



## Chicago

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# NEWS RELEASE

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## USGBC – Chicago Chapter Celebrates Natural Leaders

The U.S. Green Building Council – Chicago Chapter announced its 2009 Natural Leaders Awards winners, with a formal ceremony to recognize the recipients to be held at the Fourth Emerald Gala on Saturday, May 16. The Awards celebrate individuals and organizations that contribute to the region's sustainability and that help support the USGBC – Chicago Chapter's mission to lead the regional transformation of the built environment to become ecologically sustainable, profitable, and healthy through education, advocacy, and collaboration. Awards are given in four categories: Intent to Matter, Re-Generation, SMALL feet/ large FEAT and *Environment*.

The **Environmental Law and Policy Center** received the **Intent to Matter** award for excellence in sustainable design, construction, or operations. The Environmental Law & Policy Center (ELPC) successfully crafted and passed energy efficient building codes that take advantage of available technology while giving builders choices in what technologies to use and saving consumers 11-15% on annual utility bills. In 2005, the Commercial Energy Efficiency Building Code became law while the residential building code passed both the Illinois House and the Illinois Senate in 2008. Howard Learner, ELPC's executive director, was also instrumental in the development of the City of Chicago's Climate Action Plan, which includes more than two dozen policy ideas focusing on buildings, energy generation, transportation, industry, and waste reduction practices. ELPC's work is a major step toward making green buildings and policy the standard for Chicago and State of Illinois.

**Vincent Iturralde**, principal of **Tarkington School of Excellence** received the **Re-Generation** award for excellence in environmental education. From his first day on the job, Principal Iturralde, a former science teacher, saw the potential to bring the school to life and incorporate sustainability into the curriculum. Using recycled content for construction, sophisticated lighting controls and a rooftop garden, Tarkington was the first LEED certified Chicago Public School. His commitment is reflected in his students. Students lead the recycling effort and interact with the park grounds around them, learning environmental stewardship and building a sense of ownership in the community as a whole. Principal Iturralde has parlayed a gift of a green school into a green community.

Making a strong commitment to reduce its carbon footprint **Saint Xavier University** was honored with the **SMALL feet/large FEAT** award for excellence in organizational change. Saint Xavier University (SXU) recently completed a Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Audit, which evaluated the University's eCO<sub>2</sub> emissions, focusing on CO<sub>2</sub> reductions in such areas as student and employee travel. SXU's LEED Gold Rubloff Hall participated in a USGBC/U.S. EPA - sponsored study on the economics of going "green." Even with a 3.77% construction premium, they found the expenses would be defrayed in only 4.9 years. Rubloff Hall will not only be able to sustain energy efficiency and economic savings for the future, but the efficiency

with which the buildings operate will more than compensate for front end costs by significantly outlasting traditional building standards. With the information from energy and consumption benchmarking, SXU will move to create a Climate Action Plan to take advantage of energy reduction opportunities in the future and become as climate neutral as possible.

The **Environmotion** award for excellence in sustainable innovation was awarded to **Uncommon Ground**. The community-based restaurant on the north side of Chicago advocates the principles of local, sustainable and organically produced food, boasting the first certified organic rooftop farm in the United States. The 2,500 square foot garden not only grows produce for the restaurant below, but houses solar panels that heat up to 70% of the water for the restaurant and two beehives that produce 40 pounds of honey a year. Owners Helen and Michael Cameron expanded to this second location in 2007, having built relationships with farmers from the Great Lakes region who follow sustainable and organic methods. “Our mission is to stand as a working model for other restaurants, businesses and home owners,” Helen says, “to show what is possible within an urban environment.”

***The Chicago Chapter will recognize the 2009 Natural Leader Award recipients at their Fourth Emerald Gala on May 16, 2009 at the Swissotel in Chicago.***

The US Green Building Council – Chicago Chapter is hosting the Fourth Emerald Gala at the Swissotel Chicago on May 16, 2009. The Emerald Gala is the preeminent celebration of Illinois’ sustainable building movement. This event attracts over 600 individuals in the green building community to celebrate the sustainable building movement and support of the Chicago Chapter’s mission to lead the regional transformation of the built environment to become ecologically sustainable, profitable and healthy through education, advocacy and collaboration. Tickets are on-sale through the USGBC – Chicago Chapter website, [www.usgbc-chicago.org](http://www.usgbc-chicago.org) or contact the Chicago Chapter office at 312-245-8300.

**About the U.S. Green Building Council – Chicago Chapter**

The U.S. Green Building Council – Chicago Chapter’s over 1,500 members represent the entire spectrum of Chicagoland’s green building community, from real estate professionals, architects, engineers, designers and trade associations to contractors, product manufacturers, state and local government officials, homebuilders and homeowners. The U.S. Green Building Council – Chicago Chapter is the local affiliate of the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC), a national non-profit composed of leaders from every sector of the building industry working to promote buildings that are environmentally responsible, profitable and healthy places to live and work. USGBC’s Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building Rating System is the nationally accepted benchmark for the design, construction, and operation of high performance green buildings. LEED provides a roadmap for measuring and documenting success for every building type and phase of a building lifecycle. In the Chicagoland region, the Chicago Chapter furthers the work of USGBC through a variety of programs, events, education and research initiatives, advocacy campaigns, and resources for the local green building community.

To learn more about the USGBC – Chicago Chapter visit [www.usgbc-chicago.org](http://www.usgbc-chicago.org).

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