

Trefzer taking green to next level at GWCC

By **Tonya Layman**
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

In a move to boost its green efforts, the **Georgia World Congress Center Authority** has hired Tim Trefzer as its first sustainability coordinator.

Trefzer will coordinate a unified sustainability strategy for the Authority's campus, which includes the Georgia World Congress Center, the Georgia Dome and Centennial Olympic Park, addressing energy and water conservation, recycling, promoting public transportation, and staff and customer education.

"With my experience in green buildings and a passion for all things in sustainability, I am the perfect person for the position," said Trefzer, who was hired in January. "I am ecstatic to have the opportunity to oversee sustainability at three major sites in downtown Atlanta and bring fresh ideas to the table."

Trefzer, a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design-accredited professional, is a member of the **U.S. Green Building Council-Atlanta Branch** and is on the emerging professionals committee. He has three years of experience in green building practices. Trefzer's first exposure to LEED certification was through a program at Florida State University, where he earned his undergraduate degree in residential science and housing.

Before this position, Trefzer worked as a LEED project manager for **Sustainable Options LLC**, an Atlanta-based green building consultant firm. There, Trefzer gained experience with evaluating the feasibility of existing buildings seeking LEED certification for operations and maintenance. He completed more than a dozen LEED certification projects, including the Gold certification of Two Premier Plaza in Atlanta and the silver certification of NorthPort Logistics Center in Jacksonville, Fla.

Trefzer's former boss at Sustainable Options, Greg O'Brien, now a senior vice president with **Grubb & Ellis Co.**, said Trefzer is an impressive guy.



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"He has excelled in all areas of sustainability," O'Brien said. "He has a knack for getting his arms around these things and getting them to work. He enjoys learning and retains it all very well. He is a visionary with a big-picture outlook but also has a good attention to detail. You don't find those very often."

The Georgia World Congress Center Authority has already made significant progress toward sustainability, but having Trefzer on board will help it move to the next level. Last year, the GWCC recycled 54 tons of single-stream waste, including plastic, paper, aluminum and glass; baled and recycled 49 tons of corrugated board; composted 290 tons of food waste; recycled six tons of cooking oil; recycled 1,500 pallets; and reduced electrical consumption by 5.7 million kilowatt hours.

As sustainability coordinator, Trefzer will develop and implement plans for reaching sustainability goals and objectives for the campus. He will also work with customers to help them make their events more

Tim Trefzer

Title: Sustainability Coordinator

Company: Georgia World Congress Center Authority

Education: Residential science and housing graduate of Florida State University; Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design-accredited professional

Career highlights: His work on two Tucker buildings that did not have an ENERGY STAR portfolio set up when he initially started, but now are both ENERGY STAR eligible, meaning they are in the top 25 percent of buildings in the nation in terms of energy efficiency.

Hobbies: Traveling, having visited 11 different countries; watching hockey.

"green" and provide recycling assistance to exhibitors and attendees. His LEED experience will also enable the Authority to provide sustainability education to its staff and work toward LEED certification of the Georgia World Congress Center.

"I think they are already doing a lot of great things here but the industry is always changing and there will always be new areas to focus on. There is just opportunity abounding," Trefzer said.

He hopes that having one person who is in charge of sustainability in the Authority, its efforts will continue to flourish.

"By having me on board I can not only bring a great deal of knowledge and experience to the facilities, I can make it my job and focus every day to evaluate where we stand and where we should go," he said. "In these difficult economic times, it is important to make yourself stand out. Separating yourself from the competition is key. I would like to separate us from the competition completely in terms of sustainability."

Trefzer admits he doesn't know whether or not sustainable practices will attract more business, but he says it still is an important part of doing business.

"There are bound to be certain clients that will focus on sustainability but we need to do it because it is the right thing to do regardless if it attracts clients," he said. "Plus, it will save us money in the long run. It makes sense from a business and economic standpoint."

Just about two months into the job, Trefzer is currently evaluating where the organization stands in its green practices.

"I plan to look at recycling initiatives, not just at Georgia World Congress Center but also at the park and Dome," he said. "I want to look at the overall energy consumption and energy-efficiency practices we have implemented and decide what we should add in the next few months or years. I also want to look at the best approach to getting LEED-certified if that is possible. I want to make sure we are doing the best we can."

He hopes to soon incorporate sustainable practices sessions into the continuing education training for GWCC staff.

"There is an opportunity through these sessions to train the employees on our initiatives and goals," Trefzer said. "And I am not just talking about the hourly employees. I want to get department heads and the executive staff on board so everyone will know what we are trying to accomplish."

The authority is committed to long-term sustainability, said GWCC Assistant General Manager Patrick Skaggs.

"We've made great progress over the last couple of years but felt that we needed someone keeping us focused on our efforts full time," Skaggs said. "Tim will play an integral role on our green team and our long-term environmental/sustainability strategic planning team. Tim brings a wealth of knowledge in this area and we're very excited to have him on board. Tim will educate our staff and customers on ways to make our campus and our events greener."