

Home ▶ Articles ▶ Fairfield, Iowa ▶ SLC: It Takes a Team to Go Green

PRINT EMAIL

MUM's Sustainable Living Center The Team Behind the New Zero-carbon Building

BY LINDA EGENES



Top row: Dal Loiselle, Mabel Scaroni-Fisher, David Fisher, Diana Krystofiak. Front row: Lonnie Gamble, Mark Stimson, Jon Lipman (photo by Bill Graeser)

Jon Lipman, A.I.A., of Fortune-Creating Buildings, is the design architect responsible for the floor plan and shape of the building, integrating Maharishi Vastu architecture with sustainable features.

For instance, Maharishi Vastu recognizes the energizing and nourishing value of the eastern rising sun, while sustainable design emphasizes the heating value of a southern exposure. Sustainable design discourages multiple east windows because late-morning eastern light causes excessive heat buildup in a building. Jon solved this dilemma by employing a common design feature of Maharishi Vastu—verandas on the east and west sides of the building—thereby utilizing the eastern verandah to shade east windows from the intense late-morning sunlight, which resulted in a building that has the daylighting preferences of both systems.

Jon further optimized the two perspectives by designing a square floor plan and adding a long clerestory structure on the roof to bring in enough southern light deep into the building.

The team recognized that by incorporating these ancient Vastu principles, they were creating deep sustainability. "There's no other building like this going up in the nation, or in the world for that matter, that we know of," says nationally known green building expert Mike Nicklas, FAIA, the building's overall architect in charge, and founder and president of Innovative Design. Nicklas's firm was responsible for finding innovative ways to bring daylight into every room as prescribed by Maharishi Vastu architecture, and for designing other sustainable features.

To date, Innovative Design has designed over 4,750 buildings that use renewable energy solutions. Masaki Furukawa, also of Innovative Design, is the technical architect, and Susan Berkowitz is the interior designer. Dal Loiselle is also responsible for many of the design ideas, including the whole trees.

The story of this building is not complete without mentioning the people who drove it forward. David Fisher and his wife, Dr. Mabel Scaroni-Fisher, were so passionate about this project that five years ago, when the only donations were coming in \$25 increments, they took out a \$5,000 personal loan

to pay for the feasibility study. When others heard about their personal commitment to the project, donations came pouring in to pay back the loan for them.

Another turning point came about when Mike Nicklas offered his support at a critical moment early in the project. The world-renowned expert in ecological design became excited about the building after speaking at MUM's Eco-Fair in 2005 and consulting on the day lighting of the Argiro Center. When David Fisher approached Mike about doing the schematic design, Mike found out that they only had \$5,000 in donations. A few days later he returned and said, "All right, the schematic design costs \$30,000, but why don't you pay me the \$5,000 now and pay me the rest whenever you can"—which they were able to do after a year and a half.

Steve Guich was an early enthusiast in wanting to build a green building on the MUM campus, particularly a green dorm. He sponsored sending David Fisher to a green building fund-raising workshop in Sarasota. Steve later contributed significantly to the cost of the Sustainable Living Center. The University very much appreciates his vision and support for creating a sustainable campus.

Other major donors Eric and Mary Sue Schwartz and Jeffrey Abramson stepped forward, and with countless others, have brought the building this far. [The Kresge Foundation](#) provided MUM with a Planning Grant. [The Wege Foundation](#) provided a \$100,000 grant to help MUM's SLC achieve the Living Building Challenge. This is the largest foundation grant the center has received to date.

The Sustainable Living Center has also benefited by in-kind donations from these nationally recognized leaders in green building materials, who wanted to be associated with the cutting-edge building: Serious Materials (high performance windows); Pittsburgh Corning (FoamGlas insulation); Gerdau AmeriSteel (rebar); United States Gypsum Corporation (Aqua Tough-paperless drywall); Green Building Supply; SpiderLath Inc. (lath mesh to support exterior stucco); and GlobalWatt (PV panels).

To complete the grounds and interior by spring 2011, another \$400,000 is needed. If you would like to be part of this remarkable adventure in sustainability, contact Dal Loiselle at (319) 217-2179.

To read the first part of this article, visit: "[Building the Future: MUM's Sustainable Living Center.](#)"

For more information, see [MUM Sustainable Living Center.](#)

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written by Mara, November 22, 2010

such a joy to read a bit of good, uplifting news and know that there are folks who are helping make the world a better more sustainable place.

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written by MajorTom, November 21, 2010

Nice to see so many people deeply committed to preserving the earth and making it a better place. It gives me hope for the world and what it/we could be. Bless you all.

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