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Making Trouble @ Greenbuild

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The coveted "Troublemaker" badge ribbons made another appearance at Greenbuild 2012.

USGBC is full of troublemakers, and that is a great thing.

Throughout this year's Greenbuild International Conference and Expo in San Francisco, attendees were empowered to make their voices heard. Hundreds lined up to send postcards to their elected representatives. Each postcard carried an important message that extolled the power of the Greenbuild conference, the green building industry and the sustainability movement. This message will help to educate members of Congress, governors, state officials and local leaders on the impact of the green building industry in their communities. By filling out a postcard, each individual received his or her official USGBC troublemaker badge. By Greenbuild's close, these pink ribbons were everywhere. It was truly inspiring to see the passion within our community and individuals' willingness to share personal stories of green building success.

But sharing the USGBC advocacy message at Greenbuild was not just limited to postcards. USGBC programming at the conference continued the theme of advocates sharing their best practices and innovative ideas.

On Tuesday as part of the USGBC Community Forum, Theresa Lehman, advocacy chair for the Wisconsin Green Building Alliance, presented on her chapter's education efforts in Wisconsin. Her presentation, aptly titled "Get off your A$$ and Advocate," highlighted the many meetings she's held with members of the state's congressional delegation. She made it clear that her enthusiasm for advocacy is contagious when she shared her, and her chapter's, story about getting her representative on board with LEED as a viable option for federal government building practices. In just 10 minutes, Theresa summed up what it takes to be a truly great advocate for better building practices: belief and the willingness to try.

On Thursday, USGBC staff hosted a specialty update session that highlighted USGBC's campaign approach to advocacy. Chapter staff and volunteer advocates from California, Minnesota, Philadelphia, South Carolina, New Mexico, Illinois and Florida spoke about their efforts in building out initiatives within each of the seven advocacy campaigns. In sharing their stories, these folks demonstrated how they are changing minds and making progress in public policy to help grow the green building movement across the country. Their success stories are shining examples of best practices in advocacy that will shape our campaigns in the new year.

With my first Greenbuild now in the rearview mirror, I am grateful for the opportunity to meet all of the hardworking volunteers that are driving our movement forward. In 2013, they are ready to build upon the impressive work achieved in 2012. If the stories of advocacy success at Greenbuild are any indication, the upcoming year promises to be even better.

- 10
  Matt Pearce made 10 contributions in the last 6 months

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