stable. The updates to the Cost Study, which was first completed in 2017, highlight these differences. Across the updates, which were completed for seven cities across the U.S., initial construction costs are less than, or equal to, wood construction for the multi-family structure evaluated in the study.

AIA recognizes LCA Toolkit with 2020 Innovation Award

CONSTRUCTION SPECIFIER

The BHoM Life Cycle Assessment Toolkit by Buro Happold has won an American Institute of Architects' [Innovation Award](#). This [new tool](#), an open-source endeavor, is an accessible and data-driven framework that allows design professionals to measure embodied carbon of all elements within building design. Supported by a network of architects, engineers, and software developers who have contributed code to it, the Buildings and Habitats object Model (BHoM) boasts a range of functionality spanning multiple disciplines and represents a transformative and democratic approach to measuring embodied carbon in everyday construction materials.

Balfour Beatty launches AutoBIM Carbon Calculator

BIM TODAY (UK)

Balfour Beatty collaborated with UK groups and universities to create the AutoBIM Carbon Calculator which estimates the carbon footprint of a project by pulling data from building information modeling. "The introduction of such a tool is long overdue, and with the impact of our work on the environment front of mind, it is a truly welcomed development," said Rachel Sudlow, strategic improvement project manager for Balfour Beatty, in [this article](#).

CODES and STANDARDS NEWS

More on the IECC change to a standards process. ~Tina

Industry organizations react to new ICC framework

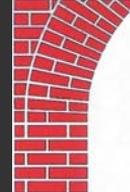
CONSTRUCTION SPECIFIER

The International Code Council (ICC) has released a new framework, however, organizations such as the New Building Institute and American Institute of Architects have spoken out against the changes. Read more [here](#).

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 **

Silver Level



Spec Mix **
Bronze Level



ACME Brick ***



Cast Stone Institute ***

The growing demand for transparency in buildings

CONSTRUCTION SPECIFIER

Green building certifications, such as the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) rating system, the WELL Building Standard, and the Living Building Challenge (LBC) have pushed all built environment stakeholders, from suppliers and manufacturers to specifiers, architects, and owners, to change the way they make decisions about the materials making up a structure. One of these changes has been the push for increased transparency into the [environmental and health impacts of materials](#).

Biogenic carbon footprint calculator for harvested wood products

WORLDWILDLIFE.ORG

A new, free-to-use calculator to calculate biogenic emissions for a variety of forest-based products has been developed by the World Wildlife Fund. The biogenic carbon footprint calculator implements a dynamic accounting approach that considers biogenic carbon in wood-based products. As such, the calculator calculates the biogenic carbon footprint by expanding on the concept of the global warming potential of biogenic carbon (GWPbio), which takes into account forest carbon gaps (decreased carbon stocks in forests until regrowth occurs) and the benefits of storing carbon in products. This calculator can be beneficial to users exploring the true carbon footprint of wood products - including lumber and timber. [Read more](#).

Cement producers earn Energy Star certification

CONCRETE PRODUCTS

Last year, thirteen factories that produce portland cement received certification from the Environmental Protection Agency's Energy Star program. Factories earn the distinction by demonstrating energy performance within the top 25% of a particular industry. [Read more here](#).

EDUCATIONAL NEWS

While things are still operating in virtual mode, take advantage of attending a new-to-you meeting or conference. Two I highly recommend are shown below. ~Tina

Registration Open for The Masonry Society Spring Meetings

TMS

Registration is now open for the TMS Spring Meetings to be held **virtually April 12 -23**. Registration and schedule information are available [here](#). In addition to regular committee meetings, the Spring Meeting will also include a Town Hall presentation on April 19 at 12pm ET.

Registration Open for 14th Canadian Masonry Symposium

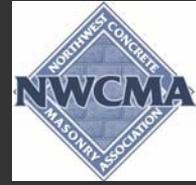
TMS

The 14th Canadian Masonry Symposium will be held **virtually May 16-19, 2021**. Thanks to generous support from sponsors, registration for the conference is FREE. For more information, visit the conference [website](#).

To Subscribe, click [here](#).



Nelson Testing Laboratories **



Northwest Concrete Masonry Association *



Pennsylvania Concrete Masonry Association ***



Masonry Institute of Washington

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