30 Years of Green Building in the U.S.

As *The BuildingGreen Report* (formerly *Environmental Building News* or "EBN") celebrates its 30th year of publication, we decided to track the growth—and explosion—of the green building movement. We start in 1990 with the founding of AIA's Committee on the Environment.

- BuildingGreen Milestones
- The Larger Green Building Movement
- Products & Technologies

1990

- *Low-e glass goes mainstream.*
- AIA Committee on the Environment is founded.

1992

- Environmental Building News *launches. First feature article: rigid foam's ozone layer and global warming problems.*
- AIA *Environmental Resource Guide* pioneers LCA reports of building materials.
- New concerns arise about the global warming potential of blowing agents in foam insulation.

1993

- *EBN first breaks ground on embodied carbon of cement.*
- U.S. Green Building Council is founded.
  –
  Forest Stewardship Council is created.

1994

- *EBN publishes a seminal article: "Should We Phase Out PVC?"*
- *USGBC considers (and rejects) a PVC ban.*

1997

- *EBN calls for phaseout of wood treated with arsenic-based preservatives.*
  –
  EBN Archives offered on CD-ROM.
- AIA awards its first COTE Top Ten projects.

1998

- "LEED Lurches Ahead," according to an EBN headline.

1999

- *The first GreenSpec Product Directory is published.*
- Energy Star Portfolio Manager goes live.

2000

- *Nadav Malin is picked to lead new LEED Materials & Resources Technical Advisory Group.*
  –
  Alex Wilson joins USGBC Board.
- LEED pilot launches.

2002

- *First LEDs are getting used in the field.*
- *BuildingGreen starts annual tradition of announcing Top 10 Green Building Products at Greenbuild.*
- First Greenbuild in Austin, TX attracts 4,189 attendees.
  –
  World Green Building Council is founded.

2004

- California VOC testing protocol is established as a standard.

2005

- Cradle to Cradle certification becomes available.
  –
  Ed Mazria launches 2030 Challenge.

2006

- Living Building Challenge comes on the scene.
  –
  Biophilia emerges as a green building concept.

2007

- *Landmark EBN article focuses on "transportation energy intensity" of buildings.*

2008

- *Sustainable Design Leaders network established.*

2009

- *LEEDuser goes live.*

2010

- *Resilient Design Institute is founded.*

2011

- Washington, D.C. begins enforcing the country's first energy reporting law.

2012

- *Resilience movement gets traction with Alex Wilson's coining of the term "passive survivability."*
- *An alarm sounds with "Flame Retardants under Fire."*

2013

- *"Engineering a Wood Revolution" marks the beginning of interest in mass timber construction.*
  –
  EBN goes paperless.
- LEED v4 advances materials transparency and life-cycle assessment.

2014

- WELL Building Standard launches.

2015

- *California law leads to widespread removal of halogenated flame retardants from furniture.*
- Paris Climate Agreement is adopted internationally.

2016

- Fitwel takes root.

2017

- *EBN gets a new name:* The BuildingGreen Report.

2018

- *XPS manufacturers phase out the most hazardous flame retardants.*
- *Additional "Peer Networks" launched, modeled on Sustainable Design Leaders.*
- AIA Code of Ethics introduces "Obligations to the Environment."

2019

- Equity explodes as a green building imperative amid police shootings and protests.
  –
  AIA goes big on sustainability with Climate Action Plan and Framework for Design Excellence.

2020

- *Photovoltaics become the lowest-cost electricity source.*
- COVID-19 gives rise to new concerns about how we inhabit (and ventilate) our buildings.
  –
  XPS manufacturers begin offering insulation with low global warming potential.
  –
  Due to COVID, adoption of healthy building certifications skyrockets.

2021

- The BuildingGreen Report *celebrates its 30th volume of publication.*

BuildingGreen

©2021 BuildingGreen, Inc. All rights reserved.