

Going Green Means Getting Educated

by Rick Wanner, 2007-08 FASA President



to ASA's first-ever green survey — he noted that his company's repair activities save the cost of demolition, removal and reconstruction.

ASA's green survey, which was e-mailed to a random cross-section of members in December, asked, among other things, how many subcontractors are familiar with the terms "green building" and "sustainable construction." Not surprisingly, everyone had encountered these terms, and over 90 percent considered themselves "familiar" or "very familiar" with them. The familiarity isn't just from the news or dinner table discussions either — nearly three-quarters of the survey respondents said that they've worked on one or more LEED™ or Green Globes projects. Clearly, more subcontractors are participating in green projects.

With all the discussion there is today surrounding green, it's important for subcontractors to remain focused on the fact that what counts is what the client means by the green terms that it uses. This issue of *The Contractor's Compass* is intended to help subcontractors understand some of the different things a client could be asking for when it asks you to participate in a green project. Is building green helping the project achieve LEED certification or another green benchmark, and if so, how will the benchmark change how your company performs the work? Is it implementing a set of "green requirements" that the prime contractor has developed on its own? Does it mean that documentation of green construction processes will be required, and in what detail? Will the green aspects of the project be incorporated into the subcontract agreement, including possibly

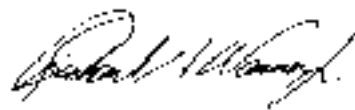
Terms like "green project" or "green building" are big in meaning. As demonstrated in this issue, they mean different and not always compatible things to different people. Either of these terms can mean compliance with environmental regulations. They can mean adopting new practices that are environmentally friendly — practices that may or may not be certified or accredited by a "green organization." They can even mean doing what you're doing already. A good example of this was supplied by a concrete repair contractor who wrote comments in response

plans and specs, warranties, and/or performance requirements? What part will your company play in ensuring compliance with environmental regulations? These are just some of the questions about the meaning of "green" that could come up when a subcontractor is considering bidding a green project.

What's clear from the input we've received from the authors who are included in this issue is that it's up to each individual subcontractor to clarify what green requirements mean for any particular project at hand. You shouldn't take for granted what "green" means. Like the other decisions that you make in your business, a decision to participate in a green project should be taken with the specific risks and rewards of the project in mind. This point is important because the green market is growing, so I suspect that virtually all professional subcontractors will be asked to work on a green project at some point in the future. Green projects vary in their project delivery systems, scheduling, the relationships of the project partners, the standards that must be met, and in other ways.

Becoming educated about green construction is a necessary first step for any subcontractor that wants to really benefit from this increasingly important market. The environmental and social benefits of green construction are attractive to many, and this push is making a difference in many areas. With projects that are labeled as green starting all over the country, in numbers that are increasing with every year that passes, the opportunities presented by green construction are as undeniable as the value of the dollars used to pay for them. The demand for green construction is in the billions of dollars each year now — and the projected growth of green markets is phenomenal. Some subcontractors already have benefited from participation in green projects; for others, that time has not come yet. Either way, I hope that the information in this issue will help you evaluate what these opportunities mean for you, so you can make the best decisions for your business. ■

Sincerely,



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ASA welcomes your thoughts at communications@asa-hq.com.