

GREEN GARAGE ASSESSOR TRAINING: VALUE TO CONSULTANTS

By Megan Leinart, LEED AP BD+C, CNU-A

At the 2014 IPI Conference & Expo in Texas, the Green Parking Council (GPC, an affiliate of IPI) conducted its first Green Garage Certification Assessor training. More than 20 parking professionals showed up for eight hours on a sunny Saturday, away from the golf course, pool, and water park, to learn how to implement one of the most exciting and transformative programs to hit the parking industry in years.

This first class of Green Garage Assessors learned about the history of the Green Garage Certification process and the various strategies included in the program to help owners, operators, and consultants implement the latest sustainable strategies and technologies into parking planning, design, construction, and management. We also learned about the many resources available to more effectively guide the certification process. The GPC's Dan Ciarcia did a fabulous job leading the marathon training course, taking us one by one through the credits and explaining their objectives, requirements, and point values.

The Value of Training

Green Garage Assessor training was a great introduction to advances that have been and continue to be made related to parking and sustainability. I encourage everyone to learn more about the training course and opportunities for you to take the class yourself. The program enables consultants to educate their clients on the latest sustainable parking trends and technologies, as well as help guide them through the process of certifying their facilities. It will also provide owners, operators, and parking staff members with the tools and resources necessary to apply these strategies in their facilities, measure the ones already in place, and ultimately make the process of certification much more efficient.

It has been amazing to watch the progress made by the GPC in its short lifetime. As a LEED accredited professional, I've shared the same struggles as many consultants, trying to adequately explain the relationship between sustainability and parking, especially when the existing certification systems developed to date—most notably LEED and Green Globes—were not designed for parking. It has been difficult to attempt to mold the concept of parking and

its many sustainable opportunities and benefits into green certification programs that were, at best, unresponsive, and sometimes even hostile to the very idea of parking. The GPC recognized this and developed its com-

prehensive certification system to provide owners, operators, and consultants with an opportunity to become more educated about sustainability and parking. The concepts outlined in the Green Garage Certification program will serve as a blueprint for implementing strategies that are not only green in their objectives to reduce the environmental effects of these buildings but also in their potential to significantly reduce energy and operational costs.

Connecting

The certification program is also an opportunity for owners to connect with the public, many of whom continue to demand the integration of sustainability whenever possible. It will undoubtedly serve as a valuable marketing tool, educating parking facility users about sustainable initiatives implemented and helping encourage them to return by choice to a greener garage or lot. It is also a chance to finally acknowledge those organizations and projects that have led the way, taking the initiative to implement sustainability into their parking facilities, simply because it was the right thing to do and long before there was a mechanism to truly measure or recognize their commitment. And it will provide a greater incentive for similar organizations to follow suit.

I'm honored to have had the opportunity to be a part of the inaugural class of Green Garage Assessors. I look forward to the coming months and years, to witnessing the incredible innovations and advancements the parking industry continues to make in this area, and to seeing many certified green parking garages. **P**



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