

**USGBC Chapter Award Nomination Form – Submitted by Lorna Rosenberg,  
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**1. Brief overview of chapter**

- Delaware Valley Green Building Council (DVGBC)
- Mission Statement - Our mission is to advance and promote sustainable and environmentally responsible planning, design, construction and operation of the region's buildings, landscapes, cities and communities, mindful of the legacy left for future generations.
- DVGBC has been a chapter since 2002

**2. DVGBC is being nominated for the chapter award in LEED.**

**3. Brief description of the chapter's 3-5 most important contributions to furthering the green building industry in the category of nomination.**

Since 2004, DVGBC has been actively engaged in working with Green Advantage® (a voluntary program that certifies construction practitioners' knowledge of green building techniques and LEED), to develop a training course for the commercial construction community. Upon completing this 9 hour training course, students are prepared to take the Green Advantage Certification exam.

- 1) Introducing the contracting community to LEED® and green building construction concepts.
- 2) Empower construction professionals, trades superintendents, and foremen to become a vital part of the sustainable design and construction process.
- 3) Share knowledge from experienced green building field contractors with those new to the subject.
- 4) Improve the success and certification level of LEED® projects with educated, aware on-site construction personnel.

**How do these contributions demonstrate innovation and leadership in the designated nomination category?**

Designers can plan the ultimate green building, but without a knowledgeable contracting team to make the drawings a reality, even the best projects won't realize their full potential. There are 10,000,000 tradesmen and supervisory personnel around the country who want to learn about the changes taking place within the construction industry. With the introduction of this curriculum and innovative teaching methodology, this underserved community can now engage in the process of green construction and certify their expertise through Green Advantage.

Experience is proving that well-informed field personnel have a substantial impact on the successful deployment of targeted LEED® credits and can make or

break the submissions required for many credits. Engaging Green Advantage certified, knowledgeable field personnel on a LEED project will certainly begin to drive down the cost of LEED® by eliminating costly mistakes on the site and poor documentation of LEED credits. Construction personnel who are engaged in the process of green building from the outset will insure that LEED® projects run smoothly, convincing owners and design professionals that LEED is worth the effort.

DVGBC also submitted a Credit Interpretation Request to USGBC to obtain a LEED® Innovation Credit ruling, which is now available to projects if 30% of field supervisory personnel working on the project are Green Advantage Certified at the time of commencement of construction.

#### **4. Rationale for being nominated.**

DVGBC recognized a serious need for contractor training in 2004 based on feedback from local contractors. Contractor knowledge is critical to the successful completion of LEED® green building projects, and education is the key to bringing the building community up to speed. To accomplish this goal, DVGBC connected with the Green Advantage® Contractor Certification program through USGBC and formed a partnership to develop curriculum to prepare commercial construction personnel for the exam. DVGBC experts and Green Advantage staff crafted a training course that responded to the construction industry's desire to adopt construction practices that are more sustainable and address the information contractors need to know about their role in LEED® building construction. Together they created a 9 hour interactive, educational and entertaining course.

The Sessions were:

##### **# 1: Laying the Ground Work**

Introductions, The Big Picture of Sustainability, First Cost v. Life Cycle, Overview and Impact of the LEED® rating System upon the Construction Industry; Construction Operations includes LEED® workbook, Construction Waste Management and much more.

##### **# 2: Building a Green Project**

Site, Structure, Walls, Windows, Roofs, Mechanical, Electrical, Plumbing, LEED Documentation

##### **#3: Finishing the Project**

Interior Finishes, Equipment, Landscaping, Project/LEED® Closeout, Course Review – prep for test.

During curriculum development, local contractors and developers were invited to review and critique the information, teaching methodology, and course materials. The General Building Contractors Association registered 30 students for the first pilot

in June of 2005. The course instructors lectured and supplemented their presentations with guest practitioners who shared real life experiences. A lively and fun learning environment was developed with topics such as, “Boss the Architect”, and “Defend your Green Product against the World” and “Green Building Jeopardy”. Students also received a course manual and a copy of the extensive powerpoint presentation on CD.

The course was a huge success! Participants gave high evaluations of the instruction and information they learned. As a result, 85% of the students passed the exam, earning their Green Advantage® Certification! This is the largest group of commercial building contractors to be Green Advantage® certified to date.

The pilot course was so successful that numerous chapters around the country have already asked to have it delivered in their communities. DVGBC has developed a business model with a specific focus on generating revenue and building membership for USGBC chapters that host Green Advantage training. Courses are already booked for the remainder of 2005 and well into 2006.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, there are well over 1 million construction supervisory personnel who should receive Green Advantage Certification. If this training course is able to reach only a fraction of this audience it will make a major contribution to transforming the market and raising the bar for the quality of LEED® certified green buildings. Reaching this important audience will also raise awareness and demand for sustainable construction throughout the nation.

##### **5. Please use this space to provide any additional supporting information.**

Special thanks and acknowledgement need to be given to Joe Weidle of Bedwell Construction, a founding board member of DVGBC who recognized the need for this work and doggedly pursued its development. Joe brought the concept to the DVGBC board, established the partnership with Green Advantage and reached out to the General Builders and Contractors Association and local trade unions to get them involved. Many other individuals gave time and energy to this project. However, the core development team of this outstanding product deserves special mention. For DVGBC, Professor Rob Fleming of Philadelphia University, Joe Weidle of Bedwell Construction, and Mike O’Brien of WS Cumby & Son, Inc. spent countless hours organizing information, developing teaching strategies and curriculum, and compiling the many collateral materials used in the course. Grady O’Rear of Green Advantage provided guidance, input and support throughout the process.

Funding for the initial development of the curriculum and the pilot program was provided by DVGBC. With Philadelphia University, DVGBC recently received a \$50,000 grant from the DOE Rebuild America program to further enhance the curriculum and build delivery capacity through faculty development across the country.