



USGBC 2009 Chapter Awards of Excellence

USGBC recognizes seven local chapters for demonstrating excellence in Advocacy & Influence, Community, Education and Organization.

Award of Excellence, Advocacy & Influence - This award recognizes chapters that have developed and implemented a successful advocacy campaign. The winning chapter worked hard to build the capacity of its Advocacy Committee, resulting in the adoption of local green building legislation and the potential for state-wide legislation.

The winner of the Award of Excellence, Advocacy & Influence for a small chapter is the [Cincinnati Regional Chapter](#). The Cincinnati Regional Chapter worked diligently to build the capacity of their Advocacy Circle, not only increasing their chapter's membership, but also enhancing the chapter's ability to influence local and state-wide policy. The chapter's increased capacity enabled it to help the City of Wilmington offer LEED incentives for private construction. In addition, the chapter built a strong relationship with the Mayor of Cincinnati, who has since signed on to the Mayors Alliance for Green Schools. Lastly, Cincinnati's diligent state-wide advocacy efforts moved the state of Ohio one step closer to implementing legislation requiring LEED Silver Certification plus 30% energy efficiency for any state funded project.

Award of Excellence, Community - This award recognizes chapters for their outreach efforts to expand the green building community, creating a greater connection to and meaningful dialogue around sustainability and green building.

The winner of the Awards of Excellence in the Community large chapter category was the [Chicago Chapter](#). The Chicago Chapter won for their work on the Urban Open/New Horizons Community Garden project, which is a collaborative endeavor between the chapter and several community, volunteer, and NPO organizational partners. The Urban Open/New Horizons Community Garden Project is an open international competition for the design and construction of a sustainable, indoor/outdoor facility in Chicago's East Garfield Park, a neighborhood awaiting revitalization. The first phase of the competition—the Urban Open Design Competition—was held in 2006; the winner traveled to Chicago to meet with community residents about the design in fall of 2007. Work on garden construction took place throughout 2008 and 2009 with area high school students, community members, and volunteers from participating organizations working together to make the garden a reality. Work on the garden was completed this summer, followed by a community celebration and dedication in August.

The winner of the Award of Excellence in the Community small chapter category was the [Vermont Green Building Network](#). The Vermont Green Building Network (VGBN) won this year's award for its leadership in putting together a Web site project as part of the Vermont Green Home Alliance (VGHA), seeking to promote collaboration among individuals and organizations to advance green building in Vermont. The VGHA is made of up individuals representing five different organizations – four of which are developing or promoting a different residential rating system. The purpose of the alliance and the Web site was to, first, educate one another on the various rating systems and, then, to work collaboratively to present objective information in a format allowing for easy comparison. VGBN became executive agent of a 5-party MOU to successfully launch www.vermontgreenhomealliance.org.

The [St. Louis Chapter](#) also received an honorable mention in the Community award category. St. Louis' submission focused on a their Growing Green Awards, which are meant to recognize individuals, groups, organizations and companies that are transforming the built environment into a healthier place to live, work and play.

Award of Excellence, Education - This award recognizes chapters that have made a significant contribution to green building market transformation through their educational offerings. This year's winning chapters' efforts included developing successful education plans; determining and filling education gaps in the local area; and creating new and innovative ways to integrate green building education into the chapters' offerings.

The winner of the Award of Excellence in the Education large chapter category is the [James River Green Building Council](#) out of central Virginia. The James River Green Building Council was selected as this year's recipient for utilizing its dedicated volunteers and staff to create and implement high quality educational programs. James River developed educational offerings targeting specific audiences and created unique opportunities to get involved. James River's programs are diverse in content, cost, and purpose, yet still retain their high-quality. Among the educational opportunities offered by James River are a luncheon program series, the "Green Spaces" design competition, LEED workshops and events, Eco-Building Tours, and organizational partnerships.

The winner of the Award of Excellence in the Education small chapter category is the [South Carolina Chapter](#). The South Carolina Chapter concentrated its efforts on delivering high-level, consistent and impactful educational programs through its four branch regions in the state. These programs advance each region's current understanding and reflection of sustainability, especially as expressed through the built environment. The South Carolina Chapter utilized an assortment of formats and approaches to promote its education initiatives, including monthly educational programs, LEED Workshops, LEED AP study groups, and a large-scale state-wide conference. The varied formats allowed the chapter's branches to provide learning and community-building at a grassroots level. These programs educate relevant sectors on the impact of the built environment on our planet's health and provide numerous, meaningful and much-needed tools and resources to the communities they serve.

The [Chicago Chapter](#) received an honorable mention in the Education award category. Chicago's efforts focused on collecting and sharing green building performance data, and showed considerable innovation in the area of education.

Award of Excellence, Organizational Excellence - This award recognizes a chapter board-led initiative that improves or enhances chapter leader development and/or chapter organizational excellence.

The winner of the Award of Organizational Excellence in the small chapter category was the [Georgia Chapter](#). The Georgia Chapter successfully merged into a state-wide entity. With state-wide interest in green building growing in Georgia, the two existing entities in Savannah and Atlanta decided to consolidate in order to significantly streamline green building activities in the state, as well as improve chapter operations. The formation of the Georgia state-wide chapter yielded a blueprint for other chapters/branches to follow, including the formalization of working branch operating guidelines, a branch formation toolkit/checklist, a balanced revenue share model, and a state-wide committee structure with balanced participation from each branch within the state. The Georgia Chapter's decision to unify shows a clear vision for the greater good of green building market transformation in the state of Georgia.

The winner of the Award of Organizational Excellence in the large chapter category is the [Delaware Valley Green Building Council](#). The Delaware Valley Green Building Council (DVBGC)

invested in building organizational capacity, including the redevelopment of a Web site, which significantly increased organizational efficiency, transparency, and communication. To increase DVGBC's bandwidth, the chapter added two positions to its staff, which now totals five nonprofit professionals. In addition, DVGBC adopted a strategic plan that calls for specific programs and advocacy work that fall in line with many USGBC chapter initiatives as well as a goal to develop the DVGBC's organizational structure and leadership capacity to leverage the knowledge, expertise, and passion of all DVGBC members. The launch of DVGBC's new Web site, which has a rigorous data, event, and committee management system, makes the organization more understandable and accessible to the public, as well as its membership.