

The Masonry Society

Sustainability E-News

Focus on Carbon Continues

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From The Editor

As we begin a new year, many of the issues we will see in 2022 will be a continuation of those we saw in 2021; namely embodied carbon and resilience. Though the topics are not new, I do expect the details and information surrounding them to evolve. Of course the challenge is always the implementation of best practices.

Embodied carbon and carbon emissions in new construction will continue to be a focus, but there is also the growing recognition that carbon emissions in existing buildings needs to be addressed through energy-efficient retrofits, and also that reuse of existing buildings is one of the best ways to avoid carbon emissions in the first place.

Resilience is a growing focus of not only communities but also building owners. There is a growing movement of resilience and hazard assessment tools available as owners seek to assess the potential hazards of a site and design more resilient structures. [ASTM International](#) has at least 3 active subcommittees working on standards related to resilience. [ASHRAE Standard 189.1](#) has a task group focused on incorporation of resilience measures into that standard. And as you can read below, the USGBC has decided to move away from their separate resilience rating program, RELi, and focus on incorporating resilience into the LEED rating system directly. I expect a lot of activity in the area of resilience standards in 2022.

What about you? Are you actively incorporating concepts of resilience and carbon footprint into your work? What tools are you using to make assessments in these areas? I'd love to hear about what you are doing.

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GREEN BUILDING NEWS

Embodied carbon and carbon emissions continue to be top news stories as we begin 2022. ~Tina

World green building trends in 2021: Reducing embodied carbon

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USGBC

Dodge Data and Analytics recently released the [2021 World Green Building Trends Report](#). In addition to projecting growth in green building over the next several years, the report found that reducing embodied carbon is becoming a top priority within the industry. Over the next 30 years, half of all greenhouse gas emissions from new buildings are projected to come from embodied carbon—which includes emissions from manufacturing, transportation, installation, maintenance, and disposal of building materials. The green building industry is starting to focus more on this issue. In the 2021 report, respondents identified embodied carbon as one of their top priorities for the next five years. [Read more.](#)

UK to develop inventory of carbon emissions

INTERNATIONAL CEMENT REVIEW

The UK government is planning to develop the first countrywide national greenhouse gas inventory as a tool to help calculate carbon emissions. "By assessing exposed concrete used in buildings to bridges, this important research will help improve UK carbon accounting and provide an accurate assessment of carbonation across the lifecycle of the built environment," said Richard Leese from the UK's Mineral Products Association in [this article](#).

New US agency to focus on wildfire mitigation

USDA

A new federal agency has been established to address the growing crisis of wildfires. The Wildland Fire Mitigation and Management Commission will consult with federal, state, and local authorities and others on means to reduce wildfires and rehabilitate burned land. Read more [here](#).

CODES and STANDARDS NEWS

"USGBC is committed to further integrating resilience strategies into our flagship program—LEED" according to a recent statement, and is separating from the RELi rating system as a result. Read more below. ~Tina

Infrastructure law will improve energy code adoption

ALLIANCE TO SAVE ENERGY

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act provides funding that will help state and local governments update building energy codes while bolstering workforce training and education. Code adoption has lagged behind in most states, and improving it can make state and federal climate goals more attainable while lowering homeowners' energy bills, Michelle Gross writes in [this article](#).

USGBC to Drop Its Resilience Rating System, RELi

BUILDING GREEN

Resilient design is getting a makeover at the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC). The organization, which acquired the RELi resilience rating system in 2017, has ceded ownership. RELi (pronounced "rely") returns to its developer, The Institute for Market Transformation to Sustainability (MTS), while USGBC works to integrate resilient design into future versions of LEED. Green Business Certification Inc. (GBCI) will no longer certify RELi projects. [Read more.](#)

How builders blocked better tornado safeguards

NY TIMES (subscription required)

[This recent New York Times article](#) highlights how segments of the building industry have used the code development process to block safeguards that would better protect building occupants. As



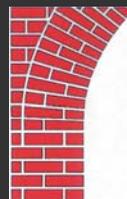
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discussed in the article, engineers know how to protect people from tornadoes like the recent one in Kentucky, but builders have headed off efforts to toughen standards. After the devastating 2012 Joplin tornadoes, building safety experts and manufacturers of resilient building materials such as concrete and masonry proposed enhanced requirements for safe-rooms to be added to the International Building Code. But a coalition of industry groups defeated this proposal, citing increased costs. "It really does kind of boil down to money," said Jason Thompson, NCMA VP of Engineering, "There's just different groups out there that want to keep the cost of construction as low as possible." Changes such as the one defeated in 2012 could have saved lives in more recent disasters.

GREEN PRODUCTS NEWS

I occasionally include articles focused on concrete. One reason is the cement used in concrete is also used in concrete masonry products, mortar, and grout. While the lessons don't always directly translate to masonry, they can often be informative nonetheless. ~Tina

Concrete carbon emissions: Real challenges, real opportunities

CONSTRUCTION SPECIFIER

Concrete is a tremendously useful and flexible material: building foundations, roads, walkways, bridges, and other infrastructure utilize concrete for its strength, durability, and plasticity in formation. Concrete also has relatively low-embodied carbon per unit volume when compared to other building materials, but, because of its utility, modern construction uses a lot of it. [This article](#) discusses strategies to reduce the GWP of concrete to decarbonize individual building and infrastructure projects as well as global industry.

Industry coalition aims to decarbonize

CONCRETE PRODUCTS

Cemex and Holcim have signed up as founding members of a major industry group aimed at removing carbon from procurement and the supply chain. The First Movers Coalition will focus on eight key sectors, including cement, steel, and trucking, to drive down the use of fossil fuels and find sustainable alternatives. [Read more.](#)

Holcim to offer low-carbon cement in US

GLOBAL CEMENT

The US arm of Holcim plans to offer a low-carbon blended cement called TerCem in the US. The product, which will be produced at a plant in Pennsylvania, is said to produce 65% fewer CO2 emissions than ordinary portland cement. [Read more.](#)

Just* Mason Around

NCMA

Episode 12 - More About Manufactured Stone Veneer. Check out this last episode of 2021 and learn more about Manufactured Stone Veneer (MSV). In this episode, you will hear from Alex Gillespie with Creative Mines and Josh Hessel of Norse Building Products talk more about their experiences and knowledge of MSV. [Listen here.](#)

EDUCATIONAL NEWS

The Masonry Society's Night School resumes next month with a short course on Allowable Stress Design (ASD). This is a great opportunity to prep for the PE exam or to polish your basic masonry design skills. ~Tina

Silver Level



Spec Mix **

Bronze Level



ACME Brick ***



Cast Stone Institute ***



Nelson Testing Laboratories **



North Carolina Masonry Contractors Association *



Northwest Concrete Masonry Association *



Pennsylvania Concrete Masonry Association ***

Allowable Stress Design Night School

TMS

TMS is pleased to offer an intensive [Night School course on Allowable Stress Design](#) using the 2016 TMS 402/602 and the International Building Code. This 6 night series, which begins on February 9th, is an excellent way to learn from two experts knowledgeable in both practical design of masonry as well as the basis for the code required design provisions.

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