



BUILDING A GREENER FUTURE

Rising energy costs and climate change have sparked demand for eco-friendly buildings across the nation.

While sexy projects like solar farms in the Mojave Desert and sleek electric cars like the Chevy Volt seem to get all the attention, a quiet green revolution is taking place in our homes, factories, and office parks. Buildings account for some 45% of all the energy we consume in the U.S., and the potential for saving money and the planet is huge. Says Greg Kats, senior director at Good Energies, a multibillion-dollar global clean-energy investor, and author of the newly published *Greening Our Built World*: "If you use intelligent design, it's easy to get 50% to 80% energy reductions in our buildings."

New technologies to make our homes and buildings more energy-efficient are rapidly multiplying, while something as simple as painting a roof white to reflect heat can dramatically lower air-conditioning costs. New LED lighting made by industry giants like GE and Philips can reduce power usage by more than 70% compared with incandescent bulbs. Ice Energy, a Windsor, Colo., company, has a unique way to make air-conditioning systems more efficient: Its Ice Bear makes ice in a building at night when electricity demand is low, and thus prices are cheap. During the day, when air-conditioning demand rises, the building uses the stored ice to drive the system, saving considerably on the utility bill. The air-conditioner's energy demand, says the company, can be reduced by as much as 95%. Serious Materials, of Sunnyvale, Calif., makes high-efficiency windows that can pay for themselves in five years. The company is currently installing its green glass in New York City's Empire State Building. Says founder Kevin Surace:

Corporations that are environmental stewards are finding innovative ways to preserve the environment.

"Basic building materials haven't really changed much in the last 100 years. We are applying Silicon Valley technology to the construction industry, and the potential is huge."

A building's effect on the environment does not end once construction is finished. Structures have a life of their own and the way people live and work in them can have a huge impact. It doesn't do much good to design an energy-efficient structure if those using it live wastefully. SCA, the

giant Swedish paper maker, has a long history of environmental stewardship. The company supplies towels, napkins, and bath tissues to office buildings such as the Empire State Building, as well as schools, restaurants, and stadiums. Don Lewis, the president of SCA Tissue North America, in Philadelphia, explains that his company sells paper

products under the Tork brand made of 100% recycled fiber. This allows the buildings that use SCA products to gain valuable LEED points, the basis for certification by the U.S. Green Building Council.

And we're not talking small change here. Lewis explains that the amount of wastepaper the company collects annually to recycle would "fill Lincoln Financial Field in Philadelphia from goal line to goal line with a pile more than 700 feet deep." The company also employs innovative one-at-a-time dispensers that, for example, keep restaurant customers from reaching in and wastefully grabbing a huge handful of napkins. SCA customers have saved as much as 25% on their paper costs and made the planet a cleaner place in the process. Says Lewis: "We want to preserve the environment for generations to come." ●



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