

Group becoming key to green industry

Guild provides resources, network, educational events

BY CHRISTINE WEEBER
Business Report Correspondent

BOULDER — Early this year, when Molly Clarke was looking for a new job in the local green-building industry, she turned to the Boulder Green Building Guild and posted a request for employment opportunities in their electronic newsletter.

Within a week, she received 10 e-mails from members in the guild who had job leads for her. In April, she was hired by Boulder-based Architectural Energy Corp. as a project manager for LEED services, a national green-building rating system.

As Clarke can attest, since its launch in 2004 this guild has become the hub of the green-building industry in the Boulder area. The guild has grown from 10 to 170 members who represent a wide range of services and products. All members, whether building professionals, suppliers, corporate members or individuals, share a commitment to promoting healthier, resource-efficient homes and workplaces.

Recent changes within the guild will help the organization better engage its current and future members as well as the larger community, said Kim Master, executive director of the guild. The guild recently relocated to downtown Boulder from its former location in the office of What's Working, a local green building consultancy.

The central location, she said, supports outreach to local businesses and venues, such as the Boulder County Farmers' Market, where the guild provides education about its goods and services.

The guild's six committees have been completely reworked, Master said, with the goal of helping the organization make green building common practice. Committees take care of the financial and membership needs of the guild as well as legislation and public policy, education, outreach and events. The new legislative and public policy committee will keep members abreast of local and national legislation and how the guild can be involved, said Master.

As a 501 c (6), a trade association nonprofit, the guild can help shape public policy and lobby for legislation that supports the goals and mission of the guild. The committee plans to initiate small, local campaigns, such as raising awareness about the health impact of pesticides, Master said.

New educational offerings of the guild include the recently debuted Boulder Green Building Journal, a quarterly electronic publication featuring technical green-building information written for a diverse audience. And every month, the guild hosts educational events and smaller group roundtable discussions.

An example of an upcoming event is "Organizing for Success," which will cover organizing strategies for overcrowded remodeling contractors. Roundtable discussions focus on relevant topics in the building indus-



Margie McCulloch, center, president of the Boulder Green Building Guild, talks with Margaret Rogers, left, a consultant, and Kim Master, the guild's executive director, prior to a seminar on Organizing for Success presented by the guild. Launched in 2004, the guild has grown from 10 to 170 members.

try. The most recent covered business ideas for green-building entrepreneurs. Most of the guild's programs are open to the public.

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Kim Master
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
BOULDER GREEN BUILDING GUILD

The guild also sends out a biweekly electronic newsletter, a forum for specific questions about green products, job networking and where to find certain services. With the e-newsletter going to 1,600 people, the guild is well on its way to becoming “the go-to people for green building”—a goal of the organization, Master said.

Other benefits for members include a new Web site, still under construction, which will increase member visibility and have better search capabilities than the current one. Members will have a chance to see various projects

other members are working on through project home tours arranged by the outreach committee. Parallel Arts, a Boulder-based graphic design studio specializing in identity and branding, created a new logo for the guild. But the impact of the guild extends well beyond its membership. The guild also coordinates efforts with the city of Boulder and Boulder County, and educates local university students about green building and sustainability.

For the city of Boulder, Master said, “BGIBG can play a huge role in helping to educate people about the city’s revised Green Points Program, about how it’s going to work, and to give recognition to people who are going above and beyond the baseline code.”

Members of the guild are involved in Boulder County’s sustainability initiatives, such as working with the Land Use Department to create a greener building code. Early next year, the guild will host a job talk at CU Boulder about green building. The guild’s e-newsletter is mailed to dozens of university students, Master said.

Membership fees in the guild vary from \$50 per year for students to \$350 for corporate members and \$2,500 per year for patrons. The guild is seeking more patron members to promote specific companies that offer exceptional green-building materials and educate the public about these materials, Master said.

To boost the educational programming

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of the organization, the guild is in the process of creating a parallel organization, the Boulder Green Building Foundation. The foundation recently received 501 c (3) status, making it eligible to receive grants to fund educational projects.

According to Master, the guild’s growth is a local indicator of a national phenomenon. “Green building is going to become mainstream, if it’s not already,” Master explained.

“It’s the way we need to build, with impending energy costs going up. A lot of people, even today, can’t afford to live in their homes because of their energy bills. We’re trying to ‘future-proof’ our homes — preparing for the future and making it so we can afford to live in our homes, and that they last a long time.”

Many guild members will be giving presentations at the Greenbuild International Conference and Expo Nov. 15-17 at the Colorado Convention Center in Denver, Master said. Greenbuild is the green-building industry’s annual meeting.

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