



News

SPRING 2014

ALL THE NEWS THAT'S FIT TO BUILD

In each of our issues we like to share with you a bit about one of the outstanding valley institutions or organizations that Wright Builders supports. Enjoy!

OUR FEATURED NON-PROFIT

NORTHEAST SUSTAINABLE ENERGY ASSOCIATION

Our non-profit feature article this spring is about **NESEA**, the Northeast Sustainable Energy Association, which provides workshops, technical assistance and policy initiatives throughout the region for its members. A highlight of their year is the BuildingEnergy conference series; a three day blowout of workshops, events, trainings, continuing education and trade show activities focused on sustainable energy systems, design, practices and policies.

Melissa Caldwell, marketing manager for Wright Builders, presented our marketing philosophy and style as part of: "Transforming Your Business towards High Performance Construction" at BE14.

High performance construction is not new to Wright Builders. We started into solar and energy efficient construction in 1976, 38 years ago, in the company's infancy, but it is only in the last approximately 10 years that the confluence of knowledge, public awareness, values shifts, and building science advances that the work has really blossomed. That said, one key piece of our advice at BE14 was: **Keep your core business!** This means, be sure the full range of your work is known, so that those other sustaining aspects of the business do not fall off. We thought we'd take that advice and share the following:



For the first time Wright Builders presented at Building Energy 14 conference, offering suggestions and pathways for becoming a high performance oriented construction business. The session received high marks, and was especially fun because of our team of five made for a lively discussion and a solid showing for women in the profession. (There is a Fall BE14 planned for New York City in October too. Check it out as www.nesea.org)

With all that serious tech stuff, there was lots of fun too, including a members' evening harbor cruise with buffet and dancing!

DID YOU KNOW THAT...

Wright Builders does about 30% of its business on the college campuses and with schools, and has never missed a deadline;

We love planning, designing and building homes of all sizes;

Wright Builders is highly regarded as the master renovator of our region;

We build high performance commercial buildings with quality fit and finish;

Sometimes we are almost invisible, like transforming a Bank branch in 19 days, or recent improvements to the River Valley Market done off hours. Turn your head, and voila, it's done;

Village Hill Northampton, of which we are proud, is about 20% of our business;

We do about thirty smaller additions and home renovations every year;

The principals of Wright Builders have had their hands in thousands of kitchen remodels over the years!



We have our own Facebook page! Launched in early January we are having fun staying connected and learning more about what interests you in building, design, materials, décor, and plan ole life and sharing some of our own milestones. THANK YOU for your likes, comments, interest and posts. If you haven't liked us yet, visit facebook.com/wrightbuildersinc.

From NESEA's Executive Director, Jennifer Marrapese:

Over the past six months or so, the Northeast Sustainable Energy Association (NESEA) has been working with Wright Builders, Maclay Architects, and Andy Shapiro of Energy Balance, to develop a 50-year master plan for our headquarters in Greenfield, Massachusetts. It's been a fun, but sometimes sobering process to discover what it is to be a responsible steward of a building as a nonprofit organization with many competing constraints. Being a nonprofit that's focused on sustainable energy makes the task even more challenging.

For the immediate future we'll focus first on making the building accessible and configure it to better meet the needs of our employees and tenants, saving many of the energy efficiency improvements for later. And we'll call on a committee of NESEA board members to manage the project, so that we can continue to do the things our members value most, including offering workshops on topics like Deep Energy Retrofits, like the one Marc Rosenbaum will be presenting in Northampton on June 13th, and planning in-depth BuildingEnergy Pro Tours of noteworthy projects throughout the Northeast, including an upcoming tour and workshop relating to the Hitchcock Center's Living Building Challenge (LBC) project. More details can be found @ www.nesea.org/pro-tours over the next few months.

NESEA distinguishes themselves from the many other organizations that are involved with making the built environment more sustainable, as a member-driven and staff-supported organization evidenced in their BuildingEnergy Conference and Trade Show. A planning committee of NESEA members curates the conference content in a very interactive and democratic process, and the staff facilitates with logistical support.

NESEA embraces a whole systems approach recognizing the connections among different systems within a building (HVAC, envelope, lighting, appliances) and between the building and its setting, its users, the community in which it exists, and through their work try to optimize these connections.

The NESEA community is unique and likes to share, not just what works in energy efficiency/renewable energy, but maybe more importantly, what doesn't. Their community members are focused on learning from their biggest mistakes.

The NESEA community also insists upon actual data to back up building performance claims, requiring that presenters/members present at least a full year's worth of data before they are allowed to share a project as a case study.

NESEA is a multi-disciplinary community, attracting many building disciplines driven by the quality of the network and the information that can be accessed through the diverse NESEA community.

The NESEA community is also a venue for mentoring individuals and small businesses through the development of informal peer networks. Many members report that every single important business connection they have made or job they have landed has been as a result of a NESEA interaction.

They serve the entire state of MA plus ME, NH, VT, CT, RI, NY, NJ, PA, and DE. You can read more about NESEA at www.nesea.org.

What is Living Building Challenge (LBC)?

If we step back a pace or two from the hubbub of it all, and reflect of the great strides in sustainability that have been achieved through ENERGY STAR, LEED, and the commitment of so many, the missing piece for us is a broader view of sustainability, an international perspective. This is where the international Living Futures Institute comes in; an extraordinary organization born of the Cascadia Green Building Council in the Northwest and Vancouver.

In a terribly small nutshell, the Challenge envisions buildings which are zero net energy, zero net water, beautiful, bright, inhabitable largely with natural lighting, comfortable, built with sustainable materials derived from the local and regional markets wherever possible, reflect the natural beauty of the world, discourage automobile usage, educate their visitors about the building and the world, are assembled with a plan for end-of life deconstruction and reuse of materials, and are constructed free of 41 key toxins found in many materials.

It is a daunting assignment, but one which gently rocks the world of building science, not to sleep, but awake. There are 5 buildings certified in the world:

- **Smith College's Bechtel Environmental Classroom** in Whately, MA (certified 1.23.2014)
- **Bertschi Living Building Science Wing**, Seattle, WA (certified 4.10.2013)
- **Hawaii Preparatory Academy Energy Laboratory**, Waimea, HI (certified 4.27.2011)
- **Tyson Living Learning Center** in Eureka, MO (certified 10.12.2010)
- **Omega Center for Sustainable Living** in Rhinebeck, NY (certified 10.12.2010)

and about 160 in planning or construction. Two are planned in Amherst, one for Hampshire College and one for The Hitchcock Center for the Environment, also on the Hampshire College campus. Wright Builders is working with these institutions and their architects on pre-construction planning and estimating services, and is thrilled to be part of this cutting edge work.

Recently, during a briefing with trades on one of these upcoming projects, one of our long time subcontractors commented, "I am glad we are doing this. We should have done this, years ago." No one knows better than folks working in industry and in the trades the risks of PVC, solvents, phthalates and the other red list items.

To further our own knowledge of LBC and the green building movement, Wright Builders will be attending the International Living Future Institute's seventh annual unConference, Living Future 2014, on May 21 - 23, 2014 in Portland, Oregon.

Living Future is the forum for leading minds in the green building movement which seek solutions to the most daunting global issues of our time. Out-of-the-ordinary learning and networking formats provide innovative design strategies, cutting-edge technical information, and the inspiration needed to achieve significant progress toward a truly living future.

Continued on back...



ONGOING PROJECTS

Unitarian Universalist Society of Amherst The Society happily moved back into its beautiful new addition and remodeled space, with the first service held Sunday 4/13. The new offices, religious Ed rooms, social space with commercial kitchen and conference space for both the Congregation and the public are all part of the addition/renovations. Events of all types are anticipated with an enhanced ability to host events, weddings, etc. Springtime landscaping and painting will finish the project. Architectural design: Kuhn Riddle Architects, Amherst, MA.

Private Home in Belchertown Lovely 3 bedroom private home with beautiful views to the West. Occupancy is expected in early summer.

COMPLETED PROJECTS

Beechwood at Village Hill Northampton We are proud to say that all single family homes in the Beechwood neighborhood are happily occupied. The new residents are enjoying the views, Beechwood Park and their neighbors.

Thanks, Blackline Retail Group! We enjoyed working with you on the expansion and improvements to the building that now houses Hunt Camera and Moe's Southwest Grill.

The Hartsbrook School Early Childhood Learning Building Located in Hadley, MA, this beautifully designed learning center, designed by Kraus Fitch Architects of Amherst, MA, is now occupied and being enjoyed by children and staff. The building and craftsmanship reflect the holistic philosophy of the school.



NEW PROJECTS



Florence Savings Bank New Branch Office, Hadley, MA. Wright Builders is pleased to have been awarded construction of the new Florence Savings Bank Branch Office in Hadley. The location is iconic, as it previously housed McDonalds, the first outpost of commercial development on Route 9, in 1970. Coming full circle, this new facility has a high performance building envelope and handsome exterior, all designed by HAI Architecture of Northampton, with site design by the Berkshire Design Group. A September opening is planned, bringing even more convenient customer service to this very central location. Congratulations Florence Savings Bank!



THE UPPER RIDGE at Village Hill With one 1600 sq. ft. end unit left in Phase I (4 townhomes), Phase II is headed into construction, right on schedule. A craftsman cottage duplex comprised of a two and a three bedroom unit is underway. The long-planned vision of accessible one floor living is here, in the form of the Flats! Six 1,500 sq.' one floor units, two and three bedroom, are arranged two per floor. Each unit has three sides of light and ventilation, and shares the lobby with only one other home. This building also has 6 garages underneath with dedicated storage space, and state of the art minisplit HVAC & ERV technology throughout, for the ultimate in healthy air and individual room temperature comfort control.



At this writing, as construction nears, one home has been presold and interest is becoming keen. We are really pleased and honored that our first buyers are a family for whom we have built twice before! That is a special treat and honor of the first order.

DUPLEX-CRAFTSMAN STYLE TOWNHOMES OCCUPANCY DECEMBER 2014
THE FLATS-ONE FLOOR LIVING-OCCUPANCY IS ANTICIPATED IN APRIL, 2015

Architectural Design: Kuhn Riddle Architects
Site Design: Berkshire Design Group
Renderings: Kuhn Riddle Architects





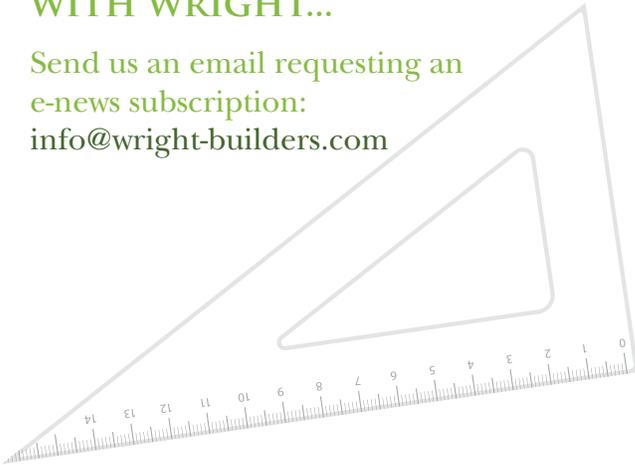
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WBI EMPLOYEE PROFILE: LYNNE BADGETT Sales Manager and Senior Estimator

What do petroleum engineering and sustainable construction have in common? After all, one is about producing fossil fuels, and the other about not using them! The answer is... Lynne Badgett, senior estimator at Wright Builders, who got her engineering training at the University of Alaska, and has ended up in the Pioneer Valley for some years now. After stints in industry, Lynne took on the challenge of learning the building industry, through immersion in Wright Builders, designing her own home, and applying her deep knowledge of systems and spreadsheet analysis to the building world. She is a great collaborator within the Wright Builders team, always helping, learning, and quietly leading.

Lynne has managed the design and detailing of most of the homes at Village Hill, and is great fun to be with, even if an engineer. But can she make spreadsheets dance. Some have to be printed on 24 x 36 architectural paper, and are known as the bed sheet spreadsheet!

Not to give away secrets, but she does like a spot of chocolate in the afternoon.

WHAT IS LBC continued...

Jonathan Wright is readying to earn his Living Building Challenge (LBC) Ambassador Certification. Professionals who wish to shift the focus of green building conversations are trained through the Ambassador Network to deliver informal introductory presentations to peers, local organizations, institutions, companies and community groups. Ambassador Presenters help build local capacity for sustained discussions on restorative principles and the formation of a local Living Building Challenge Collaborative. Learn more about this conference at www.living-future.org/unconference2014.

Watch for more on this in our fall newsletter and in the meantime learn more at www.living-future.org/lbc

INSIDE THE CIRCLE | OUTSIDE THE BOX

Alexis Buzzell places 2nd at
USASA Nationals in Colorado in March!



Jonathan Wright's
first book: After the Rain
launches 9/28/14.
Save the date!

Melissa Caldwell's
paintings & baskets @
Hosmer Gallery -
Month of April 2014