

DVGBC News

Fall 2006

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Meet

Meet Rob Diemer, Chairman of DVGBC

When did you first become aware of environmental concerns?

When I was a kid growing up in the 1960's, there were public service announcements on the TV about pollution, littering, etc. I remember all the coverage about Love Canal. I knew the environment was important, but it wasn't personal to me. In 2000, I started hearing people talk about green buildings, and I was asked about sustainable design in several project interviews. I started educating myself on sustainability and LEED and gradually realized that this was something that I wanted to be involved in. In June 2001, I went to a seminar at the Fuel Cell Research Institute in Irvine, California to learn more about fuel cells for a client that was interested in them. California was in the middle of rolling black outs and power outages, and everyone I met was very excited about green buildings. I caught their excitement. When I got back to the east coast, I decided to sign up for the USGBC annual meeting (pre-GreenBuild) in Tucson, AZ. I have gone back every year since then.

When and why did you become actively involved in DVGBC?

Once I realized that I wanted to be involved in green buildings, I needed to find a way to get opportunities to work on green building projects. I thought that it would be good to get involved in the USGBC but hadn't yet found a way. In 2002 I was at Green Build in Austin, Texas in 2002 and attended the USGBC member day. I think the DVGBC was recognized as a new chapter that day, and I saw Scott Kelly holding the chapter flag. When I saw him later on at the conference, I introduced myself and said I wanted to get involved in the DVGBC. He immediately put me to work on the Educational Programs committee.

How has your involvement in DVGBC impacted your engineering practice?

My practice is totally different now then it was 5 years ago. I try to concentrate on green buildings and LEED projects. Through my involvement in DVGBC, I have met a lot of people and gotten involved in a lot of projects to which I wouldn't have otherwise had access. Beyond my engineering practice, my involvement with the DVGBC has

helped me grow as a person. I have met some very inspiring people. I have had a chance to work on projects and initiatives that are far removed from engineering. To me, this personal growth has been the real value of my involvement with the Council.

As the DVGBC's new chairman, what are the elements that make up this initiative about which you feel most passionately?

I think the DVGBC has an opportunity to be a catalyst for positive change in Philadelphia and the Delaware Valley. If we as humans are going to reverse the affects of global warming, Americans needs to demonstrate leadership by changing the focus of our country from a consuming, extractive economy to a sustainable, regenerative economy that also addresses social justice. This is the legacy we must leave our children. As Al Gore says, it is a moral imperative.

There is a lack of leadership at the top necessary to lead the American people to a sustainable future focused on the triple bottom line. Change will need to be initiated from the bottom up, and our regional chapter needs to play a role by helping define and advocate for a more sustainable future for the Delaware Valley.

In the short time the DVGBC has been in existence, we have shown an amazing ability to get things done and to demonstrate leadership within both the USGBC and the region. It is this capacity that excites me the most about the DVGBC.

And what are your priorities?

My priorities are for the DVGBC to take an active role in advocating for change in the Delaware Valley. My hope is that by engaging community, business and governmental leaders and organizations, we can have a greater impact. I believe that our advocacy needs to be focused on two primary objectives; making sustainability a priority for Philadelphia and the Delaware Valley and expanding the demand for green buildings. The two objectives go together because as the region gains a better understanding of the benefits of sustainability, and begins to move toward more sustainable government and business practices, the demand for green buildings will increase as well.





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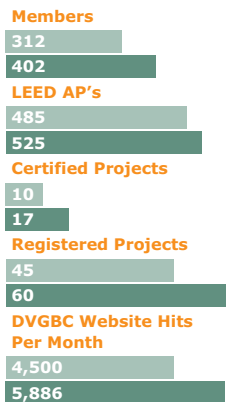
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Sponsor Spotlight

AKF Engineers, LLP is an award winning mechanical and electrical engineering consulting firm specializing in green buildings and sustainable design. The firm has offices in Stamford, CT; New York, NY; Princeton, NJ; Philadelphia, PA and Arlington, VA.



DVGBC-at-a-Glance (as of October 2006)



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High Tech High

Living the Future in a New Philadelphia High School

Today, graduating from high school with just the three R's doesn't cut it. Graduates will enter a world that demands individuals with sophisticated skills such as problem solving, effective communication and critical thinking. For this reason, the School District of Philadelphia (SDP) teamed up with the Microsoft Corporation, to create a new, 750-student, 180,000 ft² high school in West Philadelphia's Fairmount Park, where the primary goal is to infuse technology or "digital literacy" into every aspect of the learning environment.

Extensive studies have confirmed that a facility with fresh air, daylight, and superior indoor air quality is a key component of high quality education. With this in mind, the SDP decided to construct the School of the Future as a high performance green school. It was designed by the Prisco Group of Howell NJ, using the LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) rating system as a tool. LEED demands that environmentally sound building technologies be used resulting in operational cost savings for the School District through energy, water and operational efficiencies and better performance of students and staff from improved indoor air quality.

The School of the Future has many unique features. A system is in place that collects rainwater from various roofs, and gravity feeds it into a 30,000 gallon underground tank. This rain water is then pumped back up to the school to be used for flushing toilets and urinals. This combined with other water efficient design is predicted to

reduce water use by 60% as compared to a standard building. A vegetated roof on the school's performance center will help control water runoff during rain storms and an Energy Star roof with strategically placed shade trees will reduce the urban heat island effect. Over 90% of all wood used in this project was sustainably harvested as approved by the Forest Stewardship Council.

Superior indoor air quality will result from the use of low emission paints and materials and advanced ventilation systems. During construction more than 50% of all waste was diverted from landfills by recycling and when the school is in operation a comprehensive recycling program will manage the building's waste paper, metals and plastics.

The combination of excellent daylighting, high efficient lighting, a well designed building envelope, and an innovative "ice storage" HVAC system will result in energy savings that are expected to exceed the current building codes (ASHRAE 90.1) by 49%. With financial support from a Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection Energy Harvest Grant, 10 kilowatts of electricity will be generated from solar panels on the school roof and through building integrated solar glass panes. Though these and other features, the building will become a living textbook as students will monitor and analyze building systems as part of their learning process.

The School of the Future serves as an outstanding example that "high tech" commands "high performance." The School District of Philadelphia is to be commended for creating this vision that will be modeled around the country.



The Microsoft School of the Future, designed by the Prisco Group to be built in Fairmount Park, is a high performance green school. The School District of Philadelphia anticipates cost savings through energy, water and operational efficiencies and better performance of students and staff from improved indoor air quality.