

MIDDLE TENNESSEE CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

July 2007
Vol. 2, Issue 7

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Next Meeting

When: Thursday, July 26th - 11:30am -1:00pm

Where: The Tennessee Engineering Center in the Adventure Science Center, 800 Fort Negley Blvd.

Cost: Chapter Members, \$15; Non-Members, \$20. Lunch will be served.

Speaker: Steve Johnson (LightWave Electric) / Jolyn Newton (TVA)

What: Steve Johnson of Lightwave Solar Electric will give a brief history of solar energy, types of solar panels, the advantages of deciding early on whether a project should incorporate clean renewable energy in its design, and much more.

RSVP: By Noon, Tuesday, May 22nd to Terah Huber at thuber@tmpartners.com or 377-9773.



Notes from the Chair - Mike Leonard

In the book *Natural Capitalism* by Paul Hawken, Amory Lovins, and L. Hunter Lovins, a vision of the "next industrial revolution" is described. The vision tells of a world where automobiles are whisper-quiet and emit only water vapor, houses pay part of their mortgage costs by the energy they produce, oil prices are low due to low demand, and CO2 levels are at the lowest levels in 200 years.

In order to see the peaceful and serene visions of the future come to fruition, we must set goals, motivate ourselves, and embrace change for the better. As buildings play a large role in the consumption of energy and emission of CO2 gases, we must continue to be innovative in how we plan and design. The 2030 plan first introduced by architect Ed Mazria has set such goals to combat global climate change and CO2 emissions with incremental milestones. Beginning now, buildings must be designed to reduce carbon use by 50%, working toward a carbon neutral society (using no fossil fuels) by the year 2030.

How do we get there? According to Mazria, "If you think about site, shape, putting glass on the right side, shading the glazing, shaping openings, daylighting, natural ventilation, adjusting material properties and colors, you should be able to reach the 50% goal from low cost/no cost improvements -- changes that are basically information."

To motivate our design teams to pursue even higher efficiencies, we must establish energy goals and have ways to monitor our progress during design. Energy modeling software such as Energy Plus, Trane TRACE 700, and DOE2 are tools to help evaluate energy saving strategies. Using such tools near the beginning of the design process can yield substantial energy savings as the design is enhanced based on measurable feedback. Unfortunately, because they can be time-

intensive to use, modeling usually gets pushed off until later phases in design when they are less effective, or left out altogether.

LEED - Local

As anticipated from an announcement at last year's GreenBuild Convention, the USGBC has raised the bar on energy efficient buildings. As of June 26th 2007, all LEED projects* are required to achieve at least two (2) credits in the Optimize Energy Performance category. This means that buildings will be required to exceed the ASHRAE/IESNA Standard 90.1 - 2004 by 14% for new buildings or 7% for existing building renovations (* see page 3 for the full announcement).

So, how are we doing on energy efficiency in the Southeast? In the 8-state USGBC Southeast Region (does not include Florida), 88% of certified projects achieved 2 Optimize Energy credits. Of the 6 projects included at the time of this study, two-thirds of the certified projects in Tennessee achieved at least 4 points, demonstrating a 30% improvement over ASHRAE/IESNA 90.1-1999. To meet the goals described above, we need all buildings to achieve energy efficiencies, LEED certified or not. Stay motivated and keep up the good work!

Our primary role as the USGBC Middle Tennessee Chapter is to provide educational opportunities. To help promote the use of energy modeling as a design tool, we are in the process of scheduling an Energy Modeling workshop for Nashville in the coming months. This will be a must-attend event for project engineers, architects, building owners and operators. Stay tuned for more information.

Mike

Think Globally - Act Locally.

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Letter from the Regional Chair

- Sara O'Mara

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I hope everyone had a fun and safe holiday. In last month's newsletter, I reviewed the Research Portion of the Southeast Regional Council's 2007 goals. This month we will be looking at our Minority Outreach Section.

1. Minority outreach - socioeconomic:

The Community Committee of SERC will send an e-mail to the SERC reps asking them to distribute their e-mail to their chapters. We will be asking each chapter to list all minority outreach groups that they are aware of in their area. The Community Committee will gather all of the information from the chapters and create a spreadsheet. They will then ask each chapter to contact three or four groups from the list that are in their chapter area.

The Community Committee will also create a bulleted list of things that chapters could share with the identified groups. We are hoping that each chapter will organize at least one educational event involving at least one of these groups.

2. EGB outreach - young professionals, satellites-students:

The SERC will be asking each chapter to engage/integrate the existing EGB groups in the chapter OR establish an EGB committee/group within their chapters. We would like to suggest that the EGB groups contact some of the groups from the minority outreach group above.

3. Outreach to other disciplines:

SERC encourages membership diversity; we hope that each chapter will reach out to the following groups: architects, engineers, contractors, interior designers, landscape architects, manufacturers, homebuilders, building owners, developers, public/private institutions, government agencies, environmental and conservation organizations.

4. Partner with other professional entities:

The Southeast Regional council will encourage each chapter to organize at least one joint program per year with one or more of the following groups: AEE-BOMA- AIA- ASID-IIDA- APPA, ASHRAE, AGC, Habitat for Humanity, Home Builders' Associations, EPA, environmental and conservation organizations, minority contractor groups (National Association of Minority Contractors, Atlanta) etc.

Next month I'll review another portion of the 2007 SERC goals. If you have any questions regarding the Southeast Regional Council of the USGBC, please feel free to contact me.

Thank you,
Sara O'Mara
LEED Certification Manager
Choate Construction
somara@choateco.com

Letters to the Editor

The "Letters to the Editor" section is the place for our readers to express their views and opinions. Please limit your letter to no more than 300 words, and the newsletter staff will try to include your letter in the newsletter. We reserve the right to edit letters for content and length. Submit letters to cdenson@ssr-inc.com before the second Thursday of the month to be considered for that month's newsletter

Preserving Our Landscapes

People's hearts and minds can be captured to ensure that a better environment can be left for future generations so that the landscape will not be despoiled or raped by those who are senseless and ignorant and who choose to chase the almighty dollar.

We should put up safeguards to make sure that the environment is not despoiled. "Our flood plain forests and wetlands must be protected in a natural undeveloped condition." (Wolf River Conservancy) "Smart Growth forests and wetlands form a practical framework for development and infrastructure." (Wolf River Conservancy) "Intact wetlands control flooding better and are less expensive than any other method." (Wolf River Conservancy) This is especially true where all trees are cut

and all grass is done away with, and concrete and pavement are amplified right up to the streams edge.

It's time, well past time, that we become very serious about conservation and start to build on success by building more public greenways and protect more riparian corridors and adjacent floodplains and wooded hillsides, for if we do not, the environment will be a great deal worse, and we will be past the point of no return.

Maury Miller III
Earth Friends Photography
Architectural and Location Photography
Watershed Coordinator for West and Middle Tennessee Through Southeast Watershed Forum
earthfriends@localnet.com

The Cost of Cheap Electricity

Electricity in the TVA region is cheap, but at what cost is it cheap? Consider these points:

Electricity is cheaper in West Virginia and Kentucky.

Are these the economies we aspire to? Tennesseans use more power per capita than either California or New York, but do we enjoy a better lifestyle? The cheapness encourages excessive consumption and waste.



The emphasis should be on quality of air and water - not how cheap it is. How many rivers in Tennessee can you not eat fish out of? What levels of pollution are these low rates causing? What are the costs born by citizens for high rates of respiratory disease and other health issues? If coal stacks were fully scrubbed, these emissions wouldn't be subsidized through our health care. If underwriters would carry catastrophic insurance on nuclear plants, then citizens would not have to pay to underwrite that insurance for them with our taxes.

How will we deal with record low rainfall when we need 25 gallons per kWh to produce electricity from coal? When river levels are falling, what is the threshold of acceptable thermal pollution (raising river temperature to cool power plants)? Why is the Watts Bar nuclear plant permit for thermal pollution expired? Why is \$25 billion in debt

from nuclear plants spread across the rate base when people have to pay extra for clean energy? Is that fair? If this nuclear electricity is so cheap, why hasn't the debt been paid 35 years later?

TVA is a vital part of our community. We need their leadership in protecting Tennessee's natural resources. Why not scrub the stacks thoroughly, to the highest level? We will save on healthcare and get more federal highway matching funds. Why not set a goal of generating 20,000 megawatts per year from solar, 2% of what we use? We make solar panels in Tennessee, and for each job manufacturing 4 associated jobs are created. Renewable energy is the new wave in Silicon Valley. Why don't we catch this one?

Steve Johnson

**USGBC Membership Approves
LEED® Optimize Energy
Performance, Mandatory
Point Minimum**

In accordance with direction from its Board of Directors and its LEED Steering Committee to immediately increase the LEED Green Building Rating System's impact in reducing building energy related greenhouse gas emissions, USGBC's membership has approved the update of all balloted commercial LEED Green Building Rating Systems with the following change:

All LEED projects are required to achieve at least two (2) Optimize Energy Performance points. This requirement is mandatory for all LEED projects registering after June 26, 2007. Projects registered prior to June 26, 2007 will not be held to this requirement; however USGBC encourages all LEED projects to strive to achieve building energy performance commensurate with this new requirement. LEED for Homes and LEED for Neighborhood Development projects are exempt from this requirement.

To help projects achieve this new mandate, a prescriptive path has been developed for all LEED for New Construction, LEED for Core and Shell, LEED for Schools and LEED for Retail projects. When complete, this prescriptive path will be outlined in the appropriate rating system documents [available here](#).

The two mandatory points will count towards a project's LEED certification. Project teams will be reminded of this change at time of registration, through LEED Online, and illustrated in the rating system and reference guide documents.

[Go here](#) to view the current Optimize Energy Performance credits in LEED for New Construction, Existing Buildings, Commercial Interiors and Core & Shell, and the changes that are required.

**EGB SPOTLIGHT: Middle Tennessee Chapter
- Ed Wansing**

The Middle Tennessee Emerging Green Builders group was started in the spring of 2005 with a few determined people, a little bit of help from the local USGBC chapter, and a generous contribution from Turner Construction. A kick-off party was set up at Vanderbilt University where several LEED projects were in the planning and design phases. Word spread quickly, and the group was soon up and running. The group is still growing, with nearly 180 members on the email list serve. The group holds monthly meetings that range from green building tours to strategic planning meetings. Seven sub-committees within the group help to handle all of the group's goals efficiently.

The most notable of the group's accomplishments is our partnership with the Nashville area Habitat for Humanity. EGB members created a "green living" class that is taught four times per year to the recipients of the Habitat Homes. This class help to fulfil the sweat equity and education requirements that the recipients must complete before they receive their homes. The "students" are educated on the importance of sustainable design and living and are shown how to maintain their homes in a manner that protects their health and the health of the environment while also saving them money. The response to the program has been overwhelming. The group is currently in discussions with the construction board to help them determine how to provide a more efficient and environmentally friendly home.

Middle Tennessee EGB's most recent engagement has been with the "If I had a Hammer" foundation. Perry Wilson founded the organization to help "at risk" students with math and communication skills. He builds a small house with the children to help them apply math skills in a real life, hands-on environment. His program has reached over 400,000 children across the country. EGB'ers are working with Perry to help him "green" his program and the house. They will also incorporate this information into the continuing education classes that follow the build. This will hopefully start a transformation in the way Metro Nashville public schools are built, following on the heels of the requirement for all Metro Nashville Public buildings to be LEED certified.

The Middle Tennessee USGBC chapter and Emerging Green Builders have seen great success in starting the process of "greening" Middle Tennessee. They hope to continue the education of the building and construction community, along with the public on the benefits of green building and sustainable design.



July Membership Meeting - LightWave Solar Electric – Steve Johnson



With over 30 years in the electrical industry, Steve Johnson of Light-Wave Solar Electric has made a name for himself as a premier designer and installer of solar electric systems in middle Tennessee. His solar-equipped residence is the second house in Davidson County to participate in the Generation Partners Program. He proposed, designed, and installed the first two TN-CET grant recipients in state of

Tennessee. He is also a recipient of the Tennessee Million Solar Roofs “Solar Star” award and has received the PV Design and Installation certificate from Solar Energy International. This month, Steve Johnson will be speaking about Solar Electricity in Tennessee, including a brief history of solar, types of solar electrical panels, incentives available, and pictures of installations inside and outside Tennessee. In addition, he will discuss the advantages of clean renewable energy and the importance of deciding early on whether a project should incorporate solar in the building design. Mr. Johnson can be reached at 615-294-9630.

The Green Wave is Coming

- James D. Qualk, Director of LEED Facilitation Sales, SSRcx

I’ve been asked many times, “Why is Nashville so far behind when it comes to green building?” Just a few years ago, I would have agreed and provided an attempt at an explanation. Now though, I would respectfully disagree.

Many of us are familiar with the numbers. There are seven certified buildings in Tennessee, two of which are in Nashville with another building recently designated as pre-certified. As of June 2006, there were only 22 registered buildings in Tennessee. One year later, however, there are nearly 60 registered buildings in Tennessee with around 25 of those in Nashville. I know of quite a few buildings in Nashville that should be certified by the end of the year.

Without a doubt, Nashville and Tennessee are not leading the way, but we are in the hunt. Only about 70 cities and a few more than 20 states have taken steps similar to those our city council has now taken. Metro Ordinance #BL2007-1374, which passed in June, requires all new Metro government-owned projects over 5,000 square feet or \$2M to pursue a LEED silver certification. Truly, the tide is turning.

Additionally, the USGBC recently announced their goal to certify 100,000 buildings by the end of year 2010. That is a pretty aggressive goal, and I have not seen how that number was generated. But what does that number mean when applied to Nashville and Tennessee? How many buildings should we expect to certify in the next two and half years? I’ve seen a couple of presentations that take a stab at the numbers by state, and the estimate is between 1,700 and 2,500 for Tennessee. Wow! That means there is still a great deal of room for LEED to grow in this part of the country.



Photo by: Aaron Schmidt

As I mentioned earlier, Tennessee is not currently leading the way. Nevertheless, as market trends continue to pressure owners and developers to build green, we are going to continue to see the phenomenal growth like we have seen the last couple of years. The economics are far too compelling for the construction industry to look the other way. The market is changing, and we are an integral part of that change. There is no reason to rest on our laurels though – the message hasn’t reached everyone. So keep spreading the good news, and get ready to ride the green wave.



Local Statistics:

Middle Tennessee Chapter Members	284
Middle Tennessee Accredited Professionals	207
Middle Tennessee Certified Projects	2
Middle Tennessee Pre-certified Projects	1





Greening Your Residence: A September Preview

- J. Mark West

In September of 2006, our residential/LEED Homes presentation was well received. This year's residential presentation (September 27, 2007) is being composed in response to a series of repetitive inquiries I have received over the past 10 months. It seems that many people want to know what they can do to improve their existing homes, based on the principles of the LEED for Homes program. With that in mind, this year's residential focus will be broken into three parts: A LEED for Homes update, the "Top Ten Things You Can Do To 'Green' Your Home," and a panel discussion with a green residential focus.

The program will start out with an update on the status of LEED for Homes nationally, and provide an update of what is happening locally in Middle TN. A list of 'green' builders who are interested in, and/or already building LEED Homes is in development and should be ready for release by the September meeting. If you are aware of any residential green builder resources to add to this list prior to the September meeting, please forward that information to me by September 3, 2007.

The "Top Ten" presentation will be structured to highlight the ties to the LEED for Homes program. For those interested in learning more about the LEED for Homes program in advance of the presentation, you may go to <http://www.usgbc.org/DisplayPage.aspx?CMSPageID=147>, or simply www.usgbc.org, then select the "LEED" tab at the top, then the "Homes" link in the list of LEED programs. The current LEED Homes Pilot program is available as a free download at this time.

The green residential panel discussion will draw from the knowledge of several experienced individuals in various related fields and will be moderated to be as helpful as possible. There will be a list of resources available for the "do-it-yourselfers" out there and plenty of opportunities to network and exchange contact information. If anyone wants to contribute relative information for consideration in this presentation, please do not hesitate to contact me.

J. Mark West, AIA, LEED AP
eXoterra Solutions
info@exoterra.biz



An example of a Solar Ready Home by Steve Johnson



Registered Tennessee LEED projects (As of April 10)

New Construction	40
Existing Building	2
Commercial Interiors	3
Core and Shell	7





LEED for New Construction Technical Review Workshop

Certification Requirements and Process

Are you ready to enter the rapidly growing green building market?

Attend the LEED® for New Construction and Major Renovations Technical Review Workshop presented by the U.S. Green Building Council. Gain the knowledge needed to maximize building performance, achieve LEED certification and take the LEED Professional Accreditation Exam.

WHY LEARN ABOUT LEED?

Ask any of the 3000 building owners seeking LEED certification right now. Owners and developers are demanding green buildings that save money while protecting the environment and occupant health. The USGBC's LEED Rating System™ is the nationally recognized rating system for green buildings. LEED is already being used by green building projects in all 50 states, and the market continues to grow.

WHO SHOULD ATTEND?

Industry professionals seeking to increase their understanding of the LEED for New Construction Rating System and green building strategies, benefits and resources:

- Architects
- Designers
- Consultants
- Owners
- Engineers
- Developers
- Contractors
- Manufacturers

WHAT'S COVERED

- LEED for New Construction and Major Renovations:
 - Technical requirements
 - Certification process
 - Project case studies and strategies
- Green building costs and benefits
- Available tools and resources

CONTINUING EDUCATION CREDITS AVAILABLE



HOST



**MEMPHIS REGIONAL
CHAPTER**

**July 26, 2007
8:30 am – 5:00 pm
Memphis, TN**

**Lichterman Nature Center
5992 Quince Road
Memphis, TN 38119**

FACULTY

USGBC workshops are conducted by the top green building practitioners in the country. The following instructors are currently scheduled for this workshop (subject to change):

**David Freeman
John McFarland**

REGISTRATION

To register for this or any USGBC workshop, visit www.usgbc.org/workshops/register

FEES	USGBC MEMBERS*	NON-MEMBERS
Early	\$345	\$445
Late (begins 07/19/07)	\$375	\$495

Students *NEW!* \$150 (limited availability)
(FULL-TIME STUDENTS ONLY)

For info on student rates and all workshop inquiries, contact workshop@usgbc.org or call 202-742-3820.

Fee Includes:

- Online access to LEED for New Construction Reference Guide and a discounted price on the print edition (\$125 + S&H) when purchased at registration
- Educational handouts
- Continental breakfast, lunch and refreshment breaks

Join USGBC today and start saving!

Members receive discounted rates on all workshop offerings and reference materials.

*Attendees whose firms are national members of USGBC.



2nd Annual USGBC Middle Tennessee Chapter Green Tie Gala – October 20, 2007



Mark your calendars! The planning committee for the Green Tie Gala is in full swing preparing for this year's event. The 2006 Gala was a resounding success and the committee plans to build on that momentum to make the 2007 Gala

even better. Two of the major highlights this year will be our speaker, Susan Szenasy, Editor in Chief of Metropolis Magazine, and the entertainment—the live band and local favorite Guilty Pleasures.

Szenasy's editorial style pushes readers to think beyond what they think is possible. She promises to bring that same style along with her expertise in sustainability to our celebration in October. You can learn more about her and her accolades at the Metropolis website (<http://www.metropolismag.com/mediakit/>).

Guilty Pleasures has been the gold standard in Nashville for 80's cover music since the genre came into vogue. Their high-energy shows are regular sell-outs and merit praise from publications like the Nashville Scene. Thanks to a friend of a friend and a fortuitously open date, we've been able to book them for Gala.

New to our event and another highlight will be a silent auction benefiting our chapter's efforts to further the green building cause. Silent auctions are always a great opportunity to splurge on yourself or a loved one and get a good deal at the same time. This one will be no exception.

Be sure to keep your eyes open for more information as October 20th approaches. Sponsorship opportunities are available now; please contact Laura Schroeder (l.schroeder@hawkinspartners.com) for inquiries.

Again, please reserve Saturday October 20, 2007, on your calendars. The 2007 Green Tie Gala will be bigger and even better than the very successful event we held in 2006. Come be part of our chapter wide celebration – as a USGBC Middle TN member you're doing great things for our community, and you deserve to have some fun!

Event Details:

What: Dinner, Drinks, Speaker and Dancing
When: Saturday October 20, 2007
Where: City Hall Entertainment Space
12th Ave. South (The Gulch)

Contact: Eric McKinney (ericm@amconst.com)



LEED Local – Materials and Resources Credit 2 – Resource Reuse - Kim Shinn

I was just talking with Andy Sneed of Wasco, a masonry contractor, and he wanted to call my attention to a couple of resources for salvaged materials – to help earn Materials and Resources Credit 2 – Resource Reuse.

For years, the State of Tennessee has been salvaging stone from demolished and renovated State buildings and stockpiling it at the old Mid-State prison site. This could be a resource for State projects.

In addition, during the renovation of the Metro Courthouse, Wasco was involved with taking up and then re-laying a lot of the stonework in the old Civic Plaza. They ended up with a fair amount of left over stone from that project and Metro has stockpiled it.

To make it easier to use this stone in veneer applications, there are masonry processes that use a guillotine to cut the salvaged stone.

MR Credit 2 is a notoriously seldom-applied credit. It would be great for people who are doing State or Metro Nashville projects to think about using these resources and maybe even saving a little money on the masonry contract. If you are interested in acquiring some of this stone, contact the State or Metro client project manager for more information.

Kim





Solar Valley Coalition - Louise Gorenflo

The Solar Valley Coalition emerged as a network of NGO's and citizen advocates with the common purpose to shape TVA's recently adopted strategic energy plan. The efforts of many resulted in TVA's new commitment to energy efficiency and renewables.

The Solar Valley Coalition has no formal structure beyond a common commitment to reducing GHG emissions and energy intensity within the TN Valley and the State of Tennessee. USGBC and other identified advocates for sustainable energy will receive invitations to participate in upcoming conference calls to forge new strategies for the next steps we take together.

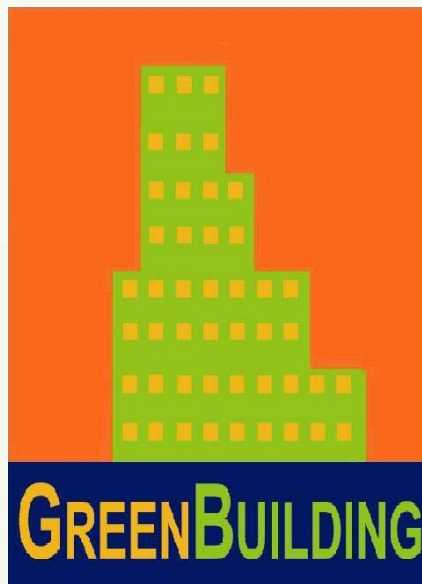
We have a website that serves as our research library (www.SolarValleyCoalition.net). Two major Solar Valley tasks are encouraging TVA and the State of Tennessee to develop comprehensive energy plans, and developing energy efficiency and renewable programs. Both of these are huge endeavors, but the informal, virtual collaboration of multiple entities does work.

Buildings consume 40% of US energy and cause 40% of the nation's GHG emissions, as well as accounting for 65% of our total electricity consumption. The State of Tennessee's antiquated building energy codes act as a barrier to realizing the energy savings potential of green

design. Each lost building opportunity translates into an unforgiving energy burden for years to come. The Tennessee building codes precede the 1998 IECC and do not meet the federal Energy and Production Act's required codes. Energy efficiency advocates will work with state legislators to introduce 2008 legislation to update the TN building energy code.

Vital advocacy work in search of leadership is encouraging the state to adopt LEED standards for state facilities. This "Lead-by-Example" state policy is critical to increase consumer awareness about LEED standards and to stimulate the market. State adoption of LEED standards for state owned facilities is the piece of the action to which we look toward the USGBC for leadership. The bottom line is that Tennessee requires modern energy efficiency building codes and green building standards that serves as the base for new construction and a platform to achieve even greater energy savings. Join the Solar Valley conversation and blaze a sustainable energy path for our communities and state!

(Louise Gorenflo keeps the Solar Valley Coalition website and can be reached at lgorenflo@gmail.com.)



Green Power Switch Customers Set All-Time Record! - Laurie Parker, NES

Nashville Electric Service had its best two months ever for Green Power Switch sign ups. The number of customers buying green power has more than doubled since this time last year.

Interest in green power and environmentally-friendly initiatives is on an upward spiral. More people are taking action for change. The proof is in the numbers.

NES Green Power Sign Ups

- May 06 - 280
- May 07 - **340**
- June 06 - 193
- June 07 - **434**

NES says it is just 185 sign ups away from exceeding last year's total. If the trend continues, that difference will be made up in a matter of one month.

Last year, 1,199 customers enrolled in the program, and NES could easily break the 2,000 mark this year. But, that's still less than one-percent of all Nashville Electric Service customers. There's plenty of room to grow.

The Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) reached its own milestone this past spring with its 10,000th residential Green Power Switch customer.

What makes green power "green"? Renewability
Renewable resources like solar power, wind power and methane gas produce energy for today and are still available tomorrow because they are energy sources derived from nature that don't get used up as they generate power.



Green Power Switch began on Earth Day 2000, and there are 15,322 reasons to join the cause. Purchasing two blocks of green power each month for a year is the environmental equivalent of recycling 15,322 aluminum cans, 1,766 pounds of newspaper or planting an acre of trees.

Each \$4 block you purchase will be used throughout the Valley as part of TVA's total power mix. To find out more, visit www.nespower.com or www.greenpowerswitch.com.



Does Your Air Conditioner Have a Clean Bill of Health?

-Avoid Unwanted House Calls and Expense During Summer's Heat Wave

- Laurie Parker, NES

Your air conditioner is in fully swing, but is it running as efficiently as it should be?

An annual check up is a great way to assess its performance. A \$50-\$100 service tune-up can reduce you cooling costs by 5%. A service technician should check for proper Freon levels, check all electrical components, clean the evaporator and condenser coils, calibrate the thermostat and check the condenser and filters. The best time for a tune-up is in the spring, but it's better late than never.

Changing the air filters in your home air conditioning unit is the least expensive thing you can do to maintain your cooling system. Filters keep the coils clean. Dirty coils make the HVAC work harder and can shorten the life of your unit.

But many people install these filters incorrectly. Most filters have arrows that indicate the correct airflow direction. The filter should be installed so that the air flows in the same direction as the arrow. If your filter doesn't have an arrow, the strongest part of the filter (often reinforced with a metal grid) should be placed next to the air conditioning system so that the air exits at the reinforced part of the filter.

Proper installation is key, and it's equally important to

replace air filters on a regular basis. Even the highest-quality filter can't do its job right if it's clogged with a thick layer of dust and particles. Most filters need to be replaced every 30 days. So, get on a routine and change your filter every month to coincide with another regular household activity, like paying your electric bill. You'll be less likely to forget if two activities are linked in your mind.

If you live in a brand new house or where there is construction or remodeling going on, you may need to change your air filters more often to compensate for the extra dust and residue in the air.



Other important tips: Make sure the condensate line on your outside air conditioning unit is draining freely. Don't plant grass or landscaping within a one foot radius of the unit. Grass clippings can damage your system and plants can restrict airflow. Keep furniture and drapes away from floor registers inside your home. Taking care of your HVAC system year around will ensure that it takes care of you when you need it most, like right now.

Would you like to:

- be a member?
- be an accredited professional?
- register and certify your building?

Visit us at www.usgbc.org/chapters/middletennessee/



Local Happenings

JULY

Thursday 7/26 - Membership Meeting

What: Steve Johnson of Lightwave Electric will give a brief history of solar energy, types of solar panels, the advantages of deciding early on whether a project should incorporate clean renewable energy in the design, and much more.

Who: Steve Johnson (LightWave Electric) / Jolyn Newton (TVA)

Where: The Tennessee Engineering Center in the Adventure Science Center, 800 Fort Negley Blvd.

When: 11:30 am – 1:00 pm

Cost: Chapter Members, \$15; Non-Members, \$20.

Lunch will be served.

RSVP: By Noon, Tuesday, July 24th to Terah Huber at thuber@tmpartners.com or 377-9773.

Thursday 7/26

What: LEED for New Construction Technical Review

When: Thursday, July 26, 2007, 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Where: Lichterman Nature Center – Memphis, TN
5992 Quince Rd.
Memphis, TN 38119

Who: The faculty for this workshop will be David Freeman and John McFarland.

How/Cost: To pre-register, go online to www.usgbc.org/workshops/workshoplist.aspx and search for workshops in Tennessee. On-site sign-in and registration for the workshop begins at 8:00 a.m. (Limited spaces are available)

AUGUST

Friday 8/3 - First Friday

Where: Smith Seckman Reid, Training Room “A”, 2995 Sidco Drive, Nashville, TN 37204

When: Friday, August 3rd, 12:00 pm-1:00 pm

Bring your own lunch.

Thursday 8/23 - USGBC Chapter Membership Meeting

What: Government Perspective: A look at the Metro LEED Ordinance

Where: The Tennessee Engineering Center in the Adventure Science Center, 800 Fort Negley Blvd.

When: 11:30 am – 1:00 pm

Cost: Chapter Members, \$15; Non-Members, \$20.

Lunch will be served.

RSVP: By Noon, Tuesday, August 21st to Terah Huber at thuber@tmpartners.com or 377-9773.



Native plants grow atop the green roof of the Westview GVR building in Nashville.



Photo by Leslie Bilbrey Green Resources