

Cascadia Green Building Council Reaches Beyond Buildings

Honing its mission and restating its focus, Cascadia calls for the rapid transformation of the built environment

(Seattle) May 6, 2010 – In a move that reflects its increasing focus on urban infrastructure, progressive building codes and regulations, and sustainable lifestyles, the [Cascadia Green Building Council](#) today unveiled a new mission statement and strategic vision along with a revised name.

Cascadia's new mission, "to lead a transformation towards a built environment that is socially just, culturally rich and ecologically restorative," highlights both the environmental NGO's growing focus on issues beyond the scope of the individual buildings and its increasing national leadership role. This move builds on the reputation that Cascadia has earned in recent years as a resource for policy-makers and design professionals interested in supporting advanced green building practices.

The built environment is currently contributing to a massive environmental crisis. It is a major source of green house gasses. Outmoded water systems waste energy and lead to the wide-scale pollution of our streams and rivers. Global sourcing of building products undermines local economies and ecosystems. Buildings are riddled with toxic materials (including PVC, mercury and cadmium) that pose major health risks to all living things. Sprawling cities leave people dependent on cars and detached from their communities. A more comprehensive and integrated approach to green building is required to address these systemic challenges.

"We need a paradigm shift in our approach to the built environment," says Jason F. McLennan, CEO of the Cascadia Green Building Council. "We can't get there by focusing solely on single buildings and a 'project-by-project approach.' If we want societies capable of thriving in a world of limited resources, we have to develop appropriately-scaled, regionally-relevant strategies for water, energy, transportation and agriculture, and we have to integrate these strategies into our architecture and urban planning. Cascadia's new mission statement and motto, 'Envisioning a Living Future', reflect our emphasis on a system-wide approach to change and on the end-game philosophy that drives our work."

Cascadia has also streamlined its name. Operating now as the Cascadia Green Building Council (and dropping the redundant word, "Region"), the organization will continue to serve Alaska, British Columbia, Washington and Oregon as its primary market. Active branches in 14 cities will keep Cascadia's programs targeted and relevant to the communities it serves. At the same time, the organization will seek out more opportunities to partner with green building leaders worldwide to help create a new model of sustainability for the built environment.

The full scope of Cascadia's new strategic vision can be observed in the current iteration of the Living Building Challenge™. In November 2009, Cascadia and the [International Living Building Institute](#) released the Living Building Challenge 2.0, a major reworking of the revolutionary green building standard that Cascadia first launched three and a half years ago. [Version 2.0](#) reflects a similarly expanded scope, providing a path for "Living" certification of

everything from single-room remodels to whole neighborhoods. Living Building Challenge 2.0 is the first green building certification program to integrate urban agriculture, social justice and universal access issues as mandatory requirements. A new section of the Challenge addresses equity, examining ways to create equal access for all, incorporate Universal Design considerations and end economic segregation of public and semi-public places.

There are 70 proposed Living Buildings in some stage of design or construction in various countries, with the first four buildings expected to be certified this year. In an effort to oversee the global advancement of Living Buildings, Cascadia established the [International Living Building Institute](#) in 2009. Cascadia currently operates the International Living Building Institute, which is dedicated to the creation of Living Buildings, sites, infrastructure and communities across the globe.

About Cascadia

The Cascadia Green Building Council is a 501(c) (3) non-profit in the US and is incorporated as a nonprofit in British Columbia. Cascadia's mission is to lead a transformation towards a built environment that is socially just, culturally rich and ecologically restorative. Cascadia is one of three original chapters of the US Green Building Council and, as a chapter of the Canada Green Building Council as well, is the only international chapter in North America. It is the originator of the Living Building Challenge, authored by Jason F. McLennan. www.cascadiagbc.org

###

Media Contacts:

Kathleen Warren, Parsons Public Relations
Kathleen@parsonspr.com / 206.789.5668

Megan Hilfer, Parsons Public Relations
Megan@parsonspr.com / 206.789.5668