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## The Green impact: Changing the standards of how buildings are built

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Steve Golumbeck

One of the biggest factors in the green/sustainable industry today is government regulations to make everything more energy efficient, according to Steve Golumbeck, senior project managing director at [Peak Construction](#).

"That's kind of the only stick that the government has," Golumbeck said. "The politicians never really want to pass anything because it ticks off big business. The only law that they can implement is more energy efficient everything—like cars as far as miles per gallon for example."

"Those are the things that the government has the power to control without having to get new laws into place," Golumbeck added. "So the things that have changed over the last couple of years, and will continue to change, are the standards by which things are built as they are becoming more and more energy efficient."

During the downturn, according to Golumbeck, the State of Illinois signed a couple of agreements into law in order to get federal money. These agreements mean Illinois always has to be compliant with the most current ASHRAE Standards, which are very stringent, and continue to become even more stringent every three years.

"We will continue to become more efficient due to those standards," he said. "From a green perspective that means all of the buildings will be built with more sustainable installations, more thermal gains, and the water, lighting and HVAC will all become better rated—therefore, in theory, using less energy."

Golumbeck pointed out that some people would argue that due to human behavior, as things get cheaper—and better and faster—humans will just use more of whatever it is. "It's true, but in general I think it's a good thing for the masses, and that's why it's there. We can be less dependent on less energy, but we don't have to burn as much oil, and hopefully slow down on all of the things that we do to the earth."

Peak Construction has built quite a few green projects. Currently Golumbeck is building a 454,000 square foot industrial speculative warehouse for IDI Gazeley in Antioch, IL.

"It should obtain LEED Silver, and there's a chance it might get LEED Gold," said Golumbeck. "They're really close to having a tenant there as well. That tenant will have to comply with certain guidelines, because it is a LEED building, as far as maintaining and agreeing to the sustainable aspect of the project."

On top of that, according to Golumbeck,

Peak likes to make sure that every project they are looking at is—what they call— LEED inspired buildings.

“The client may not necessarily want to get the plaque from the USGBC organization,” he said. “But we can certainly still talk about all of the different credits that would obtain LEED points without having to apply on paper for documentation. So for example, we can look at the different HVAC systems to provide cost benefit analysis and payback, and, ultimately, find out when the return on investment is.”



IDI Gazeley's 454,000 square foot industrial spec warehouse rendering.

“We call it LEEDInspired, and make sure that the owner knows it's an option,” Golumbeck continued. “I will say owners are very responsive to it because they want to be good corporate citizens. They also want to be able to tell their employees, for example, we put in showers and bike racks so please feel free to use them.”

For 2015, Golumbeck noted that he expects the green/sustainable industry to get even popular.

“The number one reason is because of the government regulations, and the efficiencies that are required,” he said. “In 2015, the International Energy Conservation Codes (IECC) aren't going to change much. In 2016, they will because that's when the new IECC Standards come out, therefore making Illinois that much more stringent in regards to the energy codes, and the way buildings are built.”

“In 2015, I don't know if things are going to change that much, but we do see the economy growing,” he continued. “We're definitely seeing a big push in industrial and hotel hospitality work. We see that it'll continue to be a growth sector, something that owners are interested in, and certainly want to talk about it making sure they are making the best investment for their money in the long run.”

Golumbeck isn't in the line of government and school building, but he noted those sectors are certainly building green. “Chicago wants to be one of the greenest cities. So that's why all of the public work that the city of Chicago does has to be a LEED building. Things like that are good for us and continues to help Chicago's beautification. It's a great city, and will continue to be that way because of those efforts and implementations.”

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