



The Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality's headquarters was the first state government office building in the state to be recognized by the Green Building Initiative's Green Globes environmental assessment and rating system.

## Gear up for green

Get a handle on this market—or risk losing sales opportunities. **by Dan Carazo**

**When it comes to green and sustainable** building issues, many electrical distributors have two main concerns: the impact all of this green talk is likely to have on their businesses, and just how well they are positioned to benefit from it.

"The green building market is growing about 50% per year—far faster than the commercial market," said Richard Walker, senior national environmental solutions manager for Siemens Building Technologies.

"Electrical contractors and distributors need to get up to speed and add value to this growing market," said Jordan Lerner, director for TAC Energy Solutions Division.

At Eoff Electric, a Sonepar USA dis-

tributor in Portland, Ore., a decision was made more than six years ago to support energy management applications in green projects. Today, the company has a dedicated team focused on automated energy management. "Our projects have saved more than 3 million kilowatt hours each year—and we have only scratched the surface in a huge untapped market for industrial retrofit," said Les Williamson, president.

The company holds training sessions

on the financial payback of installing new, high-performance, energy-efficient lighting at industrials and utilities. "We've also completed an energy audit and helped customers file for energy trust rebates for installation of energy-efficient electrical products," noted Williamson. "It's powerful when you can deliver the rebate check to a customer."

According to Williamson, those in CII construction in the next five years will miss a huge opportunity if they don't train personnel to handle the green initiative. "If the channel fails to get a handle on this market, it could lose sales opportunities," he warned.

# current

"New companies are popping up that are totally focused on providing green expertise."

Fortunately, many distributors already have the tools to take advantage of the green movement.

"Many don't realize how green they are," said Dave Davidson, solutions center manager for Eaton's electrical group. "Most already sell many of the ballasts, lighting fixtures, and lighting dimming controls that, if integrated properly, maximize energy efficiency."

"Companies see that they must meet the code and take notice of LEED," said Mike Crane, product marketing manager for Hubbell Building Automation.

Rebecca Hadley-Catter, manager, SOURCE Cooper Lighting Center, expects LEED will continue to increase the demand for sustainable lighting as indicated by LEED NC v2.2, which requires minimum compliance with ASHRAE/IESNA 90.1-2004.

"To gain additional points in lighting projects, demand lighting systems that integrate fixtures, daylighting, and controls and exceed power densities required in ASHRAE/IESNA 90.1-2004 by 7% to 42%," said Hadley-Catter.

She also noted that companies should have taken advantage of the EPAct tax deduction and installed new lighting systems before the Dec. 31, 2007, deadline.

According to Eric Lind, director of commercial marketing for Lutron Electronics, sustainable design is affecting every part of the U.S. construction in-

dustry because of the value it brings to building owners. "Energy savings go directly to the bottom line. Almost every electrical aspect of a building project is impacted by sustainable design. It's a key area to focus on when trying to achieve LEED certification.

"Lighting and lighting control have the biggest impact on the sustainability and LEED viability of a project," continued Lind. "Lighting is the single biggest energy draw in a building. Dimming saves energy, so every product we manufacture contributes in a major way to the sustainability of a building."

Susan Anderson, manager, energy relations for Osram Sylvania, noted that the watts-per-square-foot allowances in 2007 ASHRAE 90.1 declined from the 2004 standard. "This mandates the use of more energy-efficient products, so the distributor supplying the contractor needs to be aware of the best high-efficiency products. Most states have already adopted an energy code, which means that most projects that require permits are affected," she said.

According to Ty Foren, market development manager of commercial, industrial, and OEM for Cooper Power Systems, "Green and sustainable product and service offerings will grow more than the new construction market as existing building owners seek green, sustainable solutions as well." ■

*Carazo provides B2B marketing services for electrical industry organizations. He can be reached at [dcaraz@optonline.net](mailto:dcaraz@optonline.net).*



©YURI ARCURI/DREAMTIME.COM

## Market the message

Given the current clamor about sustainability, many companies are rushing to announce new green products and eco-initiatives in both the mainstream media and industry publications. Many are also publishing their green accomplishments in their own marketing literature, through trade associations, and on the Internet.

All reports indicate that customers, suppliers, employees, investors, and surrounding communities welcome companies' green programs and policies. "We've seen an increase recently in the number of job seekers who want to work for green companies or in industries that are helpful to the environment," said Bernadette Kenny, chief career officer of Adecco USA, a human resources consulting and research firm.

Applying this information to distribution, the following questions might spring to mind:

- How can value be added to current product lines and services, green-certified products, and electronic billing?
- Can entirely new revenue paths be created—such as a recycling service for electronic waste or a consulting service to help municipalities reduce greenhouse gas emissions?
- How can we differentiate ourselves from the competition? Can things like biodegradable packaging, hybrid delivery trucks, or well-publicized support for a local environmental organization do this?

As progressive corporate leaders are demonstrating in virtually every industry, there are myriad opportunities to capitalize on green—and to secure free publicity in the bargain. ■

*Jan Niehaus is a St. Louis-based freelance writer. She can be reached at [JanNiehaus@charter.net](mailto:JanNiehaus@charter.net) or 314-644-4135.*

## Q+A

**Q: What is LEED?**

**A:** In 2000, the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) launched the LEED program (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design). LEED calls for construction projects to be in compliance with ASHRAE/IESNA 90.1; LEED-registered projects earn points and awards for meeting energy reduction.

Submit questions to [mbyers@naed.org](mailto:mbyers@naed.org)



© JULIEN GRONDIN/ISTOCKPHOTO