


THE UPDATE

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The goal of our monthly update is to provide information on timely matters that may impact your practice and professional interests.



HIGH PROFILE GREEN BUILDING GIANTS

Two green-building projects, one each planned for a major city on either coast are currently in the works : the 54- story Bank of America Tower in Manhattan and the 18-story San Francisco Federal Building showcase the many benefits of environmentally design .The B of A building designed by Cook + Fox Architects, plans to derive 70% of its energy needs from an on-site , natural gas powered cogeneration plant that reuses heat that would otherwise escape the building. Additionally CFA engineers plan to reuse heat captured from the double-glass interiors on its southeast corner and recycle waste and rain water for toilet and other non-potable use. The west coast Federal Building designed by Morphosis will maximize natural lighting and computer controlled windows and vents to allow trapped hot air in after-hours building space to escape at night. Significant annual energy and utilities cost savings are projected. .



NEW THINKING FOR NEXT GENERATION POWER PLANTS

The US power sector needs to agree on a more competitive planning system and more actively search for better business models and generation technologies according to Exelon's chairman and CEO John Rowe. In his recent talk at Chicago's April 5th Electric Power Convention , John observed 3 current US methods of doing business now in place-none of which appeared effective. The Southeast employs vertically integrated utilities that face "little retail rivalry and negligible wholesale competition". Statewide integrated resource systems such as seen in California and elsewhere is another approach .The last approach he outlined employs wholesale competition and mostly "unused rights to retain competition" What is missing ,in his opinion, is an industry consensus on "which types of generation should be built, when and by whom and who will regulate and finance it" .



NIST EXPLORING DEDICATED FIREFIGHTER ELEVATORS

A National Institute of Standards and Technology panel looking into the 911 World Trade Center's collapse may include special

emergency elevators in its recommendations for changes in building-safety standards. Many European and Asian countries currently require skyscrapers to have special fire resistant elevators for fire fighters to use to reach high floors quickly and also help disabled people get out of the building in emergencies. The European model is to use a small dedicated elevator that is used only in emergencies while the Asian countries tend to require larger elevators that can also be used for freight during normal building operations .



CAN WE HAVE OVERLY SMART BUILDINGS?

Yes, according to Harvard architecture Professor Michelle Addington that is unless we learn to both measure and control fewer parameters. She maintains buildings are tough proving grounds for complex and interdependent technologies particularly when real-world behavior is unpredictable which complicates efforts to measure ,analyze, and respond to different time varying situations. For example Swiss researchers reported that when attempting to measure only one parameter : user comfort, it had to develop special fuzzy logic software that "counted the number of times users changed their environmental settings and eventually the software was able to adjust settings to desired levels automatically"

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Meckler Forensic Group

Address	10573 West Pico Blvd. #200 Los Angeles, CA. 90064	200 2nd Ave. South #204 St. Petersburg, FL. 33701
Phone	(310)913-3864	(800)556-1932
FAX	(800)210-6244	(800)308-5811
EMail	mmeckler@mforensicgroup.com	
URL	http://www.mforensicgoup.com	