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The Heartland Region market brief and state snapshots

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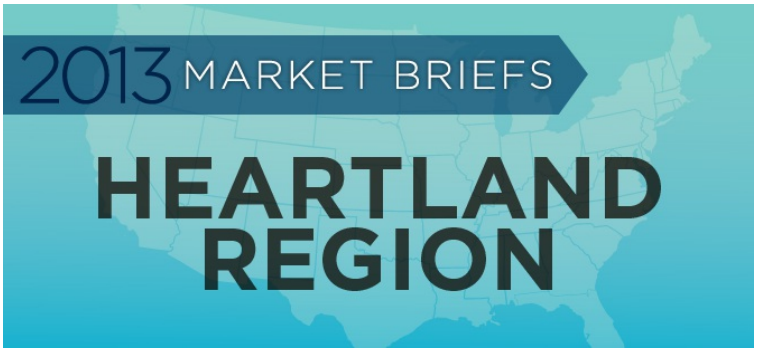

The heart of the country, the heart of USGBC.

The Heartland Regional Committee (HRC), created in 2005, is composed of 16 chapters across 12 states, from Ohio in the East to Kansas in the West and north to the Canadian border. Chapters included in our region are Minnesota, Wisconsin Green Building Alliance, West Michigan, Detroit Regional, Nebraska Flatwater, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Northwest Ohio, Northeast Ohio, Central Ohio, Cincinnati Regional, Central Plains, Missouri Gateway, North Dakota and South Dakota.

As diverse as the chapters within the region are, we share a common mission and over the years have come together to share resources and celebrate successes. For the past 10 years, the chapters of the HRC have partnered to promote the region's annual conference, Greening the Heartland, which provides both lively dialogue on issues of environmental importance along with tangible, proven approaches for green building projects and sustainable development. The conference typically draws 500 attendees and has been hosted in many different states to allow access to these resources across the region. Greening the Heartland 2013 is being hosted by USGBC-Illinois this fall.

In addition to continuing our outreach through our regional conference, chapters have placed an emphasis on growing the emerging professionals (EP) network within our region. Over the past eight months, our chapters have exceeded their goal for new EP members by 125 percent, with the Central Plains and Missouri Gateway chapters recruiting 40 new members each. Our region is well on its way to helping USGBC reach the goal of 5,000 new EPs by December 2015.

On the advocacy front, chapters are actively promoting the improvement of efficiency within our building stock, working with local and state governments to adopt ordinances that promote energy and water efficiency in buildings. Several cities within the region are considering the value of building energy and water benchmarking ordinances to unlock information and enable smart investments. Minneapolis adopted its benchmarking ordinance earlier this year. In addition to these ordinances, cities in Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Ohio and Wisconsin have adopted and are participating in the Architecture 2030 Challenge in order to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions of the building sector. At the state level, Illinois, Minnesota and Ohio have also adopted the 2030 Challenge.

Locally, several chapters have developed strong green schools committees to strive toward realizing our dream of green schools for everyone within this generation. One example is Iowa's Green Schools Committee, which was awarded grant funding from the Center for Green Schools at USGBC to amplify the Green School Scale project. Participating schools utilize this scale to assess their school, develop an action plan and submit their project for review with the hope of receiving funding toward completion of the plan. The Iowa Economic Development Authority has graciously matched funding for this project.

Not only are the green schools committees dedicated to providing green schools to everyone, school districts across the region are working to guarantee healthy, efficient and productive learning spaces for their students. Ohio is THE leader in green schools, with more than 300 LEED-registered or -certified schools, exceeding the next closest state (California) by over 100 projects!

USGBC chapters in the Midwest are getting creative in their outreach and finding ways to convey their mission to the community. One example is the Detroit Regional Chapter, which developed an online video about opportunities at the chapter.

Promoting improvement in areas such as water, waste and transportation infrastructure are just as important to our region and have resulted in the listing of three of our cities in the top 25 most sustainable cities as ranked by the Economist Intelligence Unit.

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