

## Bend partners with group on sustainability

By Rachael Rees / *The Bulletin*

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What started as a competition to stimulate conversation about sustainability has influenced the city of Bend to rethink the infrastructure of Bend's future.

In 2011, the International Living Future Institute, an environmental nongovernmental organization promoting sustainability, hosted a worldwide competition encouraging cities to apply the principles of the Living Building Challenge to their communities.

A group of Bend volunteers created a team and took on the challenge, envisioning a future Bend as a community based on the competition's rigorous set of performance standards for sustainability.

Steven Ames, principal of Steven Ames Planning, an urban planning business in Bend, was one of the six team members. Ames said the competition got people in the community thinking about the realm of possibilities that could materialize into reality.

"It generated a lot of other interest in Bend following on the notion of what it would be like to build a city to a more stringent standard for sustainability," he said Monday.

That vision, according to Sarah Costello, vice president for development and communications at International Living Future Institute, was exactly the purpose of the competition.

"By starting to create re-imagining of local cities we could spur communities to begin the work of building actionable plans that would lead to true sustainability for those cities," Costello said. "The audacious goal was the people who started the project wouldn't want to stop and would take the project to the next level of community engagement."



Source: City of Bend

The city of Bend has taken its first step, partnering with the International Living Future Institute to look at options for applying the principles of the Living Building Challenge to Bend's Central Area Plan.

Next week, Jason McLennan, CEO of the International Living Future Institute and Cascadia Green Building Council, is expected to kick off the collaboration by meeting with city staff to discuss the scope of the project, as well as give a public lecture at the Tower Theater.

"Our interest is in helping the community with its long-range sustainability practices," McLennan said. "It's a meeting to figure out how best to provide technical support to the city related to sustainability and the community's planning efforts."

McLennan said the institute is able to provide services to the city without payment from the city because of funding from the Summit Foundation, a Washington D.C.-based organization promoting sustainable communities throughout the U.S.

"We were funded to select three cities in the U.S. to partner with and bring our expertise and the technical services to," he said. And among those chosen cities was Bend.

Jodie Barram, mayor pro tem for the city of Bend, said the meeting with McLennan is just the start of exploring potential changes to the central area of the city.

"Right now the infrastructure, the roads and the sewer system can't handle what the city expects in the future as it grows," she said. "We're starting this initial discovery process for the most transformative impact to that central area, a sizable portion of Bend."

While she said the city and McLennan aren't sure what the end product is going to look like, she said the plan is to create a new infrastructure based on environmental, fiscal and social responsibility. The institute has agreed to make a \$50,000 in-kind donation for the effort, she said.

"What this collaboration is going to do," Barram said, "is look at what kind of systems Bend could use to make it sustainable for the long term as it's redeveloped."

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## If you go:

**What:** Jason F. McLennan, CEO of the International Living Future Institute and Cascadia Green Building Council will discuss community transformation, the future of architecture and design and address restorative development opportunities for Bend.

**Where:** Tower Theater, 835 NW Wall St.

**When:** Jan. 30 Doors open at 6:00 p.m. Lecture begins at 6:30 p.m.

**Cost:** Free and open to the public

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