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## Conference aims to build better green engineers

The latest strategies for efficient, eco-friendly buildings are on tap for the two-day event in Beaverton

POSTED: 06:00 AM PST Friday, December 14, 2007  
BY ALISON RYAN

Expectations for efficient, earth-friendly buildings are on the rise. For engineers working in a rapidly changing industry, staying on top of environmentally savvy design strategies means finding a fresh set of resources.

"It's not like you can go to a textbook and find this out," said Mark Frankel, Cascadia Region Green Building Council board member and technical director of New Buildings Institute. "It's all new, cutting-edge technology that we're expected to keep up with."

That ear-to-the-ground education is where the Cascadia Region Green Building Council is trying to step in. Engineeringgreen07, to be held Monday and Tuesday in Beaverton, is aimed at integrating green practices into disciplines ranging from civil to lighting engineering.

Developing the two-day program meant engaging voices from across the building community, said Gina Franzosa, Cascadia's Oregon director.

Cascadia put out a call for papers and worked with organizations that included the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers, the American Society of Civil Engineers, the Illuminating Engineering Society, the American Institute of Architects, Better Bricks and Energy Trust to come up with ideas.

"We're broadening the scope," Franzosa said.

The result is a mix of practical presentations – like designing and paying for on-site renewables, working with pervious paving, and retrofitting lighting – case studies, and wider, industry-affecting information sessions.

Frankel and colleague Cathy Turner, for example, will present results of a study that looked at 120 buildings certified through the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design rating system to see how actual energy use stacked up against predicted energy used. And the news for the LEED program – and building council – is good:

"Our buildings do in fact save energy, and yes, we can prove it," Frankel said.

Last year's conference, held in Seattle, was Cascadia's first engineer-aimed effort. The sessions, which focused mostly on mechanical engineering practices, drew about 200 people.

The idea, Franzosa said, is to create a smaller, more education-focused event than Cascadia's other big-ticket conference.

"We anticipate always keeping it a more intimate environment than Living Future," she said.

The conference is also planned to be a yearly event, with another lineup heading to Seattle in 2008 and Vancouver, B.C, in 2009.

The frontline learning potential, according to Frankel, is something that engineering pros need.

"The industry's changing very fast," he said. "There's a lot of expectation from cities, governments and the public at large that we're going to make our building more efficient very quickly."

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