



Cover Stories

Shades of Green: 'Going Green' companies deliver

By J. D. Booth
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While the idea of “Going Green” is hardly new — as those who experienced the 1970s will attest — some would say it’s taken on new life, whether the result of once-and-could-be-again \$150 a barrel oil (and \$4 a gallon gas) or a tacit acknowledgement that climate change is a fact (whether influenced by mankind or not).



Others would argue the idea of being good stewards when it comes to interfacing with the environment around us is simply the right thing to do. Pollute less, use what you need, leave the world a better place than when we first arrived.

For the business community, taking a green attitude can also be an economic argument. Corp! magazine set out to identify those organizations that have embraced that ethos — the result being our first “Going Green” awards.

Even as we sifted through the nominees, it became clear that embracing an environmentally friendly approach takes leadership. And yes, there are a growing number of organizations with a Michigan base that are stepping up to the environmental plate, demonstrating what it takes to make a difference in their world and the world around them.

We hope the following profiles of the winners will inspire you to carry on the green banner.

Green Industry Innovators

Adaptive Materials

www.adaptivematerials.com

Two of the most important words in today's quest for energy efficiency may be these: fuel cells. And Ann Arbor-based Adaptive Materials is arguably positioned as one of the top players, not only having won U.S. Department of Defense funding in the form of a competition for developing fuel cell technology, but more recently participating in the longest flight of a radio-controlled aerial vehicle using fuel cell power. Offering a growing array of portable fuel cells is what's keeping the company in the limelight, says Michelle Crumm, co-founder and chief business officer. Started with a grant of \$1 million in 2001, Adaptive Materials uses propane as the "fuel of choice" for its products, many of which are being used by the U.S. military.



Planterra's TerraWall, a new green product for building interiors. The patent-pending invention was created right here in Michigan and is said to be the greenest, most practical living wall system on the market.

Aristeo Construction

www.aristeo.com

Having earned a reputation as a company well versed in green construction techniques, Aristeo Construction appears to be positioned to continue taking advantage of market demand. A member of the U.S. Green Building Council since 2004, Aristeo participated as a subcontractor for the Ford Dearborn Truck Plant Heritage Program, which included a living sedum-planted roof and the LEED Gold Certified Rouge Factory Tour Visitor Center. Founded in 1977 by Agostino Aristeo Sr. and his son Joseph, the company has enjoyed more than three decades of growth and change. Today, it embraces the trend to incorporate green technologies into the building process.

GANTEC-Advance LLC

www.gantecinc.com

What could be greener than a company committed to helping grow crops and flowers that are healthier, more robust and even safer for human health? If you're Brian Molitor, chairman of Midland, Mich.-based GANTEC-Advance, the question is largely rhetorical, especially given the company's footprint. "We are motivated and equipped to make a positive difference in the quality of life here in our local communities and extending all the way to Africa where we currently harvest some of our key raw materials," says Molitor. "We hope to improve conditions that include economic, environmental and community development, starting at home and extending around the world." It does so by purchasing renewable, tree-based raw materials that regenerate multiple times each season. Using hand-harvesting techniques means much needed jobs in Third World countries are created. Minimizing waste is part of a production process that is gentle to the environment, Molitor

adds. "Every part of the raw material is used in organic farming or to reduce harmful chemicals in greenhouses and our processes and products also reduce the need for synthetic fertilizers often used in the growing process."

Great Lakes Electronics

www.recycleelectronics.com

The latest and greatest computer or other electronic gadget may be enticing, but what about getting rid of the old stuff in a way that doesn't compromise the environment, not to mention the security of your data. Nathan Zack, who started Great Lakes Electronics as an 18-year-old (from his garage), has a solution: a nationwide pick-up service that serves corporate clients, large retailers and government agencies with a safe, secure and reliable method for recycling. Today, with more than 120 employees and six recycling facilities in Detroit, Chicago, Atlanta, Daytona Beach, Orlando and Canada, Great Lakes Electronics is helping make sure older electronics don't create an environmental problem.

Linc Mechanical, LLC

www.lincservice.com

When Dearborn Heights, Mich.-based Crestwood School District was looking to save money on its energy consumption, it looked at five separate buildings, including a high school, three elementary schools and a middle school. It also brought in Farmington Hills-based Linc Mechanical, a member of a nationwide group of facilities managers that has earned a reputation for delivering results. In the case of Crestwood, that equates to nearly \$3.5 million in savings over the next 15 years, the result of energy efficient boilers and pump, lighting and system upgrades. Not bad for a school system without the cash to pay for the work. Bill Maurer, Linc vice president of bundled energy solutions, explains. "Our program affords the funding mechanism to replace aging boilers, lighting and pneumatic controls, while utilizing Crestwood's existing operating budget. No capital outlay from the district is necessary, and we eliminate the risk for the schools because our company guarantees the savings." The project is also Energy Star compliant. "It's very gratifying to know that we're helping our customer save money while improving comfort for students and faculty," says Scott Giacobbe, Linc Network president and CEO.



The newer portion of the Kresge Foundation headquarters incorporates 27 percent recycled materials. Photo by Justin Maconochie

MV Software

www.mvsoftware.com

If a tree is not cut down in a forest, does anyone hear? Any noise might be the applause from companies that are using technology developed by MV Software, a Clawson, Mich.-based developer that offers paperless delivery options for its business reports, either

through Adobe's Portable Document Format or Excel spreadsheets. From the perspective of CEO Pavan V. Muzumdar, any promise of productivity should derive environmental benefits as well. "It implies that one is consuming less resources to get the same output." In the case of MV Software, environmental benefits come from fewer pages being printed. Plus, the underlying design of the software tends to more efficiently use existing computer hardware. Still, Muzumdar admits his company is only one part of any solution. "People that are used to printing out everything when using an electronic copy need to change their behavior before these benefits can be realized. Our approach is to constantly remind our users that there is a better way."

Natural Kids

www.natural-kids.com

With a goal of connecting individuals, families and businesses "with resources to redefine our collective lifestyle in a way that is good for the environment and safe for our children," Natural Kids' founder Donna Lewis has her work cut out for her. But it's work that's intensely motivating. "It's knowing that I am making a tremendous impact on our future, most importantly the future of our children," says Lewis, who also operates DLA Group, LLC, a strategic marketing and business consultancy. By presenting eco-friendly resources to her network, Lewis says Natural Kids "encourages everyone to take that first or next step towards doing their part to support environmental stewardship." The challenge? "Creating urgency towards action. A healthy planet can also mean a healthy bottom line."

Planterra

www.planterra.com

From its recycling of rainwater to irrigate plants in its greenhouses, to the use of organic chemicals and the recycling of thousands of cubic yards of paper and wood waste annually, Planterra takes its environmental responsibility seriously. The second generation West Bloomfield, Mich.-based distributor of living and replica plants, now headed by Shane Pliska (and founded by Larry Pliska), is also thinking big: it's building a 20,000-square-foot conservatory that will reduce Planterra's use of natural gas by half. "Green will always be a part of Planterra's identity," says Shane Pliska, who points to a trend that bodes well for the company. "We have taken the national lead in providing greenery for commercial space and we anticipate this trend to grow our business significantly over the next five years." Still, there are challenges. "One is to effectively communicate that environmental sustainability is about producing a better environment for everyone, in every space and place," says Pliska. Another is debunking the cost perception. "Environmental sustainability does not necessarily come with an outrageous price tag. When approached smartly, the costs can be comparable or less."

Pleasantrees

www.baudville.com

Americans buy a lot of greeting cards -- an estimated 7 billion a year, most of which are made from virgin paper. But thanks to the Pleasantrees division of Baudville, a recognition and rewards firm based in Grand Rapids, consumers now have a greener choice. Launched last October as what Baudville says is the only all-green corporate holiday card provider, Pleasantrees uses paper certified to have at least 50 percent recycled content and 30

percent post-consumer content. Soy-based ink and adoption of Forest Stewardship Council sustainable forestry standards gives the product line an eco stamp of approval. Pleasantrees also contributes to the planting of three trees for every product order, thanks to its partnership with American Forests, a nonprofit citizens' conservation group, the expectation being some 50,000 new trees by the end of 2009.

Plymouth Technology, Inc.

www.plymouthtechnology.com

What happens when industries use water as part of their manufacturing processes? Quite often the valuable resource is contaminated with metals that creates an environmental problem. Plymouth Technology, through its Metals Removal System, is said to reclaim up to 90 percent of the water used in an industrial wastewater treatment facility, delivering benefits that include less chemicals used. Add to the list of positives the tons of refuse that no longer need to be sent to a landfill and it's clear that Plymouth Technology offers its clients a green future. As President Amanda Christides points out, the system has proven to provide such dramatically lower metals levels that compliance with discharge regulations is virtually guaranteed.

Resource Recycling Systems

www.recycle.com

The idea of going green, while laudable, simply isn't enough to get the job done. What's required, experts will submit, is a viable engineered solution that incorporates the latest technology, something the team at Ann Arbor-based Resource Recycling Systems understand. With consultants specializing in the wide variety of disciplines necessary to design and complete viable recycling systems, the firm works with public agencies and corporations to deliver its solutions. Headed by James Frey, who helped grow the award-winning Recycle Ann Arbor program from a voluntary organization into a comprehensive nonprofit municipal recycling service provider, the 23-year-old company has earned a reputation for developing practical solutions nationwide.

VPSI

www.vpsiinc.com

First launched by a group of Chrysler employees in the mid 1970s, VPSI is arguably one of the best-known providers of vanpool services in the nation. Today it operates some 5,000 vans, each 15-passenger vehicle typically conserving more than 300,000 consumer miles and 13,000 gallons of fuel a year. From that perspective alone, VPSI is an intensely personal means of making a difference to the environment.

"One vanpool removes as many as 14 vehicles and their emissions from the road each day," notes Chris Hooper, the company's marketing programs manager. "VPSI is a convenient solution for environmentally conscious commuters." The company works with hundreds of



VPSI, Inc., helps firms organize van pools for their employees.

organizations and municipalities throughout the nation to offer programs that qualify for the federal Commuter Choice Tax incentive program.

Green Initiative Champions

A3C

www.a3c.com

When former Vice President Al Gore began talking about climate change, the principals at A3C, a collaborative architecture firm based in Ann Arbor, took notice, says Jan Culbertson, a senior principal. “We accepted the AIA’s [American Institute of Architecture] 2030 challenge [that sets targets for reduction of greenhouse gas emissions] beginning with our own building.” Culbertson says the initiative has produced long-term benefits for A3C and its clients. “Our project has been an incredible educational tool for us, other professionals, clients and the public. We continue to build our knowledge and share information and best practices. We are becoming better at meeting clients where they are and advocating for higher performing buildings.”

Branch Tree Service

www.branchtree.com

For a quarter century, Warren-based Branch Tree Service has focused on tree preservation as its key mission, completing thousands of treatments for ailing trees that would otherwise be lost and cut down. “We have taken great strides over the past several years to reduce the use of hard line fertilizers,” notes CEO George R. Lee, who says advancements in liquid composting is helping homeowners keep their trees healthy. The firm produces some 150,000 to 200,000 yards of wood chips every year, diverting the material that would otherwise be sent to landfills to be used as mulch or used by Consumers Energy to generate electricity. Lee also points to efforts to educate clients on the benefits of reducing the use of pesticides. “By doing so, you can still have a beautiful and healthy landscape.”

Clayco

www.claycorp.com

A nationally recognized privately owned real estate, architecture and engineering, design/build and construction firm, Clayco has already earned a reputation for green building practices, having made it to the “Top Green Contractors” list of *Engineering News Record*. With some 50 LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) accredited professionals on staff, the national company (with offices in Livonia) is on its way to having half its professionals so qualified. In the meantime, Clayco staffers are making themselves known, speaking at numerous community events and universities where they espouse the benefits of sustainable building practices. But Clayco is doing more than talk: the firm has overseen more than 30 LEED building projects, says regional vice president Mark Tomasik. The results include a 30 percent saving of domestic water through the use of high efficiency, low water use plumbing fixtures and valves, and an 18 percent energy improvement in its projects.

Days Hotel Grand Rapids

www.dayshotelgrandrapids.com

Certainly, one way to be kinder to the environment is by using less energy, something the Days Hotel in downtown Grand Rapids has embraced with its installation of leading edge laundry equipment that uses cold water. The system, which uses ozone to boost cleaning, the added benefit being the effective removal of any bacteria, was installed last fall. But as Ellen Markel, general manager of the facility notes, that's just the beginning. "Our entire organization is very passionate about the environment. We make every effort to preserve, protect and promote environmental responsibility and it's our hope that our example will inspire others to take action." Markel says the hotel aims to be the first Zero Waste facility in the area. "We are determined to provide all the 'comforts' to our guests while educating and promoting the importance of reducing water or energy consumption and recycling."

Fishbeck, Thompson, Carr, & Huber, Inc.

www.ftch.com

As engineers and architects, the professionals at Fishbeck, Thompson, Carr & Huber are accustomed to interfacing with the environment -- so much so that they've built that ethos into their everyday way of thinking. "We continually strive to learn, share and apply new and proven technologies, and encourage clients to consider a long-range outlook on their environments and projects," says President James Townley. With membership in the U.S. Green Building Council, the firm takes seriously its commitment to fully integrated design methodologies in all disciplines, notably through having more than two dozen of its professionals now accredited in methods under the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design program. The firm has completed numerous client projects involving sustainable environmental principles, including Michigan State University's first LEED-certified facility, the school's chemistry building.

Harbor Industries

www.harborind.com

For Harbor Industries President Tim Parker, manufacturing point-of-purchase displays and store fixtures is a business that can be gentle on the environment. "We're trying to minimize the resources we use, but we're also trying to incorporate more environmentally friendly materials into the design of our products," says Parker. "The final avenue of our initiative is to educate our employees, suppliers and customers about how they can adopt practices that are more sustainable." Parker says Harbor wants to be seen as the leaders of sustainable design and manufacturing in the retail environment. Working in places like Grand Haven and Charlevoix may make it just a little easier. "The natural beauty of these communities reminds us of our responsibility to be good stewards of our environment."



Through much of the Kresge Foundation building, a raised floor supplies cool or warm air. Supplying it at ground level rather than overhead is more efficient and provides better ventilation. Photo by Justin Maconochie

ITC Holdings

www.itc-holdings.com

It's one thing to be able to generate renewable energy (through solar and wind power) but quite another to make sure it gets to the end users. That's the job of ITC, which owns and maintains the electrical transmission grid, not only in Michigan, but in a growing number of regions across the U.S. The company, headed by former DTE Energy executive Joe Welch, says it's also put its energy into the construction of a 188,000-square-foot headquarters facility in Novi. Locating it on an 85-acre parcel of land, ITC built up, not out, the end result being the preservation of an ecologically diverse natural wetland on the property. Inside, floor to ceilings maximize the use of natural daylight and a high-efficiency, dual-fuel boiler and dry coiler helps to minimize the use of energy. Add to the mix a team of employees who act as a "green team" to champion further ways to promote recycling and eliminate waste and it's clear that ITC is generating excitement for the future.

Mason L. Brown & Associates, Inc.

As a group of civil engineers and land surveyors, Mason L. Brown is familiar with the challenges of interfacing with the environment, first for its clients but as part of its own facility that it built two years ago. In fact, its Auburn Hills headquarters is now a demonstration site for developers and builders. "They get to see firsthand how a low impact site looks and works," says Mason L. Brown II. "In cooperation with the landscape architect and the pavers manufacturer, we have shown potential clients (and other engineers and architects) that these methods are not necessarily more expensive than traditional construction methods." Brown sees a future where smaller and cleaner stormwater discharges will be the law. "Our firm will need to stay ahead of the curve in utilizing innovative methods in our designs."

Meijer Logistics

www.meijer.com

With some 180 stores located in Michigan and five other states, Meijer expends a great deal of energy keeping its shelves stocked with merchandise. But thanks to the leadership of Meijer Logistics, it's doing so in a way that's environmentally friendly. From cutting miles driven (and saving a million gallons of diesel fuel), Meijer Logistics is also employing a variety of fuel saving technologies (and driver education programs) to further reduce the amount of energy it consumes. Since joining the U.S Environmental Protection Agency's SmartWay Transportation Partners, Meijer is the only Michigan-based carrier to earn its SmartWay Excellence Award, one of many the retailer has received for its eco-practices.

Nichols Paper & Supply Co.

www.enichols.com

Rena Hesselink calls the strategy for contributing positively to a healthier environment a game changer at Nichols. As vice president of sustainability for the Spring Lake, Mich.-based supplier of cleaning and paper products, that means giving clients the tools they need to perform well while minimizing their environmental footprint. One way might be to reduce the number of products being used to clean a facility. "We listen when our manufacturers come out with new ideas in products," notes Hesselink. "In some cases they use us for a sounding board." Still, Hesselink understands there are challenges ahead.

“There continues to be a perception that green cleaning products don’t work or that the cost more. That is simply not true.”

Pet Supplies Plus

www.petsuppliesplus.com

While part of a network of some 215 stores in 21 states, it’s Addy and Matt Shattuck that own four area stores, including two in White Lake (the others in Bloomfield Hills and Canton). In fact it was as mutual owners of stores that the couple originally met (they married in 2005). Today, the Shattucks are doing whatever they can to reduce their impact on the environment, including doing away with plastic shopping bags in favor of cotton, reusable carriers. They also promote pet neutering through a partnership with Nooters Club. From Addy’s perspective, the initiatives reinforce what people inherently desire. “I think most people have become earth conscious in one form or another. With four grandchildren, we certainly have. I want them to enjoy everything God intended this planet to offer.”

Sheraton Detroit Novi

www.sheratondetnovi.com

While running a hotel like the Sheraton Detroit Novi means catering to the needs (and sometimes whims) of its clientele, there are initiatives that put in place can minimize the environmental impact. So found the hotel’s management when they put in place a program that includes reusing white paper in the office, returning pallets to vendors, and using glass dishes instead of disposable paper products. Guests are invited to waive a daily bed linen change and every room has a programmable thermostat that helps guests demonstrate their own environmental sensitivity. Washrooms have low flow faucets and toilets and even paperless check-in and the donation of unused toiletries to a local shelter helps make a difference.

Staff Resources, Inc.

www.sri-eng.com

Leaders at Staff Resources, Inc. say while the cost savings represented by being environmentally responsible is important, there’s an even bigger picture for the Farmington Hills-based staffing company. For SRI that includes taking steps to eliminate paperwork wherever possible. It also means spreading the word on its Web site. Its hope is that others do the same so the company can also gain ideas from their successes. Establishing a long-term measurable program for tracking that success is also key.

Steven C. Flum Inc.

www.stevenflum.com

There’s recycling. And then there’s . . . well . . . for Detroit-based architect Steven C. Flum, it’s recycling taken to an entirely new level. Flum has eyed the 20,000 shipping containers that arrive each day in the U.S., but don’t get returned, largely because of the cost to ship them back. With his “Power of Green Housing” project, he intends to build a 17-unit condominium complex near the campus of Wayne State University. The housing, which will incorporate versatile exterior surfaces applied directly over corrugated metal, will also serve as a demonstration project for sustainable living, with features such as radiant

heating to lower heating costs, as well as composting and on-site recycling.

Sunblossom Solar Gifts

www.solarchime.com

They won't power the world, but the solar chime and mobiles produced by Bonnie Greenwald at Sunblossom Solar Gifts don't need plugs or batteries either. Indeed, only a "gentle dusting" is required of these indoor-only products. Launching the company in 1996, Greenwald and co-founder Jon Tury set out to create items that enhance people's lives while preserving the earth's resources (including minimizing or recycling packaging materials). The artistic and innovative products are popular in homes, elder care facilities and offices -- anywhere there is light. "Our philosophy is to provide pleasure in this hectic world," says Greenwald, Sunblossom's president.

Turner Construction

www.turnerconstruction.com

Leadership. When it comes to protecting the environment, it's that quality which becomes one of the most important factors in progress. When Turner Construction employees in the 1960s saw the impact buildings were having on the environment, they stepped up to help establish the United States Green Building Council. Since then, Turner initiatives have resulted in a 93 percent landfill diversion rate in Michigan and some \$500 million in LEED certified or registered projects in the state. All new hires are trained in the theory and practice of green building, which provide immediate and long-term economic benefits for developers, building owners and occupants. Having created a detailed databank of cost-effective green materials, processes and suppliers to assist its clients, Turner has more than 600 LEED accredited professionals on staff.

Viability

www.viabilityonline.com

With a vision for tapping into the greater return available through sustainable business practices, Chris Byrnes says Viability, the company he formed to help jumpstart economic development, is gaining ground. Indeed, several client projects have already secured grant dollars, including \$400,000 for a biomass heating system. As Byrnes explains, Viability clients include those who want to reduce their environmental impact while balancing their return on investment. "By acquiring incentive financing for projects, we help businesses reach a project price that will begin to change industry wide practices." Byrnes says a carbon credit market has the potential for leveling the playing field for projects where grant funding may not be available. Viability, Byrnes says, hopes to be a market leader in that area.

Webasto Roof Systems Inc.

www.webasto.com

Producing a wide variety of automotive roof systems, Webasto is doing more than designing and developing market leading products. It's also taking care to make sure its operations create as little environmental impact as possible. Whether it's in the area of energy consumption, its use of water, or simply incorporating sustainable purchasing and recycling into its everyday practices, Webasto is making a difference, says John Bul,

commercial manager for the company's Michigan operations. Creating a world-class rating for carbon footprint reduction and focusing on the use of alternative energy wherever possible is also part of what keeps Webasto poised for future success.

Green Organizations

Arts and Scraps

www.artsandscraps.org

The mission is simple, yet compelling. Provide children with affordable learning and creative experiences using recycled industrial scraps. From there Peg Upmeyer, director of Arts and Scraps, a Detroit-based nonprofit, is using a simple and unique way for more than 150 corporations and 40 individuals to transform their "stuff"-- some 28 tons annually -- into learning opportunities for area children. "Children reuse the materials we collect in hands-on learning challenges," notes Upmeyer. "When children and adults are able to approach a challenge in a way they can't be wrong, it gives them confidence in their abilities." While the accomplishments of Arts and Scraps are substantial, so are the ongoing needs, including supplemental funds to purchase a walk-in cargo van to pick up materials. While Upmeyer and her team have managed to keep the organization 70 percent self-sufficient, "we need to make sure our business model stays viable for growth and flexibility, while meeting the needs of the community."

Electric Auto Association (Michigan Chapter)

www.michiganEAA.org

The local presence of an association launched in 1967, the Michigan Chapter of the Electric Auto Association serves as a source of information about the idea and implementation of electric vehicles. Once almost a hobby interest, the concept of the electric auto becoming widespread is clearly gaining ground, and the EAA is poised to play a role in that transformation. Largely a network of do-it-yourselfers and electric vehicle enthusiasts, the state chapter of the EAA, led by Larry Tuttle, could be considered a grassroots effort to spark the rebirth of an industry that predated the internal combustion engine.

Grand Rapids Art Museum

www.artmuseumgr.org

Clearly, the people who run the Grand Rapids Art Museum are happy to have you through the doors. But there are also lots of reasons to admire not only the exhibits on display, but the building itself. One key reason: the 125,000-square-foot facility, which cost \$75 million to develop, was the first art museum in the nation to receive Gold Certification in Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, the benchmark for green construction. Among the features of the Grand Rapids Art Museum is a white roof designed to reflect heat while collecting rainwater and snowmelt. The water is collected in giant basement cisterns and put to use in the cafeteria (for dishes) or watering the lawn and replenishing a reflecting pool. A system that includes funneling outside air underground (where the temperature is a constant 55 degrees Fahrenheit) saves money as well.

Kresge Foundation

www.kresge.org

With one of the Kresge Foundation's six fields of interest being the environment, it made sense that the creation of a new headquarters facility on the foundation's existing three-acre site in Troy, Mich., should be as green as humanly possible. In a two-year project that wrapped up in 2006, Kresge set out to incorporate a 19th century farmhouse and barn (which were part of the organization's offices for many years) into a contemporary, two-level 19,500-square-foot glass and steel building. Achieving Platinum certification as a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design building, the headquarters project stands out as an example of what is possible. At the same time, it sets the stage for a robust grant-making strategy that is taking shape.

Lawrence Technological University

www.ltu.edu

Long before it was fashionable to do so, the leading edge educators at Lawrence Technological University were experimenting with solar panels, alternative fuels and building designs that dealt with orientation and material selection. So says Joseph Veryser, who not only serves as the school's associate dean for the College of Architecture and Design, but director of the Center for Sustainability. When it began the design of its A. Alfred Taubman Student Services Center five years ago, having the building LEED certified was a natural goal. Before it was completed, the building earned Silver certification. "We felt it was important to demonstrate our commitment," notes Veryser. "After all, how can we expect students to take sustainable design seriously if we don't practice what we preach?" Veryser says LTU has since updated its strategic plan, putting renewed emphasis on sustainability and environmental stewardship. "That will differentiate us as an environmentally engaged university and move us to greater national recognition."

Michigan Alternative and Renewable Energy Center

www.gvsu.edu/marec

An arm of Grand Valley State University in suburban Grand Rapids, the Michigan Alternative and Renewable Center (MAREC) is a "distributed generation" energy center, producing the power it needs to heat, cool, light and power the building. The 25,000-square-foot facility is powered in part by a fuel cell, turning natural gas into electricity. Photovoltaic solar roof tiles create more power, some of which is stored in the facility's nickel metal hydride battery system for use during peak energy consumption periods. As a Gold Certified LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) building, MAREC takes a visionary approach to energy production, use and conservation, even as it operates as a leading resource for education and instruction on alternative energy.

Michigan Green

www.michiangreen.org

A nonprofit group of energy companies intent on championing the cause of renewable energy and energy efficiency in Michigan and beyond, Michigan GREEN (Group for a Renewable Energy Efficient Nation) has quickly established itself as an advocate for change. Incorporated in 2007, the group has distributed more than 12,000 energy kits to low-income households in the state, an initiative that equates to more than \$12 million in annual savings possible over the life of the conservation kits. Partnering with the Michigan Green Schools Program, the organization is promoting energy efficiency and awareness,

with Michigan Green members presenting programs at dozens of energy conferences and seminars across the state.

NextEnergy

www.nextenergy.com

A nonprofit dedicated to seeing Michigan become a national hub for business investment in alternative and renewable energy, NextEnergy hopes to tap into the more than \$1 billion likely to be invested this year alone in alternative energy opportunities. Now led by Keith W. Cooley, former director of the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth, NextEnergy has already attracted millions of dollars in new federal funding for Michigan-based research to advance alternative and renewable energy development. NextEnergy sees its role as a catalyst for change. "Never has the opportunity been better for alternative and renewable energy to succeed."

Walsh College

www.walsh.edu

When Walsh College began planning an addition to its Troy campus, it was determined to do so in as environmentally friendly a manner as possible. Now a reality, the Jeffery W. Barry Center, a 37,000-square-foot, \$10.5 million building has lived up to its expectations, says Stephanie W. Bergeron, Walsh president and CEO. Not only does the building capture rainwater and rays of sun (for climate control), but even the floors, composed of a mixture of 20,000 pounds of recycled windshield glass and blue glass, make an environmental statement. In addition, green building construction and design concepts are being integrated into the Walsh curriculum. A private not-for-profit institution, Walsh's commitment to the project is even more significant in that it was not required to have a LEED rating for the building. Still, "Walsh is committed to all of its constituents and to providing the best possible services while being a responsible provider," says Bergeron.

West Michigan Sustainable Business Forum

www.wmsbf.org

A nonprofit organization that's part of the West Michigan Environmental Action Council, the West Michigan Sustainable Business Forum acknowledges the importance of a business bottom line. In its case, however, that concept has expanded -- three times over. The "Triple Bottom Line" includes environmental stewardship, economic vitality and social responsibility. By promoting business practices that demonstrate these qualities, the group hopes to "improve corporate profitability while simultaneously enhancing the long term health of the environment." Membership in the group represents a broad cross-section of large area industries and small businesses, organizers say. "Together we are dedicated to developing the expertise and the means necessary to achieve our objectives," its Web site notes.