



SAVE 'GREEN' WITH GREEN CONSTRUCTION

AS GOVERNMENT BODIES CONTINUE TO PASS legislation needed for green building and manufacturers launch more environmentally friendly products, the era of green construction will continue to boom. In fact, the Indiana state legislature passed bill SB 226, which requires that governmental bodies building public works facilities use energy-efficient materials. But what exactly is green construction, and how does it benefit building owners?

Green design, also known as sustainable design, reduces a building's negative impact on the environment while enhancing its effects on the health and performance of the building's occupants. This is possible through a wide range of strategies, such as incorporating renewable materials, making use of more natural light and improving indoor air quality.

Green building also results in financial benefits in the form of cost savings at two stages: the initial building cost as well as its overall life cycle cost. Here's an example: according to an article in Forbes magazine, the Environmental Protection Agency spent \$500,000 to make one of its buildings environmentally friendly. Although this may seem costly, the EPA is now saving \$610,000 a year through better design, resulting in increased energy efficiency. In addition, the renovations increased the building's value by \$12 million.

Building owners also are eligible to receive tax credits, zoning allowances and other incentives if they meet requirements set by the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building Rating System™. Depending on the amount of certification points that the building garners, it can qualify as Certified, Silver, Gold or Platinum—each resulting in increased financial benefits for the building owner.

Investing in green materials

A wide variety of quality sustainable building materials are available, making it easier to build green and save money while doing it. Green building materials are made of renewable resources and may improve one or more of the following building characteristics: resource efficiency, indoor air quality, energy efficiency and water conservation.

For many projects, precast concrete wall panels—referred to as “thermal mass walls” from an energy-conservation perspective—offer a sustainable and affordable option. Precast concrete walls offer numerous benefits, including: durability; resistance to fire, mold and mildew; energy efficiency, and affordability. In addition, they can be erected in a fraction of the time needed for masonry or cast-in-place walls.

This month, Fabcon is launching a “green” precast concrete wall panel—VersaCore+Green. At the same price as its predecessor, this new option offers the highest R-value (a measurement of energy efficiency) of any Fabcon panel. More than half of a VersaCore+Green panel is made from recycled content.

The future of green

Originally labeled as a trend, “green” has transformed into a solution for many markets, including food, clothing and construction. Going green has grown immensely in the past few years, and will continue to do so as more companies, as well as government officials, continue to approve and solicit use of green technologies.

An increasing number of architects and engineers specialize in green design to help building owners capitalize on the benefits gained through sustainable materials. Likewise, these green professionals can guide business owners on the LEED certification process required for eligibility of grants and rebates available in many cities.

For more information about VersaCore+Green, visit www.fabconprecast.com or call (952) 890-4444.