

# TED

the ELECTRICAL DISTRIBUTOR

PLUG INTO GROWTH BY GOING

# green



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COUNTERFEIT THREAT

**SERIES**  
THE BRANCH  
OF THE FUTURE

**SPECIAL INSERT**  
2008 ECONOMIC  
FORECAST





being green

# THE GREEN *tipping point*

BY JAN NIEHAUS

**I**t's almost impossible to open a newspaper, turn on the radio, fire up the TV, flip through a magazine, or surf the Web without hearing or seeing green. Green, of course, refers to all things environmental—and it's no longer the exclusive domain of groups like the Sierra Club. Green now courses through the veins of savvy leaders in every industry, market, and sector—from construction to insurance, manufacturing to finance, entertainment to electrical distribution.

And it's all good; in fact, it's a win-win-win situation:

- We get to preserve the planet for future generations.
- We can operate our businesses more efficiently and economically.
- We can—and will, if we're smart—scrutinize the vast opportunity before us and cherry-pick our strongest options.

Furthermore, electrical distributors are in the unique, and enviable, position of touching almost every aspect of green building—from sensors and controls to alternative energy technologies.

Dow Corning funded an international survey of more than 1,000 man-

agers and professionals and concluded: "Environmental and sustainability programs have a strong influence on whether a company will be considered a potential supplier. On average, eight out of 10 companies globally said that environmental/sustainability factors are taken into account when they selected suppliers."

## **PAINT IT GREEN**

While October has been designated "Energy Awareness Month" throughout the United States since 1991, October 2007, with its long parade of high-profile green events, marks a green tipping point. Here is just a sampling of





### Start with the cities

The Clinton Climate Initiative (CCI), founded (and funded) by the Clinton Foundation in August 2006, aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions worldwide, starting with urban areas, which are responsible globally for 75% of all energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions.

Within a year of joining forces with the international C40 Large Cities Climate Leadership Group, the CCI negotiated volume discounts, some as generous as 70%, with 22 manufacturers of energy-efficient building products; vehicles; indoor and outdoor lighting; and advanced technologies for waste management, water systems, and alternative energy.

In May 2007, the CCI launched the Energy Efficient Building Retrofit Program, uniting four of the world's largest energy-service companies, five of the largest banks, and 16 of the largest cities. The program offers incentives to public and private building owners to implement energy-efficient technologies.

In October 2007, the CCI added the influential 1,139-member U.S. Conference of Mayors to its partnership roster, and former President Bill Clinton delivered the keynote at the U.S. Green Building Council's 2007 Greenbuild conference. —J.N.

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recent, large-scale events focused on climate change:

- The U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) is the not-for-profit organization that administers the ubiquitous LEED green building program. Record numbers of construction and real estate professionals, building owners, educators, government officials, and representatives from financial services and utility industries gathered in Chicago Nov. 7-9 for Greenbuild, the USGBC's annual international conference and expo.

- Greenbuild host city Chicago, placed by some analysts in the top 10 green U.S. cities, declared Oct. 13 to Nov. 16, 2007, "Green Building Month" and celebrated daily with fairs, conferences, tours, classes, exhibits, performances, screenings, and discussions.

- The 2007 Mayors Climate Protection Summit, which took place Nov. 1-2 in

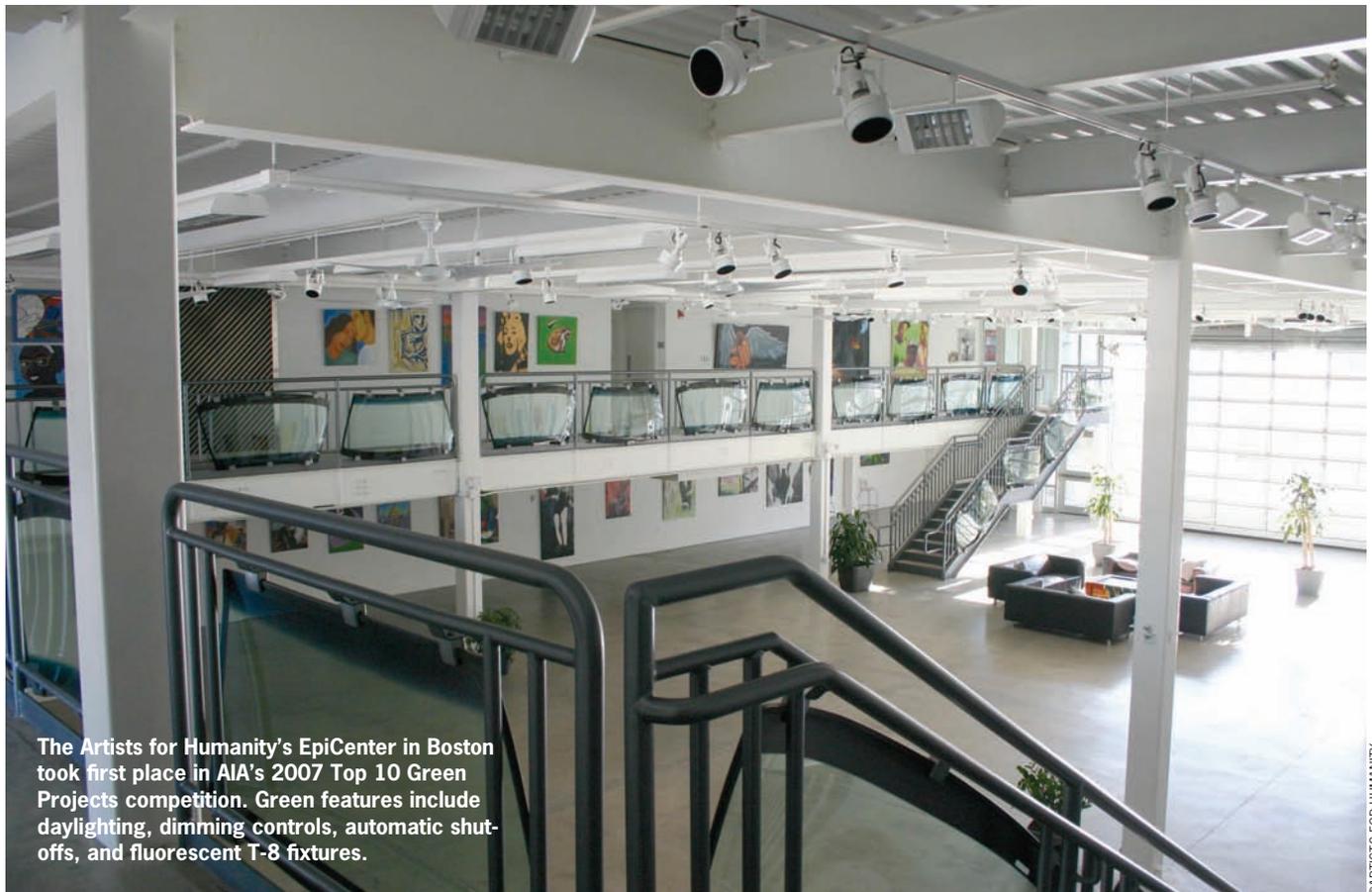
Seattle, drew the largest-ever gathering of U.S. mayors, who were convened for the sole purpose of tackling global warming. During the event, the U.S. Conference of Mayors announced a partnership with the Clinton Climate Initiative (CCI) (see sidebar on page 53). The alliance between the two groups provides the 1,139 member cities access to volume discounts on energy-efficient products, equipment, and systems.

Markets," followed by technical workshops on topics ranging from LEED, utility programs, solar, and lighting, to key market drivers and business opportunities. Two preconvention workshops were also offered ("It's Not Easy Being Green—But It's Profitable" and "Photovoltaics and Distributed Generation"), as well as a presentation ("The Real Global Warming") and a new "Green Alley" exhibit area.

## ELECTRICAL DISTRIBUTORS ARE IN THE UNIQUE, AND ENVIABLE, POSITION OF TOUCHING ALMOST EVERY ASPECT OF GREEN BUILDING—FROM SENSORS AND CONTROLS TO ALTERNATIVE ENERGY TECHNOLOGIES.

- From Oct. 5-8 in San Francisco, the National Electrical Contractors Association (NECA) devoted a third of its annual convention to green. "Think Green Day" kicked off with a management seminar "Emerging Green

- On Oct. 17, *Forbes* published "America's Greenest States." States were designated as such based on their carbon footprint, air quality, water quality, hazardous waste management, policies, and energy consumption. Vermont,



The Artists for Humanity's EpiCenter in Boston took first place in AIA's 2007 Top 10 Green Projects competition. Green features include daylighting, dimming controls, automatic shut-offs, and fluorescent T-8 fixtures.

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**Photovoltaic energy cells on the roof of the Artists for Humanity EpiCenter in Boston generate more than 59 megawatts of electricity annually, which is more than the organization needs. The school sells the surplus electricity back to the grid.**

Oregon, Washington, and Hawaii earned top honors.

### **BENEFITS ACCRUE**

In the *Carbon Beta and Equity Performance Study* of 1,500 companies conducted by the investment research firm Innovest, industrial companies with strategies that address sustainability and climate change financially outperformed their competitors for the past three years. The correlation, according to Innovest, is strong, positive, and growing.

One NECA convention attendee, Jan Carradine, director of engineering for Baker Electric in Escondido, Calif., said it all: “Green is the color of the future.”

Investopedia, which earned *Forbes’s* “Best of the Web” nod, cited multiple benefits from green real estate, including reduced waste, energy, and water use; lower operations and maintenance expense; improved indoor environmental quality; enhanced occupant comfort; and increased employee productivity.

Lutron Electronics demonstrated in an apples-to-apples comparison at the Cira Centre in Coopersburg, Pa., that its EcoSystem reduces an office building’s lighting energy use by 56%—a big savings considering that lighting in a commercial building often accounts for 44% of the total energy consumption.

And McGraw-Hill’s *Smart Market Report* indicated that green buildings not only use 25% to 30% less energy than conventional buildings, but they can

also increase property values by 7.5% and boost occupancy rates by 3%.

“More customers are embracing green,” said Mitch Rose, vice president of marketing for Billtrust, an electronic billing service. Billtrust’s strongest selling point is financial savings, Rose said, but the environmental benefits are important too. In addition to saving trees, paper, ink, the energy and materials used in the printing process, and delivery expense, Billtrust plants a tree every time a distributor brings another 10% of its customers on board.

Every month, more cities and states require that new public buildings and major renovations meet green, high-performance standards. Every day, another community forms an environmental council, another LEED-certified building makes headlines, another company retrofits its properties for greater energy efficiency, and another contracting company promotes its expertise in green building—with thousands more pursuing the same expertise.

So what are you waiting for? Jump on board, and enjoy the win-win-win. ■

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**Niehaus** is a member of the U.S. Green Building Council and numerous environmental organizations—and her commitment to green runs deep: Her St. Louis home is built with materials recycled from 1904 World’s Fair buildings. She can be reached at [JanNiehaus@charter.net](mailto:JanNiehaus@charter.net) or 314-644-4135.