

# ECOWISE

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## GoGreen Conferences

Austin, TX – April 4, 2012

Seattle, WA – April 25, 2012

New York, NY – September 2012

Portland, OR – To be announced

Phoenix, AZ – To be announced

More information:

[www.gogreenconference.net](http://www.gogreenconference.net)

## HUD Report Lists Impediments to Sustainable Construction in Indian Country

The Sustainable Construction in Indian Country (SCinIC) initiative recently released a draft report on impediments slowing the use of sustainable construction technologies in American Indian and Alaska Native communities. The SCinIC is a congressionally mandated effort of the HUD Office of Policy Development and Research, in partnership with the HUD Office of Native American Programs. The initiative supports sustainable construction practices in Native communities by identifying barriers and discussing solutions.

The report is based on a series of conversations HUD had with focus groups at last year's Greener Homes National Summit. The focus groups were made up of governmental employees, nongovernmental organizations, and tribal community members. When ranking the impediments that were discussed in the focus groups at a follow up meeting, four issues were deemed the most important:

- **Building codes-** Tribes have the ability to develop building codes and standards or adapt codes, but some have not done so in the past due to historical exclusion from Federal assistance for building code development and lack of experience with existing building codes.
- **Costs/Perceptions-** Tribal communities may feel that, they must choose between meeting housing needs and building with quality, due to extreme overcrowding in their communities. This feeling is heightened by the perception, by some, that sustainable housing is always more expensive than convention housing.
- **Capacity-** Tribal community capacity-building can be severely impeded by high rates of staff turnover, inadequate staff numbers, budget cuts, and inadequate training opportunities.
- **Planning-** Tribal communities may find themselves chasing available dollars, rather than carrying out projects that are in the community's best interest. This may be because the community has not felt able to make time to plan for future growth.

The report offers suggestions from participant on ways Federal Agencies could encourage tribes to implement green practices. These included providing incentives for projects that meet green standards, or incorporate sustainable technologies; changing the perception of sustainable construction and better equipping native communities to take on these projects.

Participants suggested financial incentives, such as the awarding of additional points in grant applications, tribal set-asides, or combined Federal funds in multi-agency grant programs. To help tribes see sustainable housing as attainable, focus group participants encouraged Federal agencies to link tribe to tools, such as cost benefit analyses, that can demonstrate how to calculate benefits of sustainable construction practices. Such tools, including free software, are available at the DOE Web visit at <http://bit.ly/qiwVnX>.



## For Tribal Lands, DOE Promotes Development through Renewable Energy

The U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy has established the Tribal Energy Program; the initiative provides financial and technical assistance to tribes through government-to-government partnerships. Its goal is to foster economic development and employment on tribal lands through the use of renewable technologies. The Tribal Energy program offers financial assistance through competitive grants and project financing assistance; DOE also offers technical assistance through their laboratories. Additionally, the program provides education and training through online courses, student internships, and workshops. For more information on the Tribal Energy Program visit:

<http://bit.ly/yTWQuc>.

One of the program's many beneficiaries is the Ute Mountain tribe of southwestern Colorado. The tribe uses their funds to support their cattle ranching. Forced to contend with an annual rainfall of only 10-15 inches and a stream which is dry part of the year, the tribe needed a new way to pump groundwater. Traditional wind pumps had become unsuitable due to the area's low winds and the pumps' high maintenance cost of approximately \$1,200 a year, per well. Electric water pumps were a more viable idea, but also more expensive with an estimated cost of \$4,400 a year, for each well. With the help of the Tribal Energy program, the Ute Mountain tribe replaced approximately 35 wind pumps with solar-powered pumps which have an estimated annual maintenance cost of \$500.

The Tribal Energy Program will also be assisting the Forest County Potawatomi Community with plans to improve their parking facilities. The tribe owns a six-story parking facility and a valet parking facility located below their casino. The ceilings of the facilities currently contain 1,720 205-Watt metal halide-type lighting fixtures. The parking structure's energy use is equivalent to 3,526 100-Watt bulbs. Through the Tribal Energy program, the tribe will replace all the lighting fixtures with energy efficient 55-watt light emitting diode (LED) lights. The change will result in a 73% reduction in the energy use for lighting this facility and a 51% reduction in the overall energy use of the facility.

By partnering with the Tribal Energy Program, Native tribes can maximize the use of renewable technologies while minimizing their environmental impact. Learn more about the program here: <http://bit.ly/bewWIA>.

## Resident's Corner | Partnering with the PHA to Improve Indoor Air Quality



The Environmental Protection Agency says that air pollution inside the home is often 2 to 5 times higher than levels outside. Studies show that poor air quality can lead to health problems such as allergies, asthma, and eye irritation. Residents can work with their Public Housing agency (PHA) to your Indoor air at home. The best way is to start from the outside and work back way in.

Are there puddles around the outside buildings in your development, especially around down spouts and ground level windows? These puddles could lead to moisture problems and mold growth. Mold can be very hazardous to a resident's health and well being; regular review of moisture prone areas can minimize water damage and subsequent mold growth.

Pest prevention for the home is also a contributing factor in air quality. Are there gaps around doors and windows, and holes in screens? These are likely entry points for pests and having these entry points calked and sealed by your maintenance department will offer added defense against pests.

Secondhand smoke is a significant source of indoor air pollution. Does your PHA allow smoking in their housing developments? Smoke can migrate between units and can cause health issues for the smoking and non-smoking residents and children. Smoking also raises the risk of fire and fire-related injury and death.

As a Public Housing resident, if you answered "yes" to any of the above questions, you should discuss your concerns with your PHA and/or resident council. The PHA and resident council will be able to assist you in resolving these issues. You are in the unit daily and are the first line of defense against small concerns becoming large and possibly expensive health issues, later.

### Contact Us:

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