



# THE COMMERCIAL APPEAL

## Buildings add touch of green

Environmentally friendly construction on the rise

By Amos Maki

When the principals at Askew Nixon Ferguson Architects decided they wanted to upgrade their offices on Union, they chose to go green. To make the building more sustainable and environmentally friendly, ANF is incorporating green elements like dual flush toilets, compact fluorescent light bulbs and recycled carpet that can be recycled itself.

“We just felt like it was the right thing to do and a big part of it was to demonstrate it to our clients and show them that it can work,” said Bob Land, an architect with ANF who specializes in green design and sustainability.

ANF is part of a small but growing green building community in Memphis, which now has a chapter of the United States Green Building Council, a nonprofit dedicated to sustainable building design and construction. Architects, developers and designers regularly meet to find ways to increase building sustainability.

The movement is also growing nationally, according to a recent study from PinnacleOne, a leading construction consulting firm.

According to the study, 48 percent of the public property owners in the United States have implemented construction projects with energy efficient designs in the last year.

It also appears that more people are aware of LEED standards. According to the study, of the owners who reported energy efficient designs, 87 percent were familiar with LEED standards and 70 percent used LEED standards in their designs.

Still, there has been some resistance to the green movement. According to a 2003 survey of 500 architects, contractors and engineers by Building Design & Construction magazine, 97 percent said they saw the green movement growing.

But 58 percent said they were rebuffed in efforts to persuade colleagues or clients to do a green project.

There are only five LEED-certified buildings in Tennessee and none in Memphis, according to the USGBC. However, there are 19 projects in Tennessee -- including the Kroc Center -- aiming for LEED certification.

“The public perception is that green buildings have to cost more,” Land said.

“There are huge potential savings,” Land said. “It doesn’t make economic sense not to do it. In three to five years, you’re making money.”

Even if companies can’t attain LEED certification, there are things they can do to make their buildings more sustainable and energy-efficient. For example, the dual flush toilets ANF installed would save a family of four more than 25,000 gallons of water a year, Land said.

“Those don’t cost more than the regular ones,” he said. “It’s just making smart choices.”

The company, which has five LEED-certified architects on staff, also installed low-flow faucets, which can cut consumption up to 40 percent.

Even positioning a building so windows aren’t facing east or west -- which can cut down on the direct sunlight that warms rooms during the summer and requires more air-conditioning -- can help.

“There are green ways to do things that aren’t standard practice but they could be and they don’t cost that much more to do,” said Land. “That’s what we’ve tried to do on a lot of our projects.”

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