

California hotels embracing LEED standards

By Janet Fullwood, Sacramento Bee

Does anybody really know how green their hotel is? Does anybody really care?

The acronym "LEED" has flashed across the public radar screen often enough to make an impression as ... well, something or other to do with energy efficiency.

But even if you know that LEED is shorthand for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, and that LEED certification is sparingly bestowed by the U.S. Green Building Council for sustainable building performance and business practices, should it matter?

You may or may not rest easier on your next weekend getaway knowing that your hotel bathroom is equipped with low-flow plumbing, that your garbage is being recycled and composted, or that a switch in light bulb technology has cut the hotel's energy bill in half. You might even be irritated by that little sign on the counter guilt-tripping you into using your towels and sheets for a second day. (Then again, you might be impressed to know they're being laundered locally with nontoxic cleaning products rather than being trucked to a regional processing facility 100 miles away.)

The point is, there's something to be said for being made aware of your choices.

With California at the forefront of investment in green energy, hotels are changing their wasteful ways – and most want their patrons to know about it.

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