Happy Birthday LEED!

Published on **30 Mar 2013** | Written by **Selina Holmes** | Posted in **LEED**

Thirteen years ago, on March 30, 2000, LEED went from being an idea to a fully functioning rating system. Who could have known that this idea would turn into a global green building movement, with more than 1.5 **million** square feet of LEED space certifying every day? Who would have imagined that the program would grow to include over **184,000 LEED credentialed professionals** and over **51,000** projects participating in LEED, making up 9.7 billion square feet of construction space?

And we're just getting started. The next update to LEED, LEED v4, is scheduled to come out later this year and is poised to have a greater impact on CO^2 emissions than any that has come before it.

So, in honor of LEED's 13th birthday (March 30), we made a list of 13 facts you may not know about LEED and green building:

1. In 2012, over half the buildings that registered for LEED were outside of the U.S.

2. LEED projects can be found in 147 countries and territories around the world — that's almost 70 percent of the globe.

3. The second tallest building in the world, Taipei 101, is LEED Platinum certified.

4. In 2012, with 36.97 square feet of LEED-certified space per person, Washington, D.C., was the greenest "state" in the nation.

5. In 2012, Soldier Field in Chicago became the first NFL stadium to certify to LEED.

6. LEED isn't just for buildings — in 2007, Eliot Tower in Portland, Ore., became the first-ever LEED-certified neighborhood.

7. Retrofitting one out of 100 American homes with water-efficient fixtures could avoid approximately 80,000 tons of greenhouse gas emissions, the equivalent of removing 15,000 cars from the road for one year.

8. LEED projects are responsible for diverting over 80 million tons of waste from landfills, and that number is expected to grow to 540 million tons of waste diverted by 2030.

9. The first LEED for Homes project was certified in 2006 — today over 33,000 residential units have certified to LEED.

10. Who says you have to certify one at a time? Through the LEED Volume program, Vornado Realty Trust certified 30 buildings to LEED.

11. LEED projects can be found in all 50 states and on six out of seven continents — there are no LEED projects in Antarctica, but you never know what the future holds.

12. Compared to the average commercial building, the LEED Gold-certified buildings in the General Services Administration's portfolio generally consume 25 percent less energy and 11 percent less water.

13. By 2015, an estimated 40 to 48 percent of new nonresidential construction by value will be green, equating to a $120-$145 billion opportunity.

Happy birthday, LEED. We salute you!

Know any fun LEED facts? Share your favorite below.

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