



Eco Wise

Your Environmental Resource



Volume 5, Issue 5 June 2007 - The Green Issue

Green Building and Affordable Housing: Supporting a Sustainable Environment

Green building is the collection of design and construction techniques that seeks to increase energy efficiency, improve indoor air quality and conserve natural resources. When faced with the decision to integrate green building technologies into affordable housing programs, developers may balk at what seems like added complexities and costs.

However, as Edward F. Connelly points out in his article, "Getting Started on Green Affordable Housing", green building and affordable housing can and should coexist. Green building, it turns out, can help achieve affordability and performance, and potentially improve the overall health of the community.

In 2005, the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative, Enterprise Foundation and MassHousing committed over \$209 million worth of incentives to construct a total of 1000 green-built homes throughout the Commonwealth. The Boston Housing Authority's 426-unit Maverick Landing used these incentives to save an estimated \$100,000 a year, a major milestone that was reported by the Boston Globe. The development is a HOPE VI revitalization which features technologies such as photovoltaic cells, ENERGY STAR rated lighting, ENERGY STAR rated appliances, high-efficiency boilers and a cogeneration system. As a striking example of the benefits of green building, Maverick Landing today uses 261,000 fewer kWh per year than development officials originally expected.

Further west, in Lawton, Oklahoma, another example of the successful union of green building and affordable housing unfurled in 2007. Officials in Lawton initiated a green building project with a combination of HUD mortgage insurance and a 9% Low Income Housing Tax Credit allocation from the Oklahoma Housing Finance Agency, which is a state-administered incentive often used to support green building. The exterior of Columbia Square's 64 units was resurrected using cementitious siding, reflective roofing, and low "E" glass windows that provide far better insulation than conventional glass windows. Engineers and architects agreed on foam building insulation instead of the more common "batt"

Green building is the collection of design and construction techniques that seeks to increase energy efficiency, improve indoor air quality and conserve natural resources.

BIG NEWS - HUD streamlines procurement of ENERGY STAR products through the Department of Energy's Quantity Quotes website. Follow the link in the Resources section to see how it's done, or click [here](#).

This Issue

- Green Building
- Energy Survey
- Events
- Regional Spotlight
- Resources
- Maintenance Corner



Survey Coming Soon!

Be on the lookout for a September survey because we want YOU to tell us about your experiences with ENERGY STAR and the energy audit process.

Events

Energy Webcasts

June 14 - Single-Family Rehab and Retrofits

September 18 - New Construction Techniques: Energy Star and Greenbuilding

Green Building Workshops

June 16, 2007 - Chicago, IL

Solar 2007 - the National Solar Energy Conference

July 7-12 - Philadelphia, PA

NAHQ EPC Trainings

July 26-27 - Hilton Head, NC
August 30-31 - San Antonio, TX

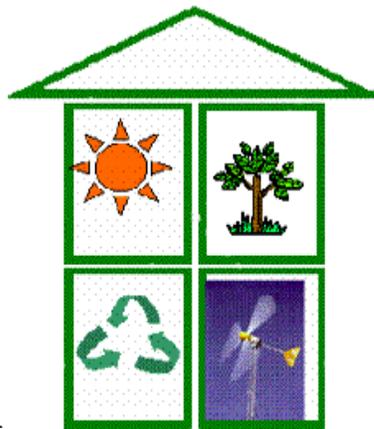
insulation. Builders also used formaldehyde-free plywood, as well as paints and adhesives with fewer Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs), in order to reduce atmospheric pollution. The interior of Columbia Square was furnished with energy-saving fluorescent light bulbs, high efficiency furnaces and air conditioning units, and ENERGY STAR rated appliances.

In Pennsylvania, Allegheny County Housing Authority's Tarentum housing development is under construction and will include 120 units. The development includes both geothermal heating and green roofs – a technique that sees roofs either partially or completely covered with vegetation in order to filter pollutants and keep the building cooler. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania supplemented Allegheny's Green Building efforts with a \$500,000 grant from its Growing Green II program. For more information on green roofs visit the news section of the PHECC website.

In December 2006, the Nashville's Metropolitan Development and Housing Agency (MDHA) broke ground on a new geothermal energy system, becoming the first public housing complex in Tennessee to embrace this technology. When a 125-unit development needed renovations, the MDHA recognized an opportunity to implement a geothermal system. The sustainable, efficient, non-polluting energy should help reduce the MDHA's operating costs, a third of which are currently being spent on utilities.

These examples of environmentally friendly affordable housing are beacons of the green light that has been cast over the United States. Through the use of innovative techniques, these vanguard developments have show that sustainable building techniques can merge with affordable housing to lower operating costs and provide a healthy and sustainable environment for residents of affordable housing.

Your state energy offices and local utility companies are a fantastic source for green building incentives.



Regional Spotlight on Green Building

[Denny Park - Seattle, WA](#)

A mixed-use, urban infill project

[Habitat for Humanity - Westchester, NY](#)

Affordable housing that includes photovoltaic panels and ENERGY STAR products

[Nueva Vista Family Housing - Santa Cruz, CA](#)

A 48-unit facility using solar power and non-toxic finishes

Resources

[Getting Started](#)

A comprehensive overview to the benefits of green building to affordable housing

[EPA - Green Building](#)

An informative website from the EPA on Green Building

[Enterprise](#)

A useful financial tool for affordable housing practitioners interested in green building

[Quantity Quotes](#)

A direct link to the ENERGY STAR Quantity Quotes website

Tips for Maintenance Staff and Residents

Maintenance Corner -

Keep your air in good condition!

Air conditioners can offer years of efficient use when properly maintained. Closely monitoring the unit's air filter is one of the easiest and most cost effective ways to ensure maximum energy efficiency and extend the life of the operating unit.

A dirty filter blocks airflow through the cooling system and makes the system work harder to provide adequate cooling. This wastes energy, increases your energy bill and shortens the equipment's life. By cleaning or replacing your air conditioner's filter on a regular basis you can prevent dust and dirt from building up in the system. This will prolong the life of the unit and ensure that it operates at peak efficiency.

Tip for Residents:

* Check your filter every month, especially during heavy use months. If the filter looks dirty after a month, change it. At a minimum, change the filter every three months.

Tip for Maintenance Staff:

* Consider creating a filter replacement program or send out a monthly reminder to residents to check their filters.
* Consider upgrading to Energy Star certified air conditioners.

Email us with your Maintenance Corner questions!
phccinfo@nelrod.com

To unsubscribe from this mailing list email phccinfo@nelrod.com with "unsubscribe phecc" in the body of the message.

Comments? Questions? Email the newsletter editor at phccinfo@nelrod.com or call 1-800-955-2232

This monthly e-mail update is brought to you by HUD's Public Housing Energy Conservation Clearinghouse (PHECC) featuring news and resources to help agencies manage energy and water costs.