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Trudeau of Cummings Props. lectures on green design issues

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Attendees at the presentation of "Green Design and Construction in Suburban Boston" hosted by the Boston Chapter of the International Facility Management Association (IFMA) and Cummings Properties, found the information and a tour of the newly built TradeCenter 128 eye-pleasing.

IFMA Boston chapter president, Kate Thibeault, CFM, welcomed guests including representatives from three Mass.' Fortune 500 companies, Iron Mountain, Inc., Cabot Corp. and Liberty Mutual Group, Inc. She introduced the evening's featured speaker, Jim Trudeau, design manager at Cummings.

Trudeau delivered a speech to facilities representatives from local companies including New Balance Athletic Shoe, Inc., Pearson Education and Investment Technology Group, Inc., as well as two out-of-state companies, Progress Software Corporation from Nashua, N.H. and Gilbane Building Co. from Providence, R.I.

The highlights of Trudeau's talk included the approach to a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification process, affects on design, challenges encountered and cost. He discussed Cummings' non-traditional, integrated delivery system, which allowed it to complete LEED Gold pre-certification of the seven-story TradeCenter 128 in record time.

During the question and answer period, many attendees' questions focused on Cummings Properties' corporate structure. "We design and construct almost all of our buildings, but we go one step further because we also manage and maintain all of our own properties," said Trudeau. He explained that Cummings Properties' single source system creates a unique, shared knowledge pool.

He acknowledged that this vertically-integrated system helped simplify the LEED application process, a first attempt by Cummings Properties and accomplished without a consultant.

"Because this is how we design and build all of our properties," Trudeau added, "we really know each one very well." He pointed out that most commercial real estate development projects are inherently fragmented; the design and construction teams may only work together on one job. "Our engineers, architects and purchasing managers were involved from the very beginning," he commented.

For many attendees, the speed of delivery for TradeCenter 128 was impressive. Trudeau again referenced the all-in-one package delivery system. "A single entity expedites paper work and permits, eliminates many potential problems, reduces costs and enhances communication. Each job is built on the strength of the previous one, except we try to improve the process each time. After nearly forty years of doing this, we're pretty efficient," he stated.

Guests appeared surprised to learn about Cummings Properties' ability to forgo the sometimes lengthy and onerous task of securing outside financing. Trudeau said the company carries no mortgages on any of its more than 80 properties.

Many guests also commented that the site, located just off of Interstate 95/Route 128 and near Interstate 93, was easily accessible from all Boston's environs.

While a few members and guests took advantage of the time afterward to network and enjoy refreshments, most joined a technical tour of the building. At least one tour member commented that the mechanical penthouse room was "the cleanest I've ever seen." Buderus condensing boilers with an average of 95% efficiency as well as an energy management system that coordinates all central system operations were some of the highlights.

Trudeau pointed out other design enhancements, including separate electrical meters so clients would be rewarded for conservation efforts, operable windows and low flow toilets. He reported that the high efficiency lighting, controls and water source heatpumps translate directly into utility savings.

IFMA Boston reportedly has more than 800 members from design, construction and facilities fields. They offer programs, tours, educational seminars, round table discussions, and special events, all at reasonable costs and with great opportunities to make valuable professional connections.

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