

## The Elusive LEED Superlative

Blog: [LEED Blog](#)

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December 3, 2011

Part of the lure of a green building is its payoff: reduced utility bills, better looks and a healthier indoor environment.

But the sweetest might be bragging rights for the building that claims firsties in a LEED category.

The U.S. Green Building Council's list of [LEED-registered and certified buildings in the Monterey Bay area](#), updated Dec. 2, includes 33 in Monterey County. Only seven of those have been certified:

- The International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers local in Castroville (Gold, Existing Buildings Operations & Maintenance)
- The Trader Joe's shopping complex in Monterey (Silver, Core & Shell)
- Moss Landing Marine Laboratories (Gold, Existing Buildings 1.0 Pilot)
- Salinas Municipal Pool (Gold, New Construction 2.2)
- Chartwell School in Seaside (Platinum, New Construction 2.1)
- CSUMB Library (Silver, New Construction 2.2)
- Monterey College of Law's [Community Justice Center](#) (Platinum, New Construction 2.2)

So far, the list doesn't show any platinum certifications for existing buildings. The *Weekly* is hoping to claim that honor.

That list, by the way, only seems to apply to commercial buildings. A [different USGBC spreadsheet](#) shows quite a few LEED-certified homes in the county, including Interim, Inc.'s Sunflower Gardens housing complex in Salinas, which [scored LEED for Homes Platinum cred in June 2010](#).

A Carmel Valley home landed Platinum honors in April 2010, another in Carmel got Silver last June, and on July 6 of this year, Carmel-by-the-Sea City Councilman Jason Burnett's home earned Platinum.

Burnett, who runs an eco-energy consulting firm in Marina and is [running for Carmel mayor](#), says he and wife Mel decided to go platinum on the remodel of their [mid-century modern home](#) to show that it can be done—and because the things that earn LEED points also tend to be best building practices.

"It makes for a building that is better-looking in the end, and it makes for a building that's going to last longer," he says.

The Burnetts replaced their shag carpet with a water-based, reflective epoxy floor; installed a system that turns out all of the house's LED lights at the push of a button; and calculated a net-zero electricity footprint, thanks to a photovoltaic system on the roof.

BuildingWise Project Manager Levi Jimenez doesn't think the county's certified LEED projects take any wind out of the *Weekly's* sails in going for the first local LEED-EB Platinum.

"The realm of Existing Buildings is not as easy to achieve Platinum," he writes by email. " It measures the building's actual performance, not a modeled theoretical performance as in [LEED for New Construction] or interior design as much as [LEED for Commercial Interiors].

"EB, as [BuildingWise Founder] Barry [Giles] says, 'is where the rubber hits the road.'"