

Newsmaker | Roy McBrayer

Deputy state architect; program manager, Green Building Initiative

Sacramento Business Journal - by [Bob Schmidt](#) Correspondent

Roy McBrayer, deputy to the California State Architect, doesn't mince words when it comes to energy and the environment.

"The energy challenges we face, the environmental challenges we face, are the most serious threats to our way of life that we've ever seen," said McBrayer, who is also program manager of the Green Building Initiative, which has the task of reducing energy use in state-owned buildings by 20 percent by 2015 and encourages the same for the private sector.

"The other side of it is, we have an opportunity that we've never had before. The technology that's available, the communications ability we have, the ability we have to do things on a large scale, have never been greater. We have the capability of overcoming these challenges."

How did your Air Force experience prepare you for your current job?

I was at the Flight Test Center at Edwards Air Force Base as commander of the logistics and engineering section, and I had been a program manager on the B-2 bomber for about seven years before that. I had a lot of experience with acquisition programs for the major weapon systems the Air Force was buying at the time.

The state wanted to improve its information technology acquisition process, and that's what I had worked on.

The state architect is responsible for overseeing school construction in the state, and for the past four years I've been the manager of the governor's green building program. We've come a long way in four years.

What makes a building "green"?

There's a combination of things that makes a building "green." I think of it as being high performing in the energy area. It doesn't pollute, it doesn't use a lot of virgin materials in the construction, it's friendly to the transportation patterns, it uses less water, and it's energy efficient.

The building's siting, its location, its design, its proximity to transportation, the way it's constructed and the materials used to construct it, all go into the designation. Beyond that, it's the way it's operated. Leave all the lights on when they're not needed, you use more energy than you should.

One of the things the governor said when he signed the order (in December 2004) was that all state buildings built from then on would be designed, built, and operated as green buildings. ...

No other state has a green building program that compares to the magnitude of our effort. Other states have since started similar programs, and the federal government released an executive order in January of '07, dealing with federal buildings, that was very similar to the governor's.

Does the state's green building focus impact private-sector building?

Yes. The private sector looks to the state for market signals, if you will. If the state makes a commitment to move in a certain direction, the private sector sees that and is likely to follow suit.

The state can impose standards via the building codes. The **California Building Standards Commission** adopts those codes, and just this past year adopted the nation's first green building code, a set of voluntary measures that will become mandatory concurrent with the next adoption cycle, in 2010. That will make sure that all buildings built in the state, regardless of the occupancy type — residential, commercial, whatever — will have to meet minimum standards of being green buildings.

How is the state's fiscal problem affecting state building projects?

The budget we have now is arresting a lot of the things General Services is doing. Many building projects have been temporarily delayed, but we hope the situation gets resolved so we can go about our business.