

# Designing for a sustainable future

Architects share their unique talents while working to preserve the environment, make use of new technology and create different delivery methods.



JOSEPH HOLLAK



By BoNhia Lee - Staff Writer

Architects have designed buildings with the environment in mind for years.

It's not new. The concept of sustainability, or reducing the negative impact on the environment and increasing health and comfort, has always been a principle of design.

It's just become increasingly popular in recent months as more people talk about ways to recycle, to be environmentally friendly, and to save money while doing it.

Sustainability is the most visible trend in the architecture industry today. Other key developments include new technology helping to streamline the design process and the changing project delivery methods.

"We're beginning to see tremendous cost increases in energy, obtaining energy, materials and transportation," said Loren Aiton, an architect at Taylor Teter Partnership in Fresno. "Sustainability is clearly here to stay."

## Sustainability takes the 'LEED'

The architects at Taylor Teter are receiving requests for proposals with growing interest in having sustainable features incorporated into the project designs.

The firm is ready to handle the inquiries as

it pushes for all of its architects and engineers to become certified in Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, also known as LEED, by the end of the year.

LEED is a set of guidelines administered by the U.S. Green Building Council for the design, construction and operation of green buildings.

There are currently 55,391 LEED-accredited professionals across the country. That's 10 times the number of members as in 2000.

Aiton is one of eight certified employees at the firm and a member of the Central California Chapter of the U.S. Green Building Council. He also helps train professionals working on LEED certification.

Architects get LEED-certified to elevate their awareness and to understand what sustainability is in order to offer it to clients, Aiton said.

"As we move forward for our immediate future and future generations, building sustainability is the way we have to do everything," Aiton said. "We have to think of the finite resources we have and look to use them in better ways."

Sustainable design includes:

- Using recycled content for construction.
- Better land use and planning.

- Use of low volatile organic compound (VOC) materials.

- Reducing water use.

"I think sustainability is the way of the future, and this is where we need to be going and how we need to be thinking of how we do building," Aiton said.

Russ Taylor, a partner in the firm, agrees. He knew sustainable practices would be important six years ago, when he attended an architecture conference where it was discussed.

Sustainability is important to our planet and to our kids and grandchildren as we hear about things like global warming, Taylor said.

It's much easier to produce sustainability today than 24 months ago because so many companies are getting on board with energy-saving designs, Taylor said.

Take, for example, the Unitarian Universalist Church of Fresno, which is seeking LEED certification for its sustainable designs. The church hired McCamant & Durrett Architects, a firm with sustainable design experience from Nevada City, Nev., to build its church in north Fresno.

"We could tell sustainable green building was really a core value of the company," said George Burman, the church project manager.