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Quarra Helps to Build Green

MADISON, WI – Quarra Stone—the Madison, WI, company that supplies and fabricates natural stone for signature architectural and restoration projects throughout the country— has launched a comprehensive database that identifies dimensional stone quarries throughout the United States, Canada and Mexico.

The database is designed to enable architects who are specifying natural stone in their projects to earn points toward LEED® (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification. Current guidelines call for the award of one point toward LEED certification for builders who use dimensional stone that is quarried within 500 miles of construction.

"The use of natural stone in buildings is one of the most interesting options in sustainable design today—nature has given us a material that has embodied energy of the highest level," says Dr. George Skarmeas, AIA, AICP, principal director of preservation architecture, RMJM, an international architectural practice with offices worldwide. "For us as designers, knowing how we can access natural stone within the guidelines of sound sustainable principles and best practices is an important tool and a valuable resource that Quarra's new data base is engineered to provide."

According to James Durham, president of Quarra Stone, taking a lead in providing the building industry with strategic resources to help stimulate measurable environmental benefits is a natural for his company:

"We specialize in natural stone—an inherently Earth friendly building product," notes Durham. "Quarra has a deep commitment to the goals of sustainability and we are excited to be on the leading edge of providing our customers the services and resources they need to help them create environmentally sensitive architecture."

To create the quarry database, Durham engaged a task force of business school interns who worked on the initiative in consultation with LEED accredited professionals. During this project, the team also worked with the Deutsche Naturstein-Archiv—the world's largest collection of dimensional stone samples—to help them increase the size and scope of their North American collection.

More than 500 quarries in the United States, Canada and Mexico were identified for inclusion in the inventory which is slated to be updated quarterly. Quarra also established a "library" of samples from each quarry as well as accompanying data, photo images and product descriptions.

The new database will initially be made available exclusively to Quarra's current clients and prospective clients who are specifying stone for major building projects. A Quarra team member will be assigned to help guide the data retrieval process and work closely with customers to strategically utilize the database in combination with Quarra's other resources to help identify a range of appropriate LEED-qualified stone selections for interior or exterior application.

Created by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) in 1993, LEED is a nationally accepted certification program for the design, construction and operation of high-performance, sustainable "green" buildings. To earn certification, projects must be awarded credits in six categories: sustainable sites, water efficiency, energy and atmosphere, materials and resources, indoor environmental quality, and innovation in the design process. Go to www.usgbc.org to learn more.

Headquartered in Madison, WI, Quarra Stone fabricates and supplies architectural and interior stone for signature building projects throughout the United States in collaboration with many of the country's leading institutions and premier architectural teams on some of America's most prominent architectural landmarks and new award-winning architecture. For more information, call (608) 246-8803 or visit www.quarrastone.com.

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