

# Opportunities In Green Retrofitting

## *McGraw-Hill Presents Conference In Chicago November 17, Highlighting Building Changes, Chances*

BY MELISSA JANKIEWICZ

As the recession lingers and new construction grows increasingly difficult to find and finance, the “green” construction market offers a rapidly expanding field of opportunity to retrofit buildings with sustainable features.

The upcoming **Green Retrofit Chicago Conference** promises the latest knowledge in green design and construction opportunities in the City of Chicago. The Builders Association is a Gold Sponsor for this event, which takes place November 17 at the Chicago Downtown Marriott. McGraw-Hill Construction is hosting the conference in conjunction with AIA Chicago and the Chicago Chapter of the United States Green Building Council.

Green retrofitting consists of implementing sustainable building practices in the upgrading, remodeling or construction of homes and buildings. Upgrading opportunities may be available to give older buildings energy and water conservation measures, indoor air quality moisture management, water heating, energy performance testing, insulation and weatherization, mechanical ventilation, siding, roofing, and landscaping.

“Economic triggers put more focus on retrofitting buildings under construction, as well as looking at existing buildings and building over their current standards to promote higher efficiency for both economic and environmental reasons,” said Doug Widener, Executive Director of the U.S. Green Building Council’s Chicago Chapter

Widener added that competitive grant programs, such as one launched by the U.S. Department of Labor in which those who receive “Green” Jobs Training may receive funding from the American Recovery & Reinvestment Act (ARRA), is another major incentive to becoming involved in retrofitting.

The Chicago Department of Buildings (DOB) has implemented a Green Permit Program in which the normal permit process is expedited where projects involving green construction are concerned, according to Larry Merritt of the City of Chicago Department of Environment.

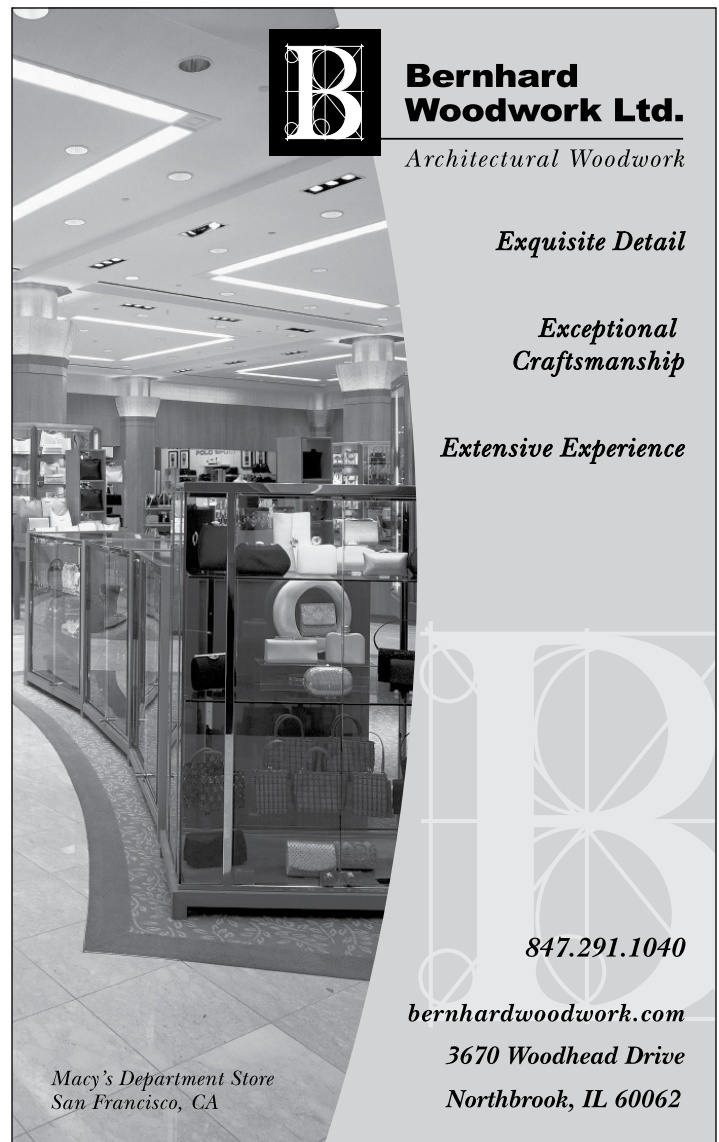
“Green permitting can reduce the process to 30 days instead of 90,” said Merritt. The streamlining of the permit process depends on the number of green building elements involved in the project, as well as its complexity, he said. According to the City of Chicago, extraordinary levels of green strategy implementation can result in the waiving of consultant code review fees.

Widener will be among the experts speaking at the conference. He will be joined in that capacity by:

- Joe Mazzella, Publisher, Midwest Construction
- Zurich Esposito, AIA Chicago
- Michelle A. Russo, LEED AP, Director of Green Content & Communications, McGraw-Hill
- Tudor Vanhampton, Midwest Bureau Chief, Engineering News-Record

Case studies will also be presented to help familiarize attendees with the concepts of green retrofitting. Among the topics to be discussed at the conference are the benefits of green construction from the owner’s perspective, technologies and innovations in retrofit renovations, building green into leases and operations and maintenance, water and waste reduction and business benefits.

For more information on this event, visit the Calendar of Events at [www.bldrs.org](http://www.bldrs.org).



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