Congressman Quigley Visits LEED-Certified, Net-Zero Home in Chicago

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Last Monday, Congressman Mike Quigley of Illinois 5th Congressional District paid a visit to the home of Jacek Helenowski to get a firsthand look at one of the highest scoring residential LEED for Homes projects to date - and one of the first net-zero energy homes in Chicago. His goal was to see in-person the technology on display in his north Chicago Congressional District.

Quigley is no stranger to green building and design. In 2002, while a Commissioner for Cook County, he was instrumental in drafting and passing an ordinance requiring LEED certification of all county buildings. The ordinance also calls for each modernized county building to achieve certification through the LEED for Existing Building Operations and Maintenance (EBOM) rating system.

Since being elected to Congress in 2009, he continues to advocate for sustainable solutions for the built environment. He has voted to create new funding opportunities for K-12 institutions to update their facilities in an efficient, high-performing fashion. He has also been a co-sponsor of legislation to incentivize integrated community planning and to expand Federal procurement of more green products.

So, it is worth taking note when a green building aficionado is impressed by what he sees.

"I have been fighting for greener living since before I was elected to public office over a decade ago, so it's an honor to have such an achievement in my district," said Quigley.

The Helenowski's home renovation has clearly been a labor of love. From the use of insulation made from local soybeans to the wood reclaimed from a Chicago building fire, no detail was left unnoticed. It is a great demonstration of innovation and what dedicated people can accomplish when they have a goal.

"My hope is that this is the future of construction - because as the Helenowski family has shown us, it is a boon to the local economy, saves on energy costs, and is terrific for our environment," added Quigley.

While this home is what builders and homeowners may aspire to, there is a lot that can be accomplished without installing a vegetative roof or a geothermal system. The new LEED for Homes Scoring Tool allows builders to explore LEED for Homes in an easily-navigable system. One of the features is a QuickScore option, where users can answer some general questions about their project and get preliminary feedback on where their project might be rated, along with a list of actions and measures that would need to be addressed. This is an incredibly useful resource to see how current and future projects compare to reaching LEED for Homes certification. For homeowners looking to for tips on making smaller projects green and how to connect with local green building professionals, check out www.greenhomeguide.com.

For more information on the LEED for Homes visit: usgbc.org/homes.

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