

2008- Looking Ahead

It is with much hope that I look forward to 2008 for both the Central Texas-Balcones Chapter (CTBC) and our communities. As the 2007 Chair of the CTBC of USGBC, I can tell you that we spent much of last year building relationships and creating the organizational framework necessary to sustain our chapter going into 2008. Our accomplishments included providing an unprecedented number of educational opportunities, working with both the Cities of San Antonio and Austin to frame language for green building resolutions, and partnering with other organizations to provide more meaningful outreach. Going into 2008, our chapter is now strongly positioned to continue to expand beyond our traditional offerings.

So what does lie ahead for us? Two areas of focus you should expect to hear much more about are green schools and homes. Unlike the LEED rating systems, USGBC's primary message with schools and homes is the importance of the role they play in influencing the greening of our society, and secondarily the methodology in which they themselves can become green. We have advocates trained specifically in these sectors working with our chapter to educate our communities on these issues, and they are also forming working committees to support their very ambitious efforts. Additionally, we will continue to dialogue and be a resource to our municipalities and other governing bodies as they endeavor to author ever more ambitious sustainability agendas.

A very exciting development for our CTBC is the commitment of our board of directors to hire staff this year. Not only will this allow us to have a more streamlined means of communication with our members, but it will help us be more effective in meeting our objectives. The dedication that the board has demonstrated over the past 4 years is a true testimony to the belief in the mission of the USGBC and our chapter's extension of that mission. We have reached a pivotal point in our existence, however, which is that we expand or collapse under our own weight. Our decision to hire support does not negate in the slightest the chapters need for your volunteerism. That need, in fact, is stronger than ever! We are overwhelmed with requests for programs and information, so there is no shortage of ways that we plug you in to the family.

And speaking of volunteerism, on behalf of all of the Board of Directors and Committee Chairs, I must thank all of you that continue to work with us or have recently joined us. Our success to date is solely attributed to your time and enthusiasm. I continue to be amazed by the number of quality events that have taken place all because someone with a passion stood by and made them happen. A huge debt of gratitude must be expressed to our past Board of Directors, many of whom have stayed connected to our organization in one way or another. They include: Jim Estes, Katie Jensen, Adrian Neeley, George Cofer, Eduardo Acosta, Sue Barnett, Jay Elder, Deborah Fuller, Gail Vittori, Bob Harris, Jeremy Fields, Sara Partridge, Debra Henderson, Dick Grant, Claire Balfour, Heather Dalton, Rebecca Doll and Kirk King.

Lastly, I'd like to acknowledge our newly elected and continuing Board of Directors. This group met recently during our annual retreat to get acquainted and strategize about

how we address the growing sustainability agenda and the accelerated pace at which we are expected to deliver it. Let me assure you, this group is on fire with enthusiasm and has the right combination of pertinent experience to advance us to the next level, both fiscally and organizationally. I found my year as the 2007 Chair to be more rewarding than I could have every imagined, and I proudly announce the incoming 2008 Chair, Heather Degrella, as someone you should all have great confidence in orchestrating an eventful year!

Kathy Zarsky
Past Chair of the CTBC