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2015 Edition of *Tile: The Natural Choice*, a Must-Have for Construction Professionals Involved in Sustainable Practices and Sustainable Product Selection

Tile Council of North America (TCNA) has greatly expanded its annual sustainability publication, *Tile: The Natural Choice*, to include invaluable information concerning sustainable construction, especially with regard to the use of ceramic tile compared to other finish materials. Once a 4-page brochure to communicate ceramic tile's wide range of attributes, the publication is now a more-than-40-page booklet full of sustainability information focused on ceramic tile and what's important to architectural and design professionals today.

Unveiled at Coverings 2015, it now includes reader-friendly guides to the credits and points applicable to ceramic tile in today's green building standards and rating systems.

"This is a one stop shop," says TCNA Executive Director Eric Astrachan. "Consolidated in this fashion, this information is not available elsewhere and reflects hundreds of hours participating in green building standards meetings and digesting criteria across multiple green-building platforms. We are extremely pleased to give the A and D community the information they need and in a format they can easily use."

For those seeking to achieve LEED building certification, a 16-page "Guide to LEED v4 and Tile" within the *Natural Choice* booklet will help building design professionals meet that goal. Organized and color-coded by LEED credit category, this guide outlines the many ways that ceramic tile can contribute to earning LEED points, calling out the specific sections and options within each LEED credit category pertaining to ways that ceramic tile can be used to earn LEED points.

Another 18 pages of *Tile: The Natural Choice* are dedicated to detailing the compliance pathways in various green construction standards and rating systems that can be met by specifying ceramic tile made in North America, because North American-made ceramic tile has an Environmental Product Declaration (EPD). "Every major green building program today recognizes products with EPDs," says Bill Griese, TCNA's Director of Standards Development and Sustainability Initiatives. Some systems simply reward the transparency that comes with having an EPD by allocating points or credits for using products with EPDs, he says, while others require the use of products with lower environmental impacts, as evidenced by its EPD.

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“With either approach,” says Griese, “using North American-made tile is beneficial. Not only does the EPD exist, it shows that North American-made ceramic tile has the lowest impact in the most significant environmental impact categories.”

Within the *Natural Choice* booklet, the “Guide to the EPD for Ceramic Tile Made in North America” illustrates specifically how North American-made tile can be beneficial when specifying to LEED, Green Globes, and the International Green Construction Code (IgCC), among others. It also provides the EPD results in the most important environmental impact categories, like global warming and smog formation, showing also how North American-made ceramic tile stacks up against other flooring types with EPDs. According to Astrachan, “the EPD for North American ceramic tile is another example of the commitment to sustainability and #TotalTransparency coming from North American ceramic tile producers.”

The 2015 edition of *Tile: The Natural Choice* also contains a quick-reference chart that points to a vast array of other credits and compliance parameters that can be met by using ceramic tile. For example, by referencing the chart, a building design professional specifying to IgCC can quickly see that ceramic tile can contribute under sections of that standard relating to the use of indigenous materials, recycled materials, and materials that reduce heat island effect.

Tile: The Natural Choice additionally contains information about Green Squared®, the tile industry’s multi-attribute sustainability standard for tile and all the associated products needed to install it, and information on ceramic tile as compared to other flooring options in terms of life-cycle cost per square foot.

“Based on the overwhelming demand for this type of information,” says Astrachan, “we expect to continue to expand this reference piece and to continually update it to reflect changes to green construction programs over time. This is exactly what our Green Initiative is all about.”

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