



A Personal Message from Ken Riead, Senior Editor for DesignCharrette.com:

Thank you for your interest in the DesignCharrette.com website project. Building a website where everyone can collaborate on projects, no matter what their level of experience or knowledge they might have, has been a dream of mine for many years.

In fact, this version of the DesignCharrette.com website is the fifth generation (iteration) that I have diligently worked on. Only recently has software and hardware been robust enough, yet user-friendly enough, to handle the workload that I expect it to encounter. Communication and collaboration programs & systems can use a large amount of bandwidth, especially if they involve video streaming or multiple online participants.

We now live in an age where travel is rapidly becoming a prohibitively expensive option. Even travel by car can get pricey when you encounter gasoline or diesel prices at \$3 or more per gallon. Some experts predict that air travel will soon become a luxury that only the ultra-rich can afford if (when?) jet fuel goes sky-high in price. (Sorry for the pun – I couldn't help it...)

Online communication and collaboration is how most projects will be designed, debated, updated and/or created for the foreseeable future. Assembling an “Integrated Design Team” for projects can be a formidable task since most people don't know how to go about finding specific professionals and/or a team that is well suited for their particular project or situation. Bigger projects have traditionally had budget allocations for employing the help of architectural, engineering and other professional firms. However, small commercial and especially residential-type projects just don't normally have the requisite funds available for engaging expensive professional help.

Therefore, I have long felt that my personal challenge is to build an online community where all types of projects, big or small, can elicit assistance from interested and accessible talent at a reasonable cost. After all, aren't nearly all of us either looking for more work or for more help for the work we have at hand?

So, without further ado, I shall now address my background and give you my contact info, just in case you want more details. Please know that I am very pleased to have you accessing this website and am very interested in getting your comments, suggestions, constructive criticism and so forth.

Personal Background:

For those of you who are old enough to recall the era of Jimmie Carter as President, you might also recall that money was allocated for certain energy programs such as: The

Solar Bank, the formation of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, seed funding for the Solar Energy Research Institute (SERI) and for energy efficiency projects of all kinds, including solar demonstrations. Plus, millions of dollars were allocated toward the weatherization of homes across America.

I became a true solar and energy conservation believer and, once I finished my college education & military obligations, moved to Colorado in 1978 to be in the heart of the action. In short order I was employed by a large electric utility that was heavily involved in energy audits and demand-side customer programs, including a pilot demand-and-energy residential electric rate program using forerunners of today's smart meters. We also offered low-interest loans that could be used for weatherization purposes and also for renewable energy system installations.

I joined a relatively new organization named the "Colorado Thermal Insulation Association" (CTIA) and became a board member. We formed a committee to formulate a set of energy codes, primarily residential, that could be 'codified' by a city interested in becoming an early adopter of energy codes. We were pleased and surprised to see that the City of Denver did, in fact, adopt our residential & small commercial codes and become the first municipality in the nation to have a formalized set of energy codes for these types of buildings.

The Denver Solar Energy Association (DSEA) was just beginning to take root and I was a board member and on the committee that helped organize the first Denver Passive Solar Home Tour. This tour was so successful that it soon became the Colorado Solar Homes Tour. Then, the American Solar Energy Society or ASES adopted the idea and rolled out the National Solar Homes Tour; now known as the National Sustainable Homes Tour. DSEA has since gone defunct and the Colorado Renewable Energy Society or CRES is, in essence, the replacement organization. My how these original Passive Solar tours have grown...

I was both a solar student and an energy conservation instructor for the Red Rocks Solar Program in Golden, Colorado. This solar program was the largest in the USA at that time with over 500 motivated students. As the designated energy conservation instructor I developed curriculum for approximately 20 different courses. One of the subjects I discussed in many of these courses was formation of home energy ratings in California and the idea of an 'Energy Mortgage'. The possibilities seemed endless to this energy crowd and we were unguardedly optimistic about the future.

Again, you older folks might remember what happened at the end of 1980; Ronald Reagan was elected President. As some of his very first 'Executive Orders' as President he removed the solar panels from the White House and also froze the funding for all energy conservation and renewable energy programs across the country. By March of 1981 these funds were officially canceled (rescinded) and most of us energy geeks soon became unemployed. The future for solar training suddenly looked bleak and Red Rocks discontinued their solar training programs.

I decided to move my little family back to my home state, Missouri, so I gave all my course materials to a gentleman named Steve McCarney. Steve utilized this curriculum to help build Colorado Mountain College's Solar Program until, after about 3 years' time, CMC decided to drop the program. Steve then made the decision to take these courses and others he had developed and start a new organization named the "Solar Energy Institute" or SEI. SEI has since become the largest solar training organization in the United States and offers courses in a number of countries and also online.

As you can see, I have been more than fortunate to be in the right place at the right time. But, it actually gets even better:

Once back in the Kansas City area, I sought out other energy folks who had also recently become unemployed. One fellow confided in me that he wanted to start one of the first energy rating providerships outside of California. His name is Ron Hughes and I helped Ron determine how to structure this budding providership so that the mortgage industry would have confidence in the energy usage information that home energy raters or HERS* raters provided to them.

Ron took these ideas and related information that he & I developed and started Energy Rated Homes of Arkansas. Unless you are truly an energy geek this fact would not mean much to you but please bear with me. After a few years Ron was ousted from his position as head of the providership by a political power play and the organization was renamed, "Energy Rated Homes of America" or ERHA. ERHA didn't really gain much traction and became relatively dormant until a fellow named Steve Baden decided to acquire the providership and rename it "RESNET" or the Residential Energy Services Network. RESNET is known as the preeminent residential energy rating organization for the USA and I am proud of my work to help formulate the basic structure that RESNET still uses today.

Another little known factoid is that the basic structure of Energy Rated Homes of Arkansas was used by President George H. W. Bush, Sr. as part of the framework for the Energy Policy Act of 1992 (EPAAct of 1992). This act articulated a national energy policy that included energy conservation measures, much of which was incorporated in the 1993 Model Energy Code. Most people are not aware that the framework for HERS* ratings and Energy Mortgages was actually outlined in the EPAAct of 1992.

At the risk of being boring, I communicated often with Mike Myers in Austin, Texas as he and others were developing the first green program in the USA. This program is considered to be the grand-daddy of green programs and has spawned many other similar green programs. (I was the Residential Green Program Advocate for the US Green Building Council to help rebuild Greensburg, Kansas and am now also helping rebuild Joplin, Missouri from total destruction by tornadoes.)

Those of you who have read thus far are probably thinking that my background is strictly residential in nature. Actually, I have numerous commercial credentials that I will list at the end of this section and have conducted energy studies on a variety of commercial

buildings, including: the Nebraska Furniture Mart in Kansas City, Kansas – (One of the largest single box retail stores in the USA); Cabela’s in KCK – (The first all-electric Cabela’s in the nation); Great Wolfe Lodge in KCK – (The first all-electric lodge in the USA with over 1 million gallons of heated water); and a multitude of other buildings, including many for the military.

I’ll stop with the background info now as I am sure you are worn-out by my blather. What I want to impart with you, if you are still reading this, is that I basically am a neutral party that just wants to promote quality construction, sustainable practices, renewable energy and similar progressive strategies for all types of buildings and projects.

Also, I do not install equipment or represent any type of products except for the DYO – Do Your Own Kits that we offer. In short, as I am now at retirement age I want to assist others in creating the best buildings and related projects possible.

*HERS – Home Energy Rating Systems

RESNET: <http://RESNET.us>

Ken’s Credentials:

Senior Certified Energy Manager
Senior Certified Demand-Side Manager
Certified Sustainable Development Professional

Chartered “Legend in Energy” by the Association of Energy Engineers

Certified Home Energy (HERS) Rater

Certified Energy & Environmental Instructor: Missouri, Kansas & Colorado

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