



PRESS RELEASE

Contact: Marie Coleman
Communications Associate, USGBC
202.335.8878
mcoleman@usgbc.org

Follow us on Twitter at [@USGBC](https://twitter.com/USGBC)

USGBC Celebrates Five Years of Green Building, Economic & Educational Progress in New Orleans

Report: New Orleans Emerges as Environmental Leader

August 24, 2010 – (Washington, DC) – Five years after the devastating hurricanes that ravaged New Orleans and much of the Gulf Coast, many organizations have stepped in to help rebuild the city, placing emphasis on resilience, sustainability and economic prosperity. The U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC), the driving force of the green building industry in America, has also made rebuilding New Orleans green a key priority. Through USGBC's LEED green building certification program, hundreds of homes, schools and commercial buildings are being rebuilt to be high-performance, resource-efficient, durable and healthier places for the people of New Orleans who occupy them. Below is a report of USGBC's efforts since 2005.

USGBC's Notable Accomplishments:

- USGBC embedded an expert in the Recovery School District to work with all schools on rebuilding green.
- All public schools built to minimum LEED Silver Certification.
- Green movie studio in the Lower Garden District will be LEED Silver.
- Make It Right has built the largest community of LEED Platinum homes in the world.
- Salvation Army's EnviRenew is building and repairing 250 homes in five New Orleans neighborhoods to be green and energy efficient.
- USGBC and EnviRenew's Natural Talent Design Competition will build four LEED Platinum homes in the Broadmoor neighborhood.
- Preservation Resource Center (PRC) and the Center for Sustainable Engagement and Development (CSED) will be opening a new LEED Platinum community center/headquarters in the Holy Cross neighborhood of the Lower Ninth Ward.
- Working with USGBC, several groups in the city are training workers to rebuild the city better and greener: LA Greencorps, Good Work Network, Electrician's Union, Delgado Community College, Deep South Center for Environmental Justice

USGBC in New Orleans and the Gulf Coast

Since the devastating hurricanes and subsequent floods that ravaged New Orleans and the Gulf Coast region in 2005, USGBC has been on the ground there, developing strategies for rebuilding even as the flood waters began receding. At its 2005 Greenbuild Conference in Atlanta, just weeks after the hurricanes came through; USGBC convened 160 participants, including many New Orleans residents,

U.S. GREEN BUILDING COUNCIL

2101 L St NW, Suite 500, Washington, DC 20037 · Phone 202 828-7422 · USGBC.org

USGBC chapter members and other leading experts in planning, environmental engineering and architecture, in a planning charrette.

The outcome was the [New Orleans Principles](#), a roadmap and specific action plans for the re-planning and rebuilding efforts, with the intent of enhancing environmental, social, and economic outcomes. To ensure the principles became actions, USGBC created the position of “New Orleans Green Building Coordinator” to facilitate and execute the strategy on the ground. For more than two years, Anisa Baldwin Metzger has been on the ground, working with the Recovery School District and has become a nationally recognized leader in translating green building strategies into real world results. USGBC’s Louisiana Chapter has been a driving force for keeping sustainability at the forefront of rebuilding efforts.

The New Orleans Principles

- 1. Respect the rights of all citizens of New Orleans.*
- 2. Restore natural protections of the greater New Orleans region.*
- 3. Implement an inclusive planning process.*
- 4. Value diversity in New Orleans.*
- 5. Protect the city of New Orleans.*
- 6. Embrace smart redevelopment.*
- 7. Honor the past; build for the future.*
- 8. Provide for passive survivability.*
- 9. Foster locally owned, sustainable businesses.*
- 10. Focus on the long term.*

The Road to Educational Recovery

Chief among the action plans was a strong commitment to ensuring the schools are not only rebuilt, but are built to LEED Silver– so that every child within the school system could attend classes in safe, structurally sound and resilient facilities that enhanced the goals of learning. Before Hurricane Katrina:

- There were 439 buildings on 127 active public school campuses, serving 63,000 students.
- Virtually all of that space was substandard - parents chose where to send their children based on how “less bad” the bathrooms were.

Then Katrina hit, and more than 80-percent of those buildings had more than 25-percent damage. With children to educate immediately, the first initiative off the drawing board was [Quick Start](#), a community process that had the goal of building one new school in each of the five city council districts in New Orleans.

- Quick Start Schools: Langston Hughes Elementary, Wilson Elementary, Lake Area High School, Landry High School and Fannie C. Williams.
- Each school is LEED Silver and will reduce energy use by 30-percent.
- The first of those schools opened in August, 2009, with double-digit increases in test scores just in the past school year.
- When phase one of the master plan is completed in 2013, there will be 17 new and 13 renovated LEED schools.

“Make it Right” with Affordable, Durable, Sustainable Homes

- The Red Cross estimates Hurricanes Katrina and Rita destroyed more than 350,000 homes.
- An additional 146,000 had major damage.
- Overall, 850,791 housing units were damaged or destroyed.
- The number of homes destroyed equals about 17-percent of annual home construction.

Among the many organizations that stepped forward, [Make It Right](#) has taken on the challenge of providing New Orleans residents with quality, affordable homes. Make It Right devoted itself to the rebuilding and restoration of the debilitated communities in ways that honor the past, but build in the advancements and practices that define today’s green buildings – energy efficiency, water efficiency, improved indoor air quality, more daylight.

[USGBC worked closely with Make It Right](#) providing sustainable design expertise in the building of:

- 50 Platinum LEED homes built in the Lower Ninth Ward that now house 179 people with 100 more LEED Platinum homes underway.
- It’s the largest community of LEED Platinum homes in the world.
- Designed to be high-performing and energy efficient.
- Make it Right LEED homes are built to use only 1/3 of the energy that would be used by a comparable new home.
- They are more sustainable than the homes they are replacing by a factor of 10.



(Make It Right activist and actor Brad Pitt, left, and USGBC President, Rick Fedrizzi, right) presented a LEED Platinum plaque to Make It Right homeowner Deidre Taylor and her children, during a Clinton Global Initiative event in Sept. 2009

Additionally, [Salvation Army's EnviRenew Initiative](#) is building 125 new homes and renovating 125 existing homes over the next three years in five New Orleans neighborhoods. The campaign revolves around the idea that financially vulnerable individuals and families are especially in need of the benefits that green building practices provide. Healthy indoor air quality, lower utility bills, and high quality construction are vitally important for moderate and low income populations in their quest for economically prosperous lifestyles.

EnviRenew is collaborating with USGBC's 2010 Natural Talent Design Competition, which will be held Friday, August 27, 2010 in New Orleans. Four student and emerging professional design team finalists will be chosen from more than 360 submitted designs of 800-square-foot, affordable homes designed to LEED Platinum guidelines. The winning designs will be built in the Broadmoor neighborhood. Once the ADA (American Disabilities Act) compliant homes have been built and the homeowners have taken residence, the homes will enter and measurement and verification phase. The design team of the home with the best energy, water, waste and other performance metrics will be deemed the final winner and will receive their prize at the 2011 Greenbuild Conference. For more details about the Natural Talent Design Competition, visit: www.usgbc.org/designcompetition

Community-Based Environmental Sustainability

Rebuilding a disaster-stricken region not only requires the construction of new facilities, but also the maintenance of the historical preservation and integrity of existing ones. The [Preservation Resource Center \(PRC\) of New Orleans](#) is transforming a house of architectural and historical significance to the Lower Ninth Ward into a community center using many of the structure's original building materials. The [Holy Cross Community Center](#) will stand as the neighborhood's "headquarters" and is expected to be certified LEED Platinum. USGBC has also supported the Lower Ninth Ward through [Historic Green](#), an organization that is helping to rebuild the Holy Cross neighborhood as the nation's first zero carbon community.

USGBC's experience in New Orleans has informed the disaster recovery assistance that its 17,000 members and 80 chapters have undertaken in response to the natural disasters that have occurred since Katrina. With tragedies such as the devastating tornadoes in Greensburg, Kansas in 2007, the January 2010 earthquake in Haiti and the recent oil spill in the Gulf Coast, the imperative to make all buildings sustainable, durable and resource efficient is critical – not solely in disaster-stricken areas, but everywhere.

###

U.S. Green Building Council

The USGBC community is transforming the way we build, design and operate our buildings and communities, leading to healthier, more resource-efficient places where people can live, work, learn and play. Headquartered in Washington, D.C., the Council is the driving force of the green building industry, which is projected to contribute \$554 billion to the U.S. gross domestic product by 2013. USGBC leads a diverse constituency of builders and environmentalists, corporations and nonprofit organizations, elected officials, concerned citizens, teachers and students. The USGBC community comprises 80 local chapters, 17,000 member companies and organizations, and more than 150,000 individuals who have earned LEED Professional Credentials. Visit www.usgbc.org for more information.

U.S. GREEN BUILDING COUNCIL

2101 L St NW, Suite 500, Washington, DC 20037 · Phone 202 828-7422 · USGBC.org