



Liverpool Office
215 Greenfield Pkwy, Ste 102
Liverpool, NY 13088
Tel: (315) 529-9807

November 20, 2009

Reference letter for Innovative Design, Inc.

In February of 2009, TRC Energy Services, under contract to the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA), contracted with Innovative Design, Mike Nicklas, Principal, to conduct presentations and plan review sessions at three architectural firms to promote the New York High Performance Schools Guidelines (NY-CHPS).

Presentations:

The presentations included *Keys to Good Daylighting in Schools*, *Designing Solar Hot Water Systems* and *Designing Rainwater Collection Systems* and were supported by a Daylighting handbook, calculations of the window-to-wall ratios for 22 classroom and space types in Albany, Syracuse and Buffalo, NY, and a New York Green Guide or specifications guide. The presentations were a three hour presentation on Daylighting, and an hour and a half on Rainwater Systems and Solar Hot Water. All presentations earned AIA continuing education credits under the NYSERDA program. To date, the presentations have reached 75 architects and engineers at four firms designing schools in New York: Hunt Engineers (Horseheads, NY), CSArch Associates (Albany, NY), Mosaic Architects (East Greenbush, NY) and William Taylor Architects (Syracuse, NY).

Participants were asked to evaluate the presentations. The three presentations earned a **4.6 out of five** with four being "very good" and five being "excellent". One small firm has changed their entire design process to bring energy modeling and analysis in-house and to integrate this modeling at the schematic design stage. A second firm is promoting daylighting design in all buildings and a third said, "...this is the best seminar we have attended, by far..." NYSERDA is so pleased that we have contracted for four more sessions to be scheduled this next year!

Plan Reviews:

Two firms have submitted plans of buildings in the schematic design stage and Mike has reviewed the plans and then spent two to three hours with the design team showing how the design can be made more effective and save "up front" costs as well as operating costs through increased energy use reduction. At both firms the look on faces as Mike demonstrates "how to" improve their design and incorporate daylighting strategies, is fun to witness. Suddenly, grins come on faces as they finally "get it"! Mike's quiet, professional manner and knowledge of the subject is extraordinary and during plan reviews is when participants receive the full benefit of this program. So much so, that NYSERDA is more interested in scheduling plan reviews than presentations. They realize the plan review translates into direct electricity savings.

Daylighting retrofits in Existing Schools:

Mike was asked to look at daylighting options in existing schools and developed slides and materials demonstrating energy savings from incorporating daylighting strategies into retrofit projects. The results were extremely interesting: daylighting alone had an extremely long

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payback, but daylighting combined with window upgrades, or lighting upgrades, or HVAC upgrades, or a combination, brought the payback down to under ten years. This information is now included in Mike's presentations and available to architects as well.

Innovative Design has exceeded our expectations in all areas: presentations, plan reviews and supporting material. On-site, working with architects, there is none better! I recommend Mike and Innovative Design without hesitation and with the highest praise.

If you would like more information, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Donald W. Fudge
Project Manager
TRC Energy Services
315-529-9807