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NESEA offers \$10,000 cash prize for the best net-zero energy building

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To spur the market for regional zero-energy buildings, the Northeast Sustainable Energy Association (NESEA) is offering an annual \$10,000 cash prize for the best building that can document net-zero energy use while offering a high level of comfort, affordability and reliability.Â Â

The intent of this award is to encourage efficient, elegant, self-reliant buildings and patterns of occupancy by honoring demonstrated achievement of zero annual net energy. The zero energy target is easily defined, readily understood and is measurable â€” and it has captured the public imagination in a way that more abstract concepts of energy efficiency and building performance never have.

Entries are due to NESEA by January 15 each year. Specific submission requirements are listed on NESEA's Zero-Energy Building website <http://zeroenergybuilding.org>

Candidate buildings must meet two overriding criteria. First, buildings must be fully occupied and document net-zero energy use for one year. Second, the entry will be judged on the basis of several design attributes, including energy efficiency and energy management strategies, comfort and cost that make the building a model for present and future markets.

Zero-energy buildings--buildings that produce as much energy as they consume--represent the cutting edge of environmentally responsible construction. These buildings require state-of-the-art energy-efficient construction and renewable energy systems such as solar and wind, and are challenging to design and build. They offer comfort and amenities while reducing the building's impact on the environment.

The competition is open to occupied buildings in the Northeastâ€”the six New England states plus New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware and Maryland.

Winners will be announced at NESEA's Building Energy Conference and Trade Show in March in Boston every year.

A "zero energy building" is one that generates enough renewable energy on-site to equal or exceed its annual energy use.

While many aspects of a building's environmental impact are important, such as embodied energy, air quality and use of resources, this competition focuses on the energy required to operate buildings in the northeastern climate.

Entries will be judged by a panel of distinguished experts in the fields of sustainable building and renewable energy.

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