



Green Building, LEED Certification, and ICFs

Environmentally-responsible construction isn't just a trend. Green building is picking up momentum as more and more public and private building owners demand high-performance, earth-friendly construction methods and materials.

Sustainable construction may take a little more effort and money up front, but this is truly outweighed by the lasting benefits and long-term savings for the building owner and the environment alike. And the fact is, as "green building" becomes the norm, its practicality and affordability will increase.

It just takes forward-thinking, concerned home buyers, homebuilders, developers, contractors, and architects to pioneer and establish its practice.

The ongoing energy use of a building is probably the single greatest environmental impact of that building and continues to impact the environment for decades, even centuries. So the opportunity to choose a building material -- like insulating concrete forms -- which can significantly decrease its energy consumption shouldn't be taken lightly.

Can't you spare a little change for Mother Nature? The future will thank you. The lower utilities costs and increased comfort will reward you.

WHAT IS LEED?

As you research the subject of green building, you've undoubtedly encountered the term: LEED®. The LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Green Building Rating System® is a voluntary, consensus-based national standard for developing high-performance, sustainable buildings.

Members of the U.S. Green Building Council representing all segments of the building industry developed LEED and continue to contribute to its evolution.

LEED WAS CREATED TO:

- define “green building” by establishing a common standard of measurement
- promote integrated, whole-building design practices
- recognize environmental leadership in the building industry
- stimulate green competition
- raise consumer awareness of green building benefits
- transform the building market

LEED provides a complete framework for assessing building performance and meeting sustainability goals. Based on well-founded scientific standards, LEED emphasizes state of the art strategies for sustainable site development, water savings, energy efficiency, materials selection and indoor environmental quality. LEED recognizes achievements and promotes expertise in green building through a comprehensive system offering project certification, professional accreditation, training and practical resources. (Excerpt from U.S. Green Building Council’s website.)

WHAT IS LEED CERTIFICATION?

Companies and products are not LEED Certified. Actual structures can earn LEED Certified status by earning points for various green building elements. There are four levels of LEED Certification:

LEED Certified	26 - 32 Points
LEED Silver	33 - 38 Points
LEED Gold	39 - 51 Points
LEED Platinum	52 - 69 Points

HOW BUILDBLOCK ICFS CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS 19-27 LEED CERTIFICATION POINTS

Energy savings are the most heavily weighted criteria in the LEED rating system. The high performance thermal envelope of BuildBlock ICF construction can apply a significant contribution towards achieving all ten of the Energy & Atmosphere credit points for LEED projects. There are several other areas where BuildBlock forms can contribute toward LEED points.

GWS LEED Accredited Professionals performed a third-party assessment and reported that BuildBlock

ICFs can furnish the basis for up to 27 LEED points if the guidelines outlined are applied in the building design and construction. BuildBlock ICFs can indirectly contribute to even more LEED points, depending on other choices made by the project designer.

HOW TO ACHIEVE LEED CERTIFICATION

It is very important to involve a LEED Accredited Professional (AP) in your project from the beginning. You can locate a LEED AP in your area by visiting the LEED AP Directory on the USGBC website at www.usgbc.org.



CASE STUDY: ONEKAMA HYBRID HOME

The Onekama Hybrid Home, built with BuildBlock Insulating Concrete Forms, is an example of sustainable materials, innovative design, and progressive building techniques.

The 4,100 square foot, five-bedroom home is 5-Star Energy Star rated and LEED for Homes Platinum Certified. In addition to BuildBlock ICFs, the home features Andersen 400 Series Energy Star windows, solar hot water, passive solar design, CertainTeed FiberCement siding, Elk Prestique Cool shingles, Soy Therm 50 insulation, radiant floor heating, and more.

This project has received numerous awards including the 2008 ICFA Excellence Awards for both the Large Residential and Sustainability categories.