

Last Word: US Green Building Council's Rick Fedrizzi

By: Pat Curry



As founding chairman of the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC), which manages and promotes the LEED and LEED for Homes rating systems, Rick Fedrizzi travels the globe working to develop best practices for sustainable building for both commercial and residential construction. He's worked with key governmental agencies to establish and implement policies that impact businesses and consumers alike.

He's been at the green building game for so long, some people might be surprised that he came to the USGBC after a full, 25-year career at Carrier Corp.

Not surprisingly, his work there garnered the company the U.S. Department of Energy's National Energy Award, and the Stratospheric Ozone Protection Award from the EPA.

Q:? What's the business case for building green?

A: Market differentiation. As the benefits of well-designed, durable, health-conscious, efficient, and environmentally friendly buildings continue to differentiate a green home from a code home, it becomes a mark of excellence. ... Having said that, we need our baseline building codes to evolve to the 21st century and acknowledge the tremendous advances that have been made in products and practices and technologies.

Building codes are fundamental safeguards for public health, safety, and welfare, and sustainability should be part of them.

Q:? How far have we come and how far do we have to go toward truly sustainable home building in the U.S.?

A:? While LEED for Homes and other residentially oriented green building programs have begun to help bring about the construction of more sustainable homes, we still have quite a way to go. Even if every newly constructed home was built in a way that reduces energy and water use and minimizes other harmful environmental effects, we still have a massive existing-housing stock that needs to be addressed.

Q:? Of all the things happening in sustainability in the U.S. right now, what excites you most?

A:? Modular and off-site fabrication of homes. ... [It] allows builders to greatly reduce the amount of construction waste produced during a building project and increases the opportunity to consistently deliver a higher-quality home.