

How Green Are We?

July 2010

Anthony Sblendorio, Back to Nature, Inc./Ecological Development

Regenerative design pioneer Anthony Sblendorio has been involved in green building and development since 1994, when he founded Back to Nature, Inc., a landscape architecture firm based in Oldwick that specializes in sustainable projects and incorporates techniques that regenerate natural resources. A LEED AP who completed the first LEED Gold project in the Northeast and New Jersey's second LEED project ever, Sblendorio has been honored by the New Jersey Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects, the Perennial Plant Association, the Urban Land Institute Northern New Jersey Chapter, Hunterdon County Planning Board, and the New Jersey State Senate.

Since 2008, he has partnered with Joe Grano, CEO and chairman of Centurion Holdings LLC, and former New York State Gov. George E. Pataki on Ecological Development, a development, master planning, and repositioning company whose purpose is to create higher standards for ecofriendly design and development. Current Ecological clients include Cushman & Wakefield, Colliers International, and several marquee building owners.

Commercial landlords, says Sblendorio, are "getting pressure from various stakeholders," including tenants who are "demanding sustainability in their buildings." He believes the next wave of sustainable development will be "eco-agro residential communities." Ecological is "repurposing fully approved, conventional cookie-cutter McMansion developments that haven't been built," he says. "We're designing smaller, ecologically inspired homes" in order to "cluster the density and...grow organic food, preserve open space, and incorporate environmental education." So far, he says, communities like his ideas. "Just imagine that eco/agro communities are what golf course communities were in the '80s—that's where development is going."—SP

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