



## Green is Here to Stay

The State of California recently released a report entitled "The Costs and Financial Benefits of Green Buildings." A quote by Aileen Adams, Secretary of State and Consumer Affairs, was most impressive. "While the environmental and human health benefits of green building have been widely recognized, this comprehensive report confirms that minimal increases in upfront costs of 0-2% to support green design will result in life cycle savings of 20% of total construction costs – more than ten times the initial investment. In other words, an initial upfront investment of up to \$100,000 to incorporate green building features into a \$5 million project would result in a savings of \$1 million in today's dollars over the life of the building." The 130 page report can be downloaded from:

<http://ciwmb.ca.gov/GreenBuilding/Design/CostIssues.htm#Cost&Benefit>

Green building and sustainable design are here to stay. Technology provides us with the ability to make buildings that are environmentally friendly. According to an article by the U.S. Green Building Council, green buildings that meet the LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) standards along with Energy Star, can improve air and water quality, enhance and protect ecosystems and biodiversity, reduce solid waste, and conserve natural resources.

Adam Richins, a business attorney with the law firm of Stoel Rives LLP, and a board member of the USGBC Idaho Chapter, recently wrote an article for the Idaho Business Review in which he stated; "The building industry is going green. At present, green buildings represent almost 10 percent of the new construction market. The U.S. Green Building Council estimates that the green building market will be worth \$12 to \$20 billion this year. More important, green building is growing exponentially."

"For example, in 2005, the number of green buildings more than doubled from the year before. Industry leaders agree that this remarkable trend will continue in the future. Indeed, some experts project that the market could grow to \$70 billion by 2012.

"Why are developers and owners going green? The answer is in the numbers. Commercial buildings are responsible for almost 40 percent of America's energy consumption and 39 percent of all greenhouse gas emissions. In addition, green buildings use an average of 40 percent less water and 39 percent less energy than traditional buildings. These statistics drive the green market, both economically and socially.

"Economically, green buildings make sense because they significantly reduce the costs associated with operating commercial buildings. In fact, one recent study found that the cost of building a green building, which is usually 2 to 7 percent higher than building a traditional building, will be recouped in just two years. Socially, green buildings are favored because they markedly reduce the environmental impact of traditional buildings."

Green building is not simply a new buzzword, green is the new gold.

*Thank you Adam Richins for giving the Center for Professional Development permission to publish excerpts from the Idaho Business Review Article.*