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Steve Greenberg

Anthony Taormina

Robert Sroufe

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Sporting Change: Greening the Ballpark
Steve Greenberg, Anthony Taormina, Robert Sroufe

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Abstract

Sustainable construction achieves the dual aim of reducing building carbon emissions while reducing lifecycle maintenance and long-term operating costs of the facility. This exploratory research aims to address the gap between the growing development of commercial LEED real estate buildings and sports and entertainment venues, while developing a framework for LEED Certification in New Ballparks.

Medlar Field at Lubrano Park, located in State College, Pennsylvania, opened in 2006 as the first LEED certified stadium in the world. Sustainable design features include automatic plumbing fixtures, a gray water system, automatic lighting, public transportation hubs, and use of recycled and local construction materials. The first U.S. professional stadium to earn LEED certification was Nationals Park, located in Washington, D.C., in 2008. In order to achieve the environmental certification, the stadium features use of a brownfield redevelopment site, high-efficiency lighting, low-flow plumbing fixtures, a 6,300 square foot green roof, use of recycled building materials, and a ground and stormwater filtration system.

By examining the stadium developments of the two aforementioned first in class LEED stadiums—The Washington National's Nationals Park and The State College Spikes' Medlar Field at Lubrano Park—the economic, social, and environmental priorities necessary for achieving LEED certification of a minor league baseball stadium in Chico, California are identified. Through standard greening procedures, the research reveals significant reductions in carbon emissions and operating costs that will bring added value to any franchise's bottom line and advocate future sports venues to meet these standards for green excellence in the industry.