



The Natural Stone Council (NSC) has had to make a number of critical decisions over the past six months, several of which were deliberated on during the last board meeting on January 19, 2010. The sections that follow provide a recap of the resolutions passed and a summary of future plans for the NSC.

---

## Funding

Since the inception of the NSC in 2005, funding has been a challenging issue. The organization has survived on the generous donations of its partners, but the board agrees that this is not a viable long-term solution.

For several years a check-off program was seriously considered, but concerns were voiced about this option. During the last board meeting it was decided that alternatives would be investigated.

The Keelen Group has recommended that the NSC research funding possibilities through the Federal Government's Appropriations Committee. The NSC can be positioned as a good candidate because it provides education, research and development, and information on labor. As an applicant, the NSC must show a need for funding, how it will be spent and provide accountability for results. The Keelen Group suggests that the NSC apply to both House and Senate accounts to maximize potential awards.

The Keelen Group will work on behalf of the NSC to obtain these appropriations. Awards for the year's distribution of funding are released no earlier than October 1st, but can take several months to collect. Therefore, the NSC will not count on this funding for 2010.

It's important to note that this is a bridge funding mechanism. The board is still seeking a long-term solution.

---

## Branding

The NSC has been running a branding campaign since 2007 that has targeted trade groups and has been seen in publications such as *Architectural Record*. The print ads called "Freckles" and "Wrinkles" have led interested parties to the NSC's website [www.GenuineStone.org](http://www.GenuineStone.org). The traffic on this site continues to increase each month.

While the NSC has been pleased with the success of this campaign, the board recognizes that there is also a need for consumer-focused branding and advertising, which is a costly endeavor. Until a sustainable funding source is secured, plans to target consumers will have to be placed on the back burner.

It should be noted that the industry can help promote the brand through use of the Genuine Stone® logo, which is presently available free of charge to any member of the industry organizations that comprise the

NSC. Members are encouraged to post this logo at their place of business and on their website, business cards, advertising and other promotional materials.

---

## Sustainability

The NSC has made great strides in the area of sustainability over the past few years and is committed to making this a priority in the future. The industry has put a significant focus on LEED certification because stone is an ideal credit generator. That said, architects don't fully understand the benefits of using stone and the NSC would like to act as a resource.

The questions currently being asked by architects are: Can stone be reclaimed? What energy is consumed in its fabrication? Is this a renewable energy? Is the water used in fabrication recycled? Where do the diamonds come from for diamond wires and saw blades? Is any particular quarry sensitive to sustainable and environmental issues?

Jack Gebig, president of Ecoform and adviser to the University of Tennessee's Center for Clean Products, has been key in helping the NSC answer these types of questions. More specifically, he has benchmarked industry operations, identified and communicated best practices, made industry and product environmental data publicly available and evaluated stone cladding products against alternatives using a life-cycle framework.

The next step on this front is the development of a standards program including an eco label that clearly identifies certification to a standard. This certification will be a useful tool for the United States Green Building Council, as they rely heavily on labels to communicate products and processes that comply with strict environmental guidelines and verification.

By developing a standardized certification we can:

- Establish well-defined environmental and human health metrics within the sustainability movement that indicate our industry's leadership performance.
- Educate green building, government, and environmental leaders about the production of stone products.
- Create a mechanism to reward natural stone companies that certify to the standard.
- Address competitor's negative press using scientifically proven data.
- Establish environmental requirements for stone quarrying and production.
- Encourage transparent chain of custody for reporting in support of LEED credits for regional materials.
- Create parity between stone and competitive products covered by existing certification programs.

The process should begin in April 2010. The NSC will keep its members posted on the program's progress.

It's important to note that a multi-stakeholder group must be established to aid in developing the standards. Anyone can be a stakeholder, including someone from a competitive industry, as long as they participate. There is no monetary requirement for stakeholder status. Stakeholders must attend the meetings set to discuss and execute the steps. If you're interested in acting as a stakeholder, please contact Duke Pointer at [Dukepointer@aol.com](mailto:Dukepointer@aol.com).

---

# New Members

Two new organizations, The Pennsylvania Bluestone Association and the New York Bluestone Association, have become members of the NSC. Adam Diaz represents the Pennsylvania Bluestone Association and Harry Triebe represents the New York Bluestone Association.

---

## 2010/2011 Officers

The following individuals will be officers for the Natural Stone Council in 2010 and 2011:

Jim Owens, Chairman  
Brad Poynter, Vice Chairman  
Brenda Edwards, Treasurer  
Jane Bennett, Secretary  
Duke Pointer, Executive Director

Thank you!

---



Copyright © 2010 GenuineStone.org. All rights reserved.