

## **Summary of October 4, 2005, SBI Roundtable on Green Building**

On October 4, 2005, as part of Eugene Mayor Kitty Piercy's Sustainable Business Initiative, ten participants representing various sectors of the Green Building industry met at the Eugene Public Library. Included were architects, builders, trades representatives, equipment installers and technical assistance providers. The following is a summary of the discussion, based on the minutes taken by the city recorder and Bob Doppelt and his graduate student note takers.

The meeting started with a presentation by Terry Miller from the G-Rated Program describing how the Portland Office of Sustainable Development has expanded green building in Portland. Three key elements of his office's programs include:

1. Education and Technical Assistance
  - Easily available print materials
  - Case studies of private sector green building projects
  - Online resource directory ([www.nwgreendirectory.com](http://www.nwgreendirectory.com)), which includes lists of providers and green building products and services.
2. Continual Stream of Events
  - Rethink-an educational and networking forum for the green building for industry and the public;
  - BIG--'Build it Green"--self-guided tour of 20 homes and residences.
  - Technical trainings and workshops
  - Information Fair at Environmental Building Supplies
3. Incentives
  - \$500,000 a year for the next five years available through an RFP
  - Project "Green Build", working with the Bureau of Development, is a research effort to identify barriers to green building and code improvements for the State or local jurisdictions
  - An ombudsman to help with permitting issues

Funding for the Portland program comes from various sources including solid waste tipping fees, the Climate Trust, and other similar programs. An advisory committee oversees the program.

Given Portland's experience, Terry's suggestion for how to expand green building in Eugene include: develop a database of successes and mistakes; stay relevant to the needs of a fast evolving industry with continuous outreach; form a local advisory council to help steer and provide public support; tailor the definition of green building to specific audiences.

A discussion followed Mr. Miller's presentation. Among the suggestions made for expanding business and job opportunities in Green Building in Eugene were:

- City needs to clearly define what green building encompasses and that is makes economical sense
- Eugene City Council should set a goal for building green in public buildings and buildings constructed with public dollars (e.g. meeting LEED standards) and for providing incentives for others to do so voluntarily.
- City's two prominent roles should be: a) provide the needed "infrastructure" to encourage more green building (e.g. inspiration, education, recognition, incentives)

and; b) carefully adjust codes and ordinances as information and needs become clear.

- Need education for local architects, builders, construction trades, landscape architects and the general public, drawing on existing expertise
- Incentives could include: speeding the permitting process for buildings being constructed to green building standards; creating a city "green bureau" (e.g. with an ombudsman, running "eco-charrettes") to assist with design issues in the initial stage of the building process and help with permitting; establishing a one-stop-shopping resource with information about codes and green building resources, and educational materials; publicly recognizing companies that build green, and build green for low income members of the community.
- Create a one stop-shopping information resource of green building suppliers, products and services for contractors, suppliers, consumers, designers, city staff (could be like the Energy Outlet only improved, web-based, or combo)
- City could use code changes made in other communities as the model for code updates that encourage the use of green building practices (this is a goal of the city's green building pilot projects).
- Provide consumer education through a public/private partnership between suppliers & the city for workshops, green building tours (modeled after Portland's BIG program)
- Find a way for green building to be available to low-income populations and those who do not own buildings.
- Identify mechanisms to assist local companies in the green building sector to pay living wages for employees.
- City/county/school districts should adopt language requiring living wages and benefits for employees of local green builders.
- Work with the financial community to provide lower cost and more accessible financing for green buildings
- Provide trainings through EWEB, UO, LCC for construction trades-people
- Create partnerships and increase communication between builders/construction, designers, etc.
- Partner with State, County and other jurisdictions to encourage and incorporate green building practices in new construction and re-models
- Link or merge this roundtable with the City's green building advisory committee as they are working on similar issues (although the roundtable is focused on business and job creation and the city's process intends to determine how the city can help support green building)

#### Next Steps:

- Work with and support the City's efforts to eliminate barriers (already working on three green building projects with the goal of learning more about coding, etc.)
- Identify funding for an ombudsman and to establish one-stop shopping information web site (ensure that education includes information on externalities of traditional building and payback period and long-term cost-benefits of green building)
- Work with the City's Green Building Advisory Committee to identify low hanging fruit, promote green building, educate the public

Link the SBI Green Building Roundtable and City's Green Building Advisory Committee if possible.