## Green Building Materials: Closing the Gaps

***Helping Oregon Businesses Compete and Oregon Graduate Students Succeed***

As the national emphasis on green building continues to burgeon, a research team funded by Oregon BEST is developing innovative, new tools that not only help the state's construction professionals more effectively select green materials and methods, but also help Oregon's graduate students better prepare for careers in the green building industry.

This research project brings together university and professional expertise to form a crucial information network for development of improved green building material selection tools. These state-of-the art tools will make businesses throughout Oregon more competitive in the fast-growing field of sustainable building systems, while making Oregon's graduate students among the most knowledgeable in the nation when it comes to green construction.

This Oregon BEST research team is developing a *Responsible Material Selection Guide* as well as workshop curriculum, which provide key information to Oregon's construction professionals and graduate students, helping them make better decisions concerning building materials.

By identifying gaps in information, as well as gaps in access to (or availability of) green building materials, this research is helping Oregon-based material producers better understand the needs of building design and construction professionals.

Using focus groups that include Oregon-based material specifiers from the building construction and renovation sectors, researchers are identifying information and materials gaps in the green building supply chain, focused on three major structural building materials: concrete, steel, and wood. Identifying gaps in the wood products supply chain might also lead to opportunities for the many value-added forest products companies based in Oregon.

Ultimately, this Oregon BEST team will use the research findings to inform a training symposium on green building material selection directed at Oregon-based architects, engineers, specifications consultations, and building contractors, as well as graduate students in the Oregon University System.

Other partners in the project include the Oregon Forest Resources Institute.

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