

## Update from the USGBC CT-B Chapter Technology Committee

When we met that first time at Mamacita's Restaurant in San Marcos, there was more interest in the heated discussion than the food, much to the chagrin of our waitress. Between polite turns at the chips and salsa, the cross-disciplinary group charted their common ground. We, architects and engineers, interior designers and contractors, all agreed that the USGBC was not providing enough technical guidance to its members. There were plenty of hoops to jump through with the LEED paperwork, but not enough direction toward true synthesis and innovation. There were plenty of resources out there introducing the basic concepts of green building, but nothing to help you work out the details. We were better off than most with our above-average sets of expertise. Heck, we were the ones that signed up for the Technical Committee. How could we help those that were really left in the lurch? Could we provide pro-bono advice to our local community? We pictured all the phone calls coming in, during business hours, before a deadline... There had to be a way we could help with the limited free time we had.

The concept of harnessing internet and database technology came up and we have not dropped it yet. We are two years into our mission to become virtual green building consultants. We have all kinds of ideas about how to do this practically and efficiently. Necessity is the mother of invention. We have some really hard-working members, partnerships forming with major institutions, an experienced software developer, and even a name. We are START, the Sustainable Technology Applications Resource Team of Central Texas. We have a mission, to be "an interactive partnership to provide comprehensive and accessible information on regionally appropriate products and systems to support successful green building in Central Texas".

Come find knowledge in the first fruit of our labors: a simple interactive web forum on Green Building in Central Texas. We're on the web at [www.STARTcentraltexas.org](http://www.STARTcentraltexas.org). It's a place to ask questions and get real answers from people in your own building community. Your participation in our forum will help fuel our next projects: 1) to create an interchangeable standard for knowledge of building systems that can be plugged into building modeling software, and 2) to create a self-propagating database for this knowledge with a software interface that's easy to use and fun to learn from. If that sounded like Greek (or Geek!) to you, just check out our forum at [www.STARTcentraltexas.org](http://www.STARTcentraltexas.org)