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Interview with Steven Ribeiro, Aldeia Development, 2011 (audio)

Steven Ribeiro

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Noah Sharpsteen
3/8/2011
Interview Index
Documenting Sustainable Practices

John Stephenson
Steven Ribeiro – Aldea Development – Feb 18 2011-03-05
Salem, OR – Broadway Coffee House
Part 1

- 0:34 - How long have you lived in Salem?
 - Independence in 1998
 - Boise in 2000
 - Salem in 2003-present
- 1:11 -What brought you back to Oregon?
 - It is beautiful here – couldn't live anywhere else
- 1:24 - Where were you educated and in what field?
 - Associates degree from Pasadena College, Southern CA
 - Self-educated (graduate from Google U)
- 1:48 – How did you get involved in the work that you are doing?
 - Third generation real estate developer.
 - Real estate development with father
 - Professor Sherry McKibben(?) architect – University of Idaho.
 - Book – Suburban Nation.
 - Developed a lot across the street from City Hall – Independence Station.
- 4:33 – Talked before about your interest in Earth Stewardship – what does this mean to you personally?
 - Met a pastor (Tri Robinson),
 - Belief that there is a creator – our job to be good stewards of that and leave things better for our children and grandchildren
 - Economy built on oil – need to find a better way
 - Consuming oil too fast
 - Need to save it for more important things
 - Oil vs. alternatives for fertilizer
- 9:22 – How would you define sustainability?
 - Leaving things in better shape than when we got here. We can't be doing something that can't be replaced.
- 10:10 – How do you assess or gauge progress toward sustainability?

- Give it a test – is it taking care of people? Is it not taking resources that are finite? Is it making things better? It's pretty simple.
- 10:55 - You seem to have a sense of unity among the local community at the forefront among your ambitions – you talk about building relationships in the community. Why is community so important?
 - Quality of life
 - Family traditions, family structure, social networks, creating a place to live where you don't take a slice out of society and put them all in one place.
 - People tend to congregate with their own income group. Kids grow up and all they know is people like themselves.
 - Example of why lowering costs leads to not knowing neighbors
 - Contact with elderly is important
- 15:03 – So there is definitely a disconnection with the way conventional building is in neighborhoods?
 - Yeah. Youtube video – depression cooking with Clara – 94 yr old lady – all recipes from the depression era – Dandelion Salad.
 - Stories about relationships, economy, etc.
 - Connections with people from the depression (history) are important.

Part 2

- 00:15 – Sustainable practices do not always have an immediate or noticeable effect that can be observed by the general public. How has this characteristic of our culture affected your work?
 - Main challenge.
 - Synergy
- 01:43 – What has your experience been like educating people about that we can actually have better lifestyles using much less energy?
 - Creating awareness
 - 2000 Watt Society
 - Personal plan
 - The problem is to get people to care.
- 07:20 – You're set to be the example – the giant whose shoulders we can stand on, if you will?
 - At least be an example that is possible today. The ultimate plan is to document the performance, publish it, then license the building plans, and have someone recreate this building at a fraction of the cost.
- 8:09 – Talking from a business standpoint, we've seen a paradigm shift from the industrial revolution to the warehouse revolution now to the e-revolution. In your experience, how have other firms fared for firms that haven't adopted sustainable practices?

- Borders
- It's easy to take an old form of commerce and put it into the new form.
- Re-using local materials.
- Using a marine engine to harvest excess heat.
- Huge waste of energy in cars.
- 11:45 – So we don't need to stop certain practices, we can just do them in a different way and be more resourceful about it?
 - Yeah. Buses as an example.
- 13:10 – Tugboat engine, air-conditioning techniques, etc. – you are still keeping the local electrical company (Pacific Power) involved?
 - Yes, but Independent Station is designed to be possible to use without the grid.
 - Running without the grid.
 - Helping to solve the problem.
 - Further electricity solutions/innovations.
 - Smart-Grid and Micro-Grid
 - Celebrity Hypocrisy
- 19:17 – Talking about changing wasteful habits, it seems necessary to raise the awareness of bad habits. How has it been like educating about this?
 - Most people are just not aware – they are innocent.
 - Little things
 - Teaching to children
 - Occupancy sensors for lights, air circulation changes
 - Energy Dashboard (e.g. in a Prius) for awareness and anticipation
 - Hyper-miling
 - Energy Dashboard in a house
 - 15-20% Difference when aware
 - Conservation before new technology
- 23:10 – Do those types of devices pay for themselves? and are available?
 - Yeah definitely.
- 24:35 – What are some of your proudest achievements?
 - Potentially getting projects done
 - Starting a Time-bank
 - Gardens (victorygardensmv.com)
 - Zero-Net Food
 - Aquaponics (aquaponics.com)
 - Farmer's Markets based on these methods
 - Ideas to lower housing costs by using all of the methods above
- 35:35 - How do you select people that want to get involved?
 - Contact me, we'd be happy to do it.
 - Allegiant Airport (Eugene, OR) is in-expensive

- 36:42 – Where in California?
 - Very close to UC Riverside
 - Student involvement
 - Innovation of solar powered clothes dryer
 - Designing energy storage vault to heat homes
- 40:00 – 51:44 – Further notes (programs and brainstorming)
 - All information is open-sourced
 - Looking for education partnerships
 - Time-Bank is the anchor
 - Design collaboration (independent)
 - Think-tank Thursdays
 - Long-term educational model
 - Using old diesel engines with odd fuel sources to heat
 - Play-Pumps
 - “Tunneling through the costs”
 - Polished Concrete to reflect light
 - Permeable Pavement
 - Assessed with Impact Development Charges
 - Etc.
- 51:45 - Contact information
 - steven@worldsgreenestbuilding.com