



March IFMA Luncheon *What you missed*

An energetic multi-media presentation on Justifying Sustainable Building Value was held in April by presenters Greg O'Brien of CRESA Partners and Sustainable Office. His partner, Tom Boeck also provided insightful information on the techniques to show return on investment, payback periods and also the overall benefits and value of specific aspects of sustainable buildings.



As Kermit says, "It's not easy being green," but Greg and Tom demonstrated that it is almost always valuable. Their visuals provided eye-opening information on climate change and the need to reduce energy, water and material uses in the built environment. Everyone left with a feeling that they could and should do something to participate in the sustainability movement and had a few ideas about how to get the initiatives approved in our organizations.



It's Easy Going Green

Water Pressures—Pressures from Regulation, Age, and Green Building Initiatives are Coming to Bare on Outdoor Water Use

Regulation: State wide outdoor watering restrictions were imposed throughout Georgia in 2003. The Stage 1 drought of 2006 brought the issue to the headlines. Local county and city regulations are uncoordinated, reactive, subject to change without notice, and confusing for businesses operating in several counties. However, the die is cast; local municipal and state regulations are destined to increase in the future.

Age. Much of Atlanta's commercial real-estate inventory is over 15 years old. Landscapes dramatically change over the years. Aging irrigation systems are almost invariably inefficient. Mature shrubs and trees tend to need very little, if any irrigation. Turf Grass, no matter how long it's established, will always need irrigation in our climate, as will annual and perennial flowers.

Green Initiatives. Green Building initiatives have been generally limited to indoor activities but outdoor space is the next frontier in green initiatives as industry experts develop guidelines for low maintenance landscapes and standards for outdoor water use.

What to do? An irrigation audit will inventory all the components of the system and with calculations using gallons per minute and run times, determine water use. If your irrigation is metered separately from the building, check the

last year's actual water use against the calculated water use. You now have a "current state" analysis. Consider re-designs, retrofits and upgrades that can cut water use and implement actions such as severely limiting water to established tree and shrubs. Install a rain sensor that shuts the system off when it rains. Also, water pressure that's too high will atomize the water droplets so that they blow away or evaporate before reaching the ground and also wear out irrigation components. Consider landscape renovations that eliminate turf grass and consider newer generation controllers equipped with remote computer programming and weather data relays that synchronize water use with temperature, humidity, wind and rainfall.

The investment in irrigation upgrades should reduce water use but direct comparisons with pre-retrofit water use are difficult due to weather variability. The Regulators, Green Building Initiators and Asset Managers will come knocking sooner or later. Having a comprehensive plan showing pre-retrofit outdoor water use verses post-retrofit projected use demonstrates environmental stewardship, and pays you back in water bills.

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