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ICSC launches LEED for Retail web-based seminar for its members

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The U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) is inaugurating its LEED for Retail certification process this fall, and to help retailers and developers understand it, ICSC is launching a web-based seminar.

Although this type of certification is already available through the USGBC's LEED Core & Shell Development rating system, LEED for Retail will create one of the first internationally recognized environmental benchmarks specifically for retail spaces.

Introduced in 1998 as a standard for construction, LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) has since been broadened into a comprehensive system of standards that take into account the differences among various property sectors.

The system is aimed primarily at retailers, but observers say there is a role for landlords in the LEED retail certification. "If a retailer chooses to go for certification across its portfolio, a retail developer may be required to support them with documentation for that tenant to achieve the certification," said Justin Doak, co-founder of Austin, Texas-based sustainability consulting firm Ecoxera and a former LEED Retail technical manager for USGBC. "Even though it is not their center that is getting certified through this process, if a retail developer invests into good green practices, that is a great way to recruit tenants. When I was at USGBC, we would have retailers asking all the time, 'Can you give me a list of green developers and landlords?' "

Beginning this month ICSC, Chain Store Age magazine and Ecoxera are the co-hosts of an online seminar series designed to help participants decide whether LEED for Retail is right for them. The three-part series will answer questions about the LEED Retail Building Design and Construction rating system, which is for retailers opening stand-alone stores and in which the retailer is involved in the site planning; and the LEED Interior Design and Construction system, for mall and open-air center tenants with little or no control over the site.

Each module will be available as an audio file through ICSC.org.

The USGBC says some 14,000 projects are LEED-certified in the U.S. and 30 other countries.

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