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Portland's 4th Annual Sustainable Building Week Convenes Oct 11-16

Tapping into the region's legacy of creativity and collaboration, the week aims to lead the next chapter of sustainability in an era of new challenges — from COVID recovery to climate change

August 26, 2021 — Portland has always been a generator of innovation and ideas, especially when it comes to environmental sustainability. But as the region navigates new challenges brought on by a global pandemic and the effects of climate change — from recent waves of extreme heat to wildfires -- how can the places where we live, work, play, go to school and raise families, adapt to meet our changing needs, while ensuring a healthy environment for the future?

The 4th annual [Sustainable Building Week](#) taking place October 11-16 promises to help answer those questions by providing the incubator needed to plan for a quickly-evolving world. The week takes a unique approach, bringing together experts from multiple disciplines of architecture and design, building and construction, and community planning — in one place.

“We’re calling on Portland to once again come together and find solutions to some of the greatest challenges our modern society has ever faced,” said Webly Bowles, co-founder of Sustainable Building Week. “This is an opportunity for our region’s greatest thinkers and problem solvers to cross pollinate ideas that will continue to evolve Portland’s leadership in sustainability practices, creating models for the nation to follow.”

While last year’s Sustainable Building Week was held fully online due to social distancing restrictions, this year takes a hybrid approach. Events such as forest walks and building tours will take place in person, while other deep-dive discussions will occur online, and be recorded, so participants can revisit discussions again in the future.

“Over the past year, we’ve learned a lot about new ways we can come together and collaborate. As our community continues to evolve with new hybrid-work styles, we’re offering a similar mix



of in-person and online opportunities. We can engage people right here in the city, as well as from surrounding regions, while reducing the environmental impact of travel,” said Terry Campbell, co-creator of Sustainable Building Week.

This October features more than 20 scheduled programs, divided across five themes that tackle some of the biggest challenges facing the design and building industry today: energy, water, materials, health, and community. Unlike a typical conference that’s organized by one planning committee, Sustainable Building Week offers a platform for multiple collaborators to design their own events as part of the week-long series.

Highlights this year include:

- [PAE Living Building Tour](#) — Set to be the world’s first developer-driven [Living Building](#) (the highest green building standard), this five-story, mixed-use building demonstrates replicable and cost-effective solutions for sustainable design removing barriers to entry for highly sustainable projects while revitalizing the community.
- [Go Zero Tour 2021](#) — Residential buildings account for almost a quarter of all energy usage in the state of Oregon and zero energy home design is an important strategy in climate change mitigation. Solar Oregon hosts this event, highlighting zero energy homes from around the state (both virtually and in-person), presented by Solar Oregon and Energy Trust of Oregon.
- [Into the Woods](#) — Tualatin Soil and Water Conservation District, together with representatives from Hyla Woods and Sustainable Northwest Wood, will host a forest walk at Tualatin Hills Nature Park, a location featuring local tree species from the Willamette Valley foothills, Coast Range, and Cascade Range. This event will cover sustainable forest management and the local wood movement, including discussion on recent impacts to the wood products industry during COVID and the importance of tree diversity in the face of a changing climate and increased wildfire hazard.
- [Electrify Now](#) — Scientists agree that the world needs to cut heat-trapping emissions to zero by 2050 to avoid the worst effects of climate change, with major progress needed in the next decade. This series of events will cover the latest trends in moving toward 100% electrification for homes and other structures in the Pacific Northwest, in addition waste reduction and energy efficiency measures, to quickly get to net zero energy use.
- [Policies for Energy Efficient Retrofits](#) — This discussion hosted by ZERO Coalition will cover policy options to help make energy-efficient retrofits to existing homes and



buildings more equitable, affordable and accessible. The event highlights the story of the June Key Delta Community Center, a Living Building project developed, owned, and operated by the Portland Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. dedicated to sustaining the needs of the multicultural neighborhood it serves, encouraging sound and healthy social, educational, artistic, economic, and environmental development and awareness.

Attendees can choose which activities fit their interests and schedules, then sign up for individual events. Admission costs are free for most topics, with nominal fees charged for specialized training or events. The full schedule of events will be posted Sept. 15. To register, please visit sustainablebuildingweek.com.

“This week of events is crucial for our community because of two things: the pace of innovation is truly astounding in this field — as is the need for action,” said Issac Barrow, commercial real estate market manager, Portland General Electric and presenter at Sustainable Building Week 2020. “We’re at a pivotal moment in time where sustainability is moving from something that people feel is an additional burden for the project, to something that actually makes projects more economical and more attractive. Sustainable Building Week is key for information sharing and level setting, and helping move the industry forward.”

About Sustainable Building Week

Sustainable Building Week works to maintain Portland's green building leadership by curating a week of events to promote cross-disciplinary education, connectivity, and collaboration in the design and construction industry. Sustainable Building Week is a 501(c) 3 non-profit organization registered with the State of Oregon.

Sustainable Building Week collaborators come from a variety of disciplines and include AIA Oregon, Build Local Alliance, International Living Future Institute Portland Collaborative, University of Oregon Institute for Health in the Built Environment, Portland Green Schools, Portland Materials Transparency Collaborative, Solar Oregon, U.S. Green Building Council, American Society of Plumbing Engineers, Electrify Now, and ZERO Coalition.

The not-for-profit is supported this year by its sponsors, including Skanska, Gensler, Bassetti Architects, Walsh Construction, CleaRESULT, Mahlum Architects, PAE Engineers, Eteriors, New Buildings Institute, Sustainable Northwest Wood, Portland General Electric, and Brightworks Sustainability.

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