

Mississippi Advocacy Day

Published on **22 Mar 2013**

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Posted in [Advocacy and policy](#)



Top (from left): Bryan Howard, Allison Anderson. Bottom (from left): Jeff Seabold, Jackie Smithers, Mason Statham.

In growing numbers, USGBC chapters have been directly engaging with state legislatures to enhance their existing relationships and grow new relationships with their state elected leaders. Already this year, [several chapters across the country](#) have held advocacy days in their state capitols to support government leadership and support sound public policy initiatives. Last week I was fortunate enough to join the Mississippi chapter of the USGBC as its members descended on the state capitol in Jackson to educate elected officials about the benefits of healthy, high-performing buildings.

Perhaps the highlight of the whole event was when Rep. [David Baria](#) (Bay St. Louis) started off the day by recognizing and welcoming chapter members from across the state who had gathered in the House gallery. Baria encouraged his colleagues to visit with the chapter members about the various high-performance projects on which they had worked. The chapter members took his recommendation seriously, as 20 members met with more than 50 state legislators about the benefits of resource-efficient buildings.

Allison Anderson, Mississippi Chapter Advocacy Chair, said, “we were delighted at the timing of this year’s event, especially in support of proposed legislation for renewable energy tax incentives. The connections that were forged at Advocacy Day will be maintained, and our members’ projects received acknowledgement from all parts of the state, and all parties. It reinforces our message that ours is not a ‘fringe’ movement, but that healthy and high-performance buildings offer a pathway to clear economic and environmental results. We have already scheduled our date for next year and have learned that this is a good event to network among our own members, sharing ideas and contacts. We are planning to bring models and mockups next year, with examples of ‘how it works’ to get people really engaged.”

The advocacy day in Mississippi is just another example of how practitioners can generate immediate educational impact with elected officials. I appreciated getting an opportunity to join a great group of individuals in sharing that message.

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