

Alumni Turns His Knowledge of Real Estate and Sustainability into Greenbacks



Michael Wallenstein

Michael Wallenstein grew up in the construction industry and has always been fascinated by buildings and their construction. This interest led him to attend the Franklin L. Burns School of Real Estate and Construction Management at the University of Denver

as both an undergraduate and graduate student. “It was this program that made me more aware of, and altered my focus to be on, sustainability” he said. “Taking such courses as the Residential Practicum and the LEED course, in which I became a LEED AP, made me realize that I wanted to pursue a career in sustainable development.”

Michael graduated from DU with an MS in real estate and construction as the recession was starting. After coming to the realization that jobs were scarce and that there were not many entry-level jobs available in sustainable development, he began to brainstorm and think outside of the box. He researched the industry and came across the idea of tax credits. With his knowledge, resources available and insight gained from completing the Burns School program, Wallenstein felt that he had the ability to pursue this opportunity. After proposing his idea to a multitude of professionals and conducting a feasibility analysis, he became an entrepreneur and formed a business. His goal was to structure a business based on ethics, character and quality, while reducing energy usage and saving the consumer money. With his new company, Sustainable Improvements, he became an energy efficiency and rebate consultant with the goal of helping people to live healthier.

Sustainable Improvements states as its purpose that it “details the best-practiced guidelines for developers, contractors, homeowners or designers who seek to incorporate energy-efficient building methods into a new or existing structure.”

Whether it is residential or commercial, existing or new builds, fixtures or appliances, they can help to make sure that the appropriate measures are taken for obtaining the tax credits and rebates needed to make a property “greener” and more sustainable. Sustainable Improvements supports energy efficiency as a cost-effective energy resource under existing market conditions and advocates energy-efficient policies that minimize costs to society and individual consumers. These procedures lessen greenhouse gas emissions and their impact on the global climate. Sustainable Improvements offers eco-friendly alternatives in a vast selection of areas including high-efficiency toilets, insulation, HVAC, water heaters, windows, roofing, solar, geothermal and many more.

In addition to federal tax incentives, some consumers will also be eligible for utility or state rebates, as well as state tax incentives for energy-efficient buildings. The rebate program will help offset the cost premium that is often associated with building an energy-efficient structure and purchasing appliances or fixtures.

As his business grows, Michael feels he has made the right decision, at the right time, and is also making the best use of his resources and his education.

For more information about his company, visit www.sustainableimprovements.org.