



What are Vendors Doing to Help Libraries

GO GREEN?

a lot

by Wanda Urbanska

Six years ago, Joe Frueh, director of sales at the premium institutional furniture manufacturer Agati, started getting questions from library clients and designers about the green properties of his products. “It used to be the odd question,” he says—the occasional query about how or where a product was made. Today such information is “a regular part of the discussion.” However, in the not-too-distant-future—maybe 15 years from now—Frueh expects this line of questioning to go away entirely. Sustainable, eco-friendly products are “just going to become the norm,” he says.

Likewise, Coleen Gagliardo, vice president of marketing for the library supplier Gaylord Brothers, projects “tremendous growth” in the green segment of her business, which is fast-growing but accounts for just a fraction of the overall pie. To that end, in 2007, Gaylord assigned a product manager to become the company’s resident “green expert”—the person who stays current on rules and regulations and helps guide company purchasing decisions. “Green products still carry a price premium,” Gagliardo notes. “But as we build up volume, those prices will go down.”

So while green products are rapidly becoming the new “gold standard” of American building, furnishing, interiors and design, significant challenges exist for most everyone on the ground who makes purchasing decisions—especially in today’s straitened economy when public dollars are often stretched to the limit and going green can carry an initial price pre-

mium of 20% to 80% above a conventionally produced equivalent.

Libraries lead the way

Despite the cost differential, many believe that it is incumbent upon libraries to show leadership with environmental innovation and education, serving in their traditional role as beacons of the community.

“Libraries are the most visible and accessible of all public buildings,” says William W. Sannwald, author of *Checklist of Library Building Design Considerations (ALA Editions)*, the 2008 edition of which contains substantial material on green design. Libraries, he says, “need to take a lead in not only exhibiting and explaining green design techniques,” but in practicing sustainable design in the built environment.

“What differentiates a green library from a conventionally



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built library is that it's been designed and built from a systems perspective," says David Johnston, a green building consultant based in Boulder, Colorado. That means that "the building is designed to minimize fossil-fuel dependency so that it maintains the temperature and humidity to protect the collections and provide comfort for the occupants."

LEED certification standards for new public buildings and major renovation projects have set the bar for institutional construction. Forward-thinking municipalities, such as Houston, San Francisco, and San Jose to name a few, are pushing the envelope by mandating LEED as the standard for major new projects. But even without government mandates, clients have come to expect green buildings.

Furnishing, fixtures and interiors

"Our clients are requesting that we get LEED certified or LEED silver certified," says Mark Schatz, principal with Field Paoli Architects in San Francisco. Green design, he says, "has become part of the vocabulary that architects have to have." Features that help build that vocabulary into a coherent building plan—and accumulate the all-important points to achieve LEED certification—include windows with low-emissivity glass, high-performance insulation, recycled and recyclable flooring materials and wall coverings, mechanical equipment with economizer cycles and water-conserving plumbing fixtures.

On the question of ventilation, for instance, Schatz has seen what he calls "a sea change" in thinking over the last decade. In the recent past, he says, "people were afraid of operable windows. Concerns about security overrode concerns about sustainability." But, he predicts, operational windows will not be optional for much longer as future building codes will be written to incorporate strict energy standards that specify such features.

In Norfolk, Virginia, planning is now under way for the construction of a \$50 million public library complex that will be "as energy-efficient as possible, following LEED guidelines," according to Troy Valos, assistant archivist for special collections at the Norfolk Main Library. Valos is working with library director Norman Maas and a team from the city to ensure that the new Slover Main Library—slated to break ground in 2010, with a projected completion two to three years later—will be as green as possible.

"Our goal is to become the most technologically advanced library in the country," Valos says. Among the many unique features of the project is the incorporation of an 1899 neoclassical former post office and federal court building—the former Seaboard Building,

which currently serves as the central library—into the complex. (The new and existing structures will be connected by a recessed glass atrium and courtyard.) What's more, a new planned light rail

line feeding into downtown, with a station to be located directly across from the library complex, will create multiple synergies, not the least of which is increased foot traffic. "We see this library as becoming the nexus for the entire community," says Valos.

The Norfolk team has before them the heady—albeit nerve-racking—job not only of making wise design decisions, but of selecting appropriate furnishings, fixtures, and finishes for the new complex. To supplement advice from architects and designers, many procurement professionals refer to such websites as www.buildinggreen.com and www.greendepot.com, for product information and screening. David Johnston's newly launched website, www.greenbuilding.com, which is slanted toward residential construction, offers a primer for those wanting to learn the green basics.

Increasingly, companies themselves have begun providing those green basics to customers. Gaylord Bros, for instance, has set up a webpage called "Everyday Green" providing detailed product information. Jodi Accumanno, the company's product and catalog manager, who oversees the green lines, says the company scrutinizes vendor claims before taking on new products that are billed as green.

Built to last

Both Agati and Gaylord Brothers offer built-to-last lines of furniture, which are never the least-expensive short-term option but offer "life-cycle" savings. "We call it legacy furniture and warranty it for 10 years," says Joe Frueh. In 2008, Agati switched to water-based top coats on the furniture to further reduce the output of VOCs (volatile organic compounds) in its products' finishes. However, Frueh says, "the greenest thing about Agati is that we make everything in the USA." The company's furniture is milled and manufactured in upstate New York, which provides multiple benefits include reducing the carbon cost of shipping product from overseas.

In the past, says Accumanno, customers "used to shy away from the eco-friendly concept." But today she finds it exciting to see "how designers have embraced green products," making ones that appeal to almost everyone. ■



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The Lutron Eco-System lighting control system can dramatically reduce a building's energy consumption through savings in the cost of lighting. This relatively new "smart" digital system—which adjusts light levels according to the amount of daylight streaming into a space, senses occupancy, allows for dimming options, and can be pre-programmed to shut on and off according to schedule—is catching on in green libraries, schools, and other institutional settings. "These day-lighting controls are definitely an idea I would recommend," says San Francisco architect Mark Schatz.



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Atmosphere recycled rubber flooring, made from recycled tires, has displaced carpet as the flooring of choice for the 42-location Houston Public Library system. Wendy Heger, assistant director for planning and facilities, calls these 38" x 38" flooring tiles "a green choice." The flooring is quiet, she says, "and can be cleaned with a damp mop." In addition to its acoustical benefits (the

product dampens vibrations for foot and rolling traffic noise), it promotes foot comfort and resists slips and stains. Depending on the color choice—with black being the most eco-friendly—up to 7.5 tires are saved from the landfill for every 100 square feet installed. It "does so many things right," remarks Les Carley, ToMarket sales representative in the Houston area, "it's a show stopper."

10 ECO-FRIENDLY PRODUCTS FOR YOUR LIBRARY



▲▲▲ **Gaylord Brothers' Greenplay Submarine Activity Center**, constructed with FSC-certified wood, formaldehyde-free finishes and 100% post-consumer plastic material, is a part of the Greenplay line of eco-friendly children's library products. A concern for the impact of toxic products on developing bodies makes buying for this age cohort the first priority for many, says Gaylord Brothers' Jodi Accumanno.

After speaking with architects, interior designers and vendors across the nation, *American Libraries* compiled a list of 10 products—or product categories—that libraries may want to consider in their quest to save energy, improve indoor air quality, and become better environmental stewards.

Agati's Curtis ladder-back chair is built in America with FSC-certified hardwoods, using sturdy mortise-and-tenon joinery. Each right angle is secured with a pin to further increase strength. Agati's chairs are design classics that are ergonomically engineered for lumbar support and longevity. "We expect our furniture to last for at least 25 to 35 years," says Agati's Joe Frueh; but he adds that when well maintained, under the right conditions, pieces "could last 100 years."



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The Sydney Smart dual-flush toilet by Caroma is a water-saving winner that averages 0.9 gallons per flush. The dual-flush technology—developed in Australia by Caroma and catching on in America—allows users to choose the appropriate water load, depending on whether the waste is liquid or solid. After a 400-bed Hilton hotel in San Antonio switched to Caroma dual-flush commodes in 2007, water usage dropped by a staggering million gallons a month. The Sydney Smart features an industry-leading 3.5-inch waste trap that Nick Gunia, president of Alterna Corporation, a Caroma distributor in Miami, calls “virtually impossible to clog.”

Derbibrute roofing is a waterproof roofing membrane with a reflective surface that helps create an energy-saving “cool roof.” Derbibrute was installed at the Looscan Neighborhood Library of the Houston Public Library system, the system’s first “green” branch. “What sets us apart from the single-ply is that we’re a multiply,” says Clint De Shon, a researcher for Derbibrute. The bright white surfacing exceeds Energy Star reflective standards, and the product offers a 20-year warranty. “As long as it keeps its integrity, we can go in and put another membrane on top of the Derbibrute,” says De Shon.

Armstrong linoleum flooring

is the go-to choice of interior designer Marie Fisher, who is using it for several of her library projects in the San Francisco Bay area. Armstrong linoleum, which was introduced in 1909, is making a comeback after years in the doldrums. Fisher characterizes linoleum as “outstanding ... a cradle-to-cradle product that is sustainable.” The impervious, integral material can be used on floors and tabletops. Containing 35% pre-consumer recycled material of wood dust, cork flour, and linseed oil, linoleum is more economical than cork and has what Fisher calls a desirable “old-fashioned look.”

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Gaylord’s Iron Horse book truck is made in America of durable, 30% post-consumer recycled domestic steel. Its round tube construction makes for a long lifespan; each truck can support up to a 500-pound load. “We could easily take these trucks and move their manufacturing to China to get the cost down,” says Gaylord Brothers’ Jodi Accumanno, “but we wouldn’t be sure of the quality and long-term viability of the product.”



NCFI Polyurethanes’ InsulStar spray foam insulation is what green building consultant David Johnston calls “best of class.” He says, “Insulation for any building type appropriately selected and installed is the best investment a community can make in a building’s infrastructure. Most people don’t think of insulation as an investment but as a cost. In fact, this is an investment in a building’s long-term operations.” As energy costs spiral, high-performance spray foam insulation is becoming increasingly popular, not only for its insulating properties but because it resists mold and moisture and promotes healthful indoor air quality. “We love to work long-term,” says Don Schumacher, director of marketing for NCFI. “Libraries and schools are not 20-year buildings; they’re 100-year buildings.”

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A reusable hemp tote bag is sold by Reusablebags.com. This dual-handled hemp tote is sturdy, roomy, made from renewable hemp, and can be imprinted with a library’s logo. What’s more, says Natalie Slater, internet communications manager for Reusablebags.com, the bag holds up after multiple uses. Moving from single-use disposable bags to reusables is one of the first—and easiest—and best moves a library can make to go green.

