

WE ARE . . .

We are excited to send you our new quarterly newsletter!

This newsletter comes from a design firm that has been consistently striving to create design solutions which provide for energy efficiency and a healthy environment (both indoors and outdoors) for over four decades.

SUSTAINABLE . . .

“Sustainability” is simply about maintaining and improving the quality of life, both for yourself and for the entire global environment. It pretty much all works together.

Easy things to do:

In warm weather, close the drapes on you east windows in the mid-morning, and on your west windows in the mid-afternoon. It helps reduce air-conditioning costs.

In cold weather, open the drapes on your south-facing windows during the middle part of the day. Close all your drapes at night. [You can't see outside that well at night anyway unless you turn off the lights.] It helps reduce heating costs.

Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC's) are chemicals used to manufacture many common materials used in buildings. Depending on your level of sensitivity, they are not particularly good for your health, or they can be really bad for your health. When you redecorate your home or office, choose “low-VOC” (or better - “No-VOC”) paints and other finish materials. It says on the label. And you can get the same colors either way.



ARCHITECTURE . . .

We believe great design is not limited to particular styles. Trends in architecture come and go just like they do in the styles of automobiles, clothing and hair-dos. We think style trends are interesting, but not



“requirements”. We work with individuals to design their personal environments. And we find that most people have fairly good ideas about what they like in that regard. We try to work with your ideas to create a wonderful design. [If you want someone else to tell you what you like, we can recommend other designers to you.]



**We think architectural “requirements” are more like:
Homeowner comfort, safety, and enjoyment;
Affordability;
Durability of materials and simplicity of maintenance;
Having a good overall environmental impact;
“Weather stays on the outside”, unless you want it to come in;
Things like that.**

Greensburg

As you likely know, the town of Greensburg, Kansas, was literally destroyed by an EF5 tornado on May 4, 2007. Since that time the citizens of Greensburg have decided to recreate their town as a model “green community” as a demonstration of how similar towns might develop, and as an “Eco-Tourism” destination. Greensburg GreenTown is a local non-profit group that is directing the residential portion of the redevelopment effort.

They are constructing a “Chain of Eco-Homes” which will serve both as B&B-type housing options for eco-tourists and as demonstrations of the evolving alternatives for sustainable residential design. Greensburg GreenTown, FreeGreen, AT&T, and AIA Kansas, recently partnered on sponsoring an international design competition to create new house designs appropriate for the Chain of Eco-Homes.

I was asked to help judge the Semi-Final round of the competition on behalf of AIA Kansas. The judging was accomplished through the donation by AT&T of the new Cisco “TelePresence” system. [Sort of “video conference meets I-Max”] All members of the panel of judges were at TelePresence sites across the country. I was at the Cisco offices in Overland Park, the largest group was at a temporary site established in Greensburg, and the representatives of FreeGreen were at the Cisco site in Boston.

By using TelePresence we were all virtually in the same place, at the same time. [But without each of us having to travel large distances. Much lower carbon footprint.] We were looking at each other (real-size), the same drawings and carrying on a normal conversation. We were able as a group

to quite efficiently examine each entry, analyze its virtues, compare each with the other entries, and eventually agree on the final ten projects. [The only difficulty I noticed was when someone outside of “the room” knocked on the door, it was hard to tell in which city that door was located.] The final round of judging will also be conducted from sites across the country using the TelePresence system. The final contest results should be available in the near future. Check the web sites listed below for contest entries, information and results.

Steve

Both federal and state governments have recently enacted legislation that will provide incentives to homeowner and builders to promote making their homes (both new and existing) more energy efficient and environmentally friendly. Many of these incentives are in the form of tax rebates and are “limited-time-offers”. Installation of new, or replacement of existing, things such as windows, exterior doors, insulation, roofing, or even the sealing of cracks, can qualify for these programs. They can save you money on purchasing things that will save you money.



Interesting websites which can provide you with more information on these subjects are:

- www.greesburggreentown.org
- www.freegreen.com/greensburg
- www.aiaks.org
- http://energytaxincentives.org/consumers/insulation_etc.php,
- <http://naturalstrategies.com.au/>
- <http://www.jstephenlanearchitect.com>

- * Whether or not you found this newsletter interesting, if you know someone who you think might please forward this on to them.
- * If you would prefer to never, ever, receive another of these newsletters from us, please let us know, and we will happily “delete you from our memory”.

If you have received this newsletter “forwarded from a friend”, can’t wait for the next issue, but don’t trust your friend to forward another and want to have your e-mail address on “the list”, please contact us also.

If, for some reason, you feel compelled to print any portion of the attached .pdf copy of this newsletter, please (if possible) use recycled paper, a recycled toner cartridge, and then recycle the paper when you’re finished with it. (Thank you)