

Austin Green Building Has Far Reaching Effects

In 2002, a unique joint-use project between Austin Independent School District (AISD) and the City of Austin created a building that changed lives not only in Austin but as far away as Arkansas.

The JJ Pickle Elementary School / St. John Community Center (Pickle Elementary/St. John facility) was designed by long-time Green Building Program member, Stan Haas of [TeamHaas Architects](#). Intended to serve as "one-stop center" for the area, the building houses an elementary school, a public branch library, a neighborhood recreation center, health and human services offices, and a community police office. The different services are linked by an 800-foot long curving hallway that also controls access to distinct areas in the facility. Although there are some shared spaces, AISD areas are restricted from public access during the school day to prevent any disruption to classes and ensure student safety. All non-AISD services have independent interior entrances.

The 116,200 square-foot facility was assisted in part by a sustainability grant from the [State Energy Conservation Office \(SECO\)](#) and energy efficiency was a main focus during the project. The partnership between the school district and the City enabled the design team to incorporate many sustainable building technologies specifically designed to save water and energy, as well as lower operation and maintenance costs. For example, the building was properly oriented to maximize day-lighting in the gym, cafeteria, branch library and all of the classrooms. The day-lighting, in conjunction with direct and indirect light fixtures and dimmable ballasts, reduces cooling loads and peak energy demand by up to 40% and provides high quality light in the learning environment. Rainwater, collected from the metal roof and stored in cisterns, is used to replace water that evaporates out of the air conditioner's cooling tower. A life cycle cost analysis indicated that this facility will save in excess of \$12 million at the 50th year of operation over a conventional school.

The school is a model for sustainable design and for integrating educational and municipal functions in one building. Naturally, it was included in the tour of local green building sites given during the first [United States Green Building Council \(USGBC\)](#) International Green Building Conference and Expo held in Austin in November 2002. In addition, Stan Haas gave a presentation at the Conference called "Sustaining the Community: The St. John's Community Center/Pickle Elementary School."

Meanwhile in Arkansas...

Also in November 2002, as the result of a lawsuit, the Arkansas Supreme Court announced that the state's educational facilities were inadequate and unequal and therefore, unconstitutional [see www.arkansasfacilities.com]. At the same time, a small group of building professionals interested in sustainability and calling themselves "the green terrorists" was meeting in coffee shops around Little Rock. Martha Jane Murray, AIA, Sustainability Director for the Arkansas-based [The Wilcox Group Architects](#) and Teri Borton, Director of Comprehensive Solutions, with [Trane Arkansas](#) were two of the founding members of this group, which is now more respectably known as the Arkansas Chapter of the USGBC.

With the recent Supreme Court ruling on her mind, Murray came to Austin to attend the International Green Building Conference. She attended Haas' presentation on the Pickle Elementary/St. John facility, and heard more about the building during a presentation by Charles Naeve, a structural engineer who had worked on the project. She was impressed by what she heard and was determined to bring Haas to Little Rock to talk to the newly formed USGBC chapter.

Borton also had been researching high performance schools for several months partly as a result of her involvement in creating the Arkansas Chapter of the USGBC. Through her research, she had come to believe that adopting sustainable building practices for constructing public school facilities was the way to make the most difference in Arkansas' quality of education. Officials in the school district started to show an interest in sustainable building when Borton began talking about how school facilities affect learning, attendance, and test scores, among the other more obvious benefits of high performance schools.

As the Arkansas legislature continued to struggle with the Supreme Court order to bring Arkansas schools up to adequate and equitable standards, they concluded that, in order to specifically address the facilities issues, the legislature needed to form a Joint Committee on Educational Facilities. The Joint Committee created a Task Force charged with developing maintenance guidelines and education adequacy standards for Arkansas public school facilities. Borton, Jan Meyer (Director of Sustainability with Cromwell Architects and Engineers) and Bill Harrison (President of Trane Arkansas) were among those appointed to the Task Force.

After hearing about the Pickle Elementary/St. John facility, Harrison offered to underwrite a trip to Austin to tour the building and meet with the key project team members. On November 5, 2003, Dan Robertson (AISD Project Director for Pickle Elementary/St. John facility), Nick Naccarato (City of Austin Project Manager), Reverend Ray Hendricks (past president of the St. John

neighborhood association), and Stan Haas led a four hour tour for the Arkansas delegation which included Senator Shane Broadway and Representative Joyce Elliot, Co-chairs of the Joint Committee, other Arkansas legislators and Task Force members, school superintendents and educational officials from five school districts in Arkansas, and representatives from Trane Arkansas.

A Transformation Occurs

Both the building and the interaction with the project team members profoundly affected the tour group. The combination of the architecture, the art in public places component, the integrated team approach, and the effects of sustainable building on the learning environment inspired the group, and provided a completely new vision and a new vocabulary for discussing both building and educational standards. The group embraced the ideals embodied by the Pickle Elementary/St. John facility, and saw the possibility for creating the same extraordinary environment for children in Arkansas.

After the tour, Murray realized that it would be invaluable to have all four of the tour leaders speak to the USGBC chapter and other groups and individuals working on the Arkansas school issues. Teri Borton with Trane Arkansas organized a seminar in Little Rock that focused on high performance schools and invited Robertson, Reverend Hendricks, Haas and Naccarato to speak about the development, design and building of the Pickle Elementary/St. John facility. Approximately 90 people, including state legislators, school district superintendents, Department of Education officials, school board presidents, and Trane Arkansas staff members heard the presentation which was followed by a panel discussion that focused on the positive impacts to the learning environment and the benefits and cost effectiveness of sustainable design. The inspiration that began during the tour came full circle as the Arkansas legislators and school administrators who had visited the Austin school gave very moving endorsements about their experience.

As a result of the tour and the presentation in Little Rock, Bryant School District committed to constructing two high performance schools - an elementary and a middle school. Trane Arkansas is currently working with the school district (a Bryant school superintendent was on the tour) and its architects, Brooks Jackson and Bunny Brown, to design and construct two high performance schools - an elementary and a middle school.

Arkansas Hits a Snag

Unfortunately, the school district had already set the budget for these two new buildings and the amount of available bond money would only cover a conventionally designed project. Luckily, Teri

Borton, in her role at Trane Arkansas as the K-12 specialist and performance contracting expert, had been researching performance contracting in new construction as a means of financing any additional first costs of building a high performance school. Because of her work, Trane, working closely with the district and the design team, was able to propose a ground-breaking energy performance contract.

Performance contracting is a way of raising money to purchase energy-saving improvements in buildings. It is usually applied to retrofits of existing buildings to pay for technology that will provide future savings for the building owner. Basically, it is a 'loan' that is repaid using money saved by lowering operation and maintenance costs.

In order to use the performance contracting financing, Borton had to organize a grass roots lobbying effort and convince the Arkansas legislature to pass a bill, which has now become a law, allowing school districts to finance energy services performance contracts through lease purchase agreements for a maximum of 15 years.

"This is the first new construction performance contract in the state and the first one ever done by Trane," says Borton. "Our corporate attorneys were very supportive. It did, however, take a lot of groundwork before we could come back to the customer with a plan on how we were going to accomplish what I had envisioned since no one in the Trane organization had done this type of project."

Borton's passion for high performance schools apparently inspired people from many areas... from the building industry all the way up to the highest levels of the State government.

"The design team has been absolutely wonderful," says Borton. "In fact, these guys are so excited about the project that they and the District also want to pursue [LEED™ certification](#). If we are successful, these two buildings will be the first schools constructed in Arkansas to obtain LEED™ certification." Burton expects the schools to be completed in January 2006.

"All of you [involved with the design and construction of Pickle Elementary] were truly an inspiration to us here in Arkansas," says Borton. "If we are successful, your efforts will have improved the learning environment for not only children in Texas but Arkansas as well."

[Build San Antonio Green Initiative](#)

A coalition of local government departments and utility companies called the [Metropolitan Partnership for Energy \(MPE\)](#) has unveiled a Green Building Program for the city of San Antonio. The coalition, which includes [City Public Services](#) (San Antonio's utility company) and the [Greater](#)

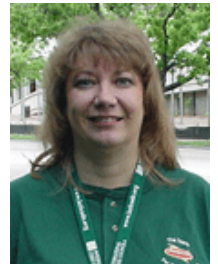
[San Antonio Builders Association \(GSABA\)](#), hopes the program will increase public awareness of sustainable building and will offer Green Building Certification and continuing education for building professionals. To be certified as a Green Building Professional, an annual fee must be paid to GSABA, and attendance is required at a one-time orientation session plus two additional technical sessions per year.

Texas Residential Construction Commission

The [TRCC](#), created by the passage of House Bill 730, provides a state-sponsored inspection and dispute resolution process for homeowners and builders. The Act provides for the adoption of limited warranties and building and performance standards, management of task force groups, the voluntary certification of arbitrators and the filing of arbitration award summaries. All residential builders, contractors and remodelers in Texas are required to register with TRCC and pay a \$125 filing fee. Texas has never had a residential builder registration requirement before now. [Registration forms](#) are available online.

Green Building Says Goodbye to Shirley Muns and Marc Richmond

Shirley Muns left the Austin Energy Green Building Program in March of 2004 to take a position with the Texas A&M Energy Services Lab. Shirley will be an Engineering Associate II responsible for conducting energy code workshops for building inspectors statewide and for reviewing Texas city's proposals for meeting the energy code requirements of Senate Bill 5. Shirley joined the Green Building Program in May of 2000 as a Conservation Program Specialist. Her work with the GBP included working with Watershed Protection Development Review (WPDR) Building Inspectors to ensure compliance with the City of Austin Energy Code and working with residential builders to improve the energy and resource efficiency of their buildings.



Marc Richmond's last day with the Green Building Program was April 30. Marc is joining [What's Working](#), a sustainability consulting company, as Director of Residential Programs. What's Working is based in Boulder, Colorado, but Marc will continue to live and work out of Austin, as he consults on Green Building issues around the country. Marc joined the GBP in 1997 and was manager from 1998 to mid 1999. Since that time Marc has been a Project Manager focusing on residential green building issues and, for the last two years, he has worked on our [Manage it Green](#) consulting project in the San Francisco Bay area.



Member Bulletin Board

Three GBP Members Enter AIA College of Fellows

Stan Haas of [Team Haas Architects](#); Peter Pfeiffer of [Barley + Pfeiffer Architects](#); and Tommy Cowan of [Graeber, Simmons, and Cowan, Inc.](#) were voted into the American Institute of Architects College of Fellows (COF). Members of the AIA are elected to the COF by their peers. Fellowship is one of the highest honors awarded by the AIA, reserved for architects who have made significant contributions to architecture and to society.

Stan Haas was nominated in the Design category. [Team Haas'](#) eclectic mix of projects include the JJ Pickle Elementary School/St John's Community Center (see story on the first page), the University of Texas Dobie Cafeteria, and a downtown office building. The company is known for its thoughtful practicality in creating spirited spaces that are beautiful as well as efficient.

Peter Pfeiffer, an Austin Green Building icon, was nominated in the Practice category. [Barley + Pfeiffer](#) are well known for its gorgeous custom homes. The firm focuses on thoughtful designs that maximize unique site benefits and meet homeowner needs for space and energy efficiency.

Tommy Cowan was nominated in the Fellowship category for his work in creating sound fiscal policy for the AIA and for his fundraising efforts. [Graeber, Simmons and Cowan, Inc.](#) worked with CarrAmerica on the [Braker Pointe Commercial Complex](#).

Upcoming Residential Ad in the Austin American Statesman

The next residential ad with the list of active Green Building Program members is scheduled for the Statesman Sunday Home section in June, 2004. To be eligible to appear on the list, a company must be current in Program participation--seminar attendance and Ratings. The deadline for this ad is **May 14th**. Please e-mail residential Ratings to your program representative before this date (allow time for any necessary revisions and inspections). If you have questions or are unsure who your representative is, contact Mary McLeod (512-505-3702) or Nathan Doxsey (512-505-3703).

High-Quality Digital Photographs Needed

We have an ongoing need for high-quality photos of rated projects (300 dpi in 8"x10" size) to use on our website and in PowerPoint presentations, exhibits, and advertisements. We would like exterior, interior, and detail shots. Photos should be well-composed, well-lit, with debris and clutter removed. Pictures of projects with established landscapes are particularly needed. Please e-mail them to your Green Building Program staff representative.

Cool House Tour

I House Tour on Sunday, May 23, 2004. Organized by the [Texas Solar Energy Society \(TXSES\)](#) and co-produced by The Green Building Program, the City of Austin Water Conservation Department, Green Mountain Energy, and Central Market.

Green By Design Sponsorships

We are always looking for sponsors for our [Green by Design Workshops](#) which usually are held four times a year. The aim of these full-day seminars is to help the general public understand the importance of green building, so they will ask you--the building professional--for greener homes. Most attendees are **ready to remodel or build new homes** and many of them are looking for architects, designers, builders and trade contractors. These workshops have proved to be very popular and usually sell out. Audience size is dependent on the venue, but typically ranges from 80 to 120 highly motivated people.

Sponsors are featured on the Green by Design webpage and on signs at the workshop; they get a tabletop exhibit at the workshop, with the opportunity to interact with potential customers during breaks and the lunch period; and they get the opportunity to address the audience about their company. Two levels of sponsorship are available: refreshment breaks for \$250 and lunch for \$500. Lunch and two break sponsorships are available for the June 26 workshop.

All Year Heating & Cooling

Barley + Pfeiffer Architects

David Weekley Homes

Images Of...

Meridian Energy Systems

Newmark Homes

Premiere Building Systems

Rick's Heating and Air Conditioning

South River Construction

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Contact [Toye Goodson](#) (512- 482-5300) or [Mary McLeod](#) (512-505-3702) if you would like to participate.

City of Austin's Grow Green Program Receives Texas Environmental Excellence Award

[Grow Green](#) was honored by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) for its role in educating the public about the environmental damage caused by landscaping chemicals.

Grow Green held homeowner seminars, created brochures, and provided staff training for area nurseries to get the word out about Austin's water quality issues. Grow Green is a partnership between the [City of Austin Watershed Protection and Development Review Department](#) and the [Texas Cooperative Extension](#), in cooperation with [local nurseries](#).

Changes to WaterWise Landscape Rebates

The Water Conservation Department is increasing the per plant rebate amount; however, it will take up to two years to receive the rebate. To qualify, participants must maintain water use at or below the water budget developed by Water Conservation staff for 18 months (beginning six months after installation is completed).