New York State Advocacy Day

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Fleming Roberts, Diane Brandli, Tracie Hall, Andrew Gil, Benjamin Huntington, Dave Green,Marsha Leed,Assemblywoman Donna Lupardo

So far this year, USGBC chapters have organized Advocacy Days in 20 states where they take their cause to the capitol, challenging state legislators to support green public policy for the betterment of their districts and their state. I love that picture: well-intentioned groups practicing democracy in its purest form, demanding that their state representatives demonstrate leadership in the critical arenas of economic development, environmental stewardship and the health of their people who spend 90 percent of their time in buildings.

On Tuesday, I had the distinct privilege of participating in one of these events. The New York Upstate Chapter of the USGBC welcomed me as one of their own, offering me a smart pin for my lapel as we buckled up for seven back-to-back meetings with elected officials. After reviewing priority legislation, we set off to educate some legislators and encourage others who were already champions for green building. The chapter's assembled group, made up of architects, interior designers and engineers, were donating their time because they know just how important these issues are. It must be said that two of the group members' last names were "Green" and "Leed."

I learned a great deal about the state of green building in New York. The bills up for discussion covered a variety of topics, including green schools, smart metering and greener codes. "The U.S. Green Building Council New York Upstate Chapter has three core values in our mission: educate, advocate and celebrate green building. Today we had the opportunity to do all three," said Tracie Hall, executive director of the chapter. "The volunteers were informed, passionate and motivated to have a positive impact on legislation currently being considered, while offering to review any items being drafted. Our assembly members, senators and their staff were ready to listen and welcomed our outreach efforts."

I also learned other fun facts, like that State Sen. David Valesky had a former career with television station WCNY and interviewed our own CEO, Rick Fedrizzi, in his earliest days with USGBC. Or that Assemblywoman Donna Lupardo is a big "Star Trek" fan. She revealed this when she said that indoor air quality was like the "final frontier."

Lupardo offered to help increase the scope of next year's Advocacy Day by helping to reserve a bigger space and promote the event with colleagues. With the support from Lupardo, the chapter will be able to attract media attention and engage other legislators simultaneously on these issues, finding places that their goals overlap so they can work together to advance important legislation. Lupardo gets it. "I'm kind of a fanatic about indoor environmental quality," she said. "It's very important to me. As soon as we cut ribbons on these green projects, I ask to be shown the HVAC systems."

It was a whirlwind of meetings, and we ended with the positive energy from the chat with Lupardo. I thank the New York Upstate Chapter for letting me be a part of their efforts to create jobs while advancing efficient and healthy construction.

Fleming Roberts
External Relations Specialist

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Jodi Smits Anderson 2 years 7 weeks ago

Past (2012) NY Upstate Chapter Chair, Past CSC, and Director of Sustainability Programs, DASNY

It was a VERY good day - I hope we can nail down a real advocacy day for 2014 soon, and work with other organizations to discuss the bills we all want to see move forward. The legislators need to know what we need to happen! We cannot let them be half-educated about the power of LEED and green buildings. They need to know they can address budget problems, staffing prosperity, labor issues and resource management with a solid dedication to sustainability. The AIA, BOMA, and school staffs would make the case for greener schools legislation, and there are many groups that can help make current executive orders such as EO#88 (energy use reduction in state operated buildings) into law with useful financing mechanisms...let's ramp it up!

Tracie Hall 2 years 27 weeks ago

Executive Director, USGBC - New York Upstate Chapter

Thank you for joining us Fleming! We're counting on you to return for an encore for our NYS Green Building Day in 2014!

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