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USGBC Missouri Gateway Chapter Uses Technology to Tackle Local Advocacy Challenge

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Recording the "St. Louis On the Air" segment. Left to right: Don Marsh, Emily Andrews, Jean Ponzi, Craig Jung

The St. Louis region provides a unique local advocacy challenge as it is divided into 193 local governments – the largest in the nation (2010 US Census Data) . Taking on this challenge, the USGBC Missouri Gateway Chapter set out to increase collaboration among organizations that provide sustainability resources to local governments, and assist local governments with their sustainability efforts.

To achieve this goal, the chapter used funds from a 2012 USGBC Chapters Advocacy Grant to develop a survey that determines green building and sustainability activities run by the local governments. From the survey responses, the chapter created a Google Map to showcase green building successes. This map was then shared with the St. Louis Regional Clean Air Partnership, East West Gateway Coordinating Council, FOCUS St. Louis, RideFinders, and the Missouri Botanical Garden's EarthWays Center.

The survey responses also informed the agenda for a successful local government Green Team Meet Up hosted by the chapter at the annual Green Homes & Great Health Festival at the Missouri Botanical Garden. Twenty-four people representing 12 local governments attended the Green Team Meet Up, where they shared best practices. Speakers covered the benefits of creating a strategic plan for local government Green Teams; effective communication with residents and city employees; the Environmental Protection Agency's Green Power Community Challenge; and opportunities for collaboration. Attendees found the Meet Up widely successful and agreed that it should become an annual event. A LinkedIn group was created to continue the conversation until they can gather again next year.

The survey and Google Map were created using free and easy tools, and could be implemented by any USGBC Chapter. Working on a limited budget, USGBC Missouri Gateway Chapter also saved time and resources by tying the Green Team Meet Up to the well-established Green Homes & Great Health Festival. Throughout the process, the chapter cultivated relationships with many local governing agencies, thus solidifying future partnerships and further establishing themselves as a local authority on energy efficiency and sustainable building issues.

For more information, listen to the recording of St. Louis On the Air featuring Emily Andrews, USGBC-Missouri Gateway Chapter Executive Director, on local NPR affiliate 90.7 FM KWMU.

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  Cindy Zork made 7 contributions in the last 6 months

Cindy Zork

Community Advancement Specialist U.S. Green Building Council
USGBC staff

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