



## **Get involved and stay involved to make a difference!**

January 30, 2012 - Long Island

Having been involved in the building industry, and in particular the HVAC sector, for over four decades I have witnessed many changes both in technology, and means and methods of construction. Many of those changes were driven by the sudden and dramatic rise in the cost of energy. There was a time in the '70s that outdoor air for ventilation in office buildings was reduced to 5 CFM per person (now it is 20) to save energy. Poor ventilation and moisture control led to mold and mildew conditions never before experienced because older structures leaked so badly that there was always ventilation.

The outdoor environment was in as bad a shape, or worse. Recycling was limited at best. Landfills, it was discovered, were emitting dangerous levels of methane gas and toxic odors and were being closed down. There was no separation of discarded building materials; and post-consumer products, what was that? Emissions from boiler plants were out of control, electric demand was growing faster than utilities could keep up, there were fuel oil and natural gas shortages, HVAC and refrigeration equipment was grossly inefficient. To put it mildly, things were out of control.

The '80s found a building industry in transition, maybe even scrambling. The problem was that each sub-industry operated in a silo. It sometimes seemed the building industry forgot the most important component, the occupants. In the '80s we saw vastly improved building materials such as high-performance glass and insulating products and the advent of control systems using a PC and windows as a platform. These software based systems were powerful but cumbersome and not always reliable. We saw asbestos abatement and recycling taking hold. We saw energy efficient products from light bulbs to air conditioning units to boilers. We even started to see emerging and re-emerging technologies such as geothermal systems, solar and wind power generation.

There was, however, a missing component. That missing component was a guide to tie all of these technologies, products, ideas, services and initiatives together. The industry needed a guide and a rating system. The industry needed LEED. In 1993 the USGBC was founded to promote sustainability in how buildings are designed, built and operated. In 1998 the USGBC began development of the LEED rating system. Now there was, and is, a comprehensive system of inter-related standards covering all aspects of the development and construction process. Management and ongoing development of the LEED rating system has grown from six volunteers and one committee to hundreds of dedicated professionals and dozens of committees.

When I began serving as a

USGBC-LI board member in January 2007 there were just 60 Long Island Chapter members. I accepted my nomination to this Board because I believed I could make a difference. It is a privilege to continue to serve this chapter and now lead a board that is made up of very talented and dedicated men and women. This chapter, only 6 years old, has made a positive impact on the building industry here on Long Island and indeed also has made a positive impact on those who live,

work, worship and play in these buildings and institutions. I am looking forward to a very successful and productive 2012. So, my challenge to all Chapter members is to get involved and stay involved because we all can make a difference!

Rudy Holesek is the chairman of U.S. Green Building Council-LI Chapter and president of Apollo HVAC, Bay Shore, N.Y.

New York Real Estate Journal - 17 Accord Park Drive #207, Norwell MA 02061 - (781) 878-4540