

Wall Street Journal correspondent Frances Robinson marveled at the Alliance to Save Energy and League of Green Embassies partnership that transformed the 230-year-old, historic U.S. Ambassador's Residence in Brussels into an energy efficient, high-performance home. Ms. Robinson attributed much of the success to the League's Chair and framed it rather uniquely as "thanks to the larger-than-life presence of its leader: shaven-headed, earring-sporting, former bodybuilding champion **Bruce J. Oreck**."

Oreck is currently U.S. Ambassador to Finland where, your correspondent suspects, he wrestles bears in his spare time." While not actually wrestling bears, those skills came in handy to move firmly established bureaucracies from reliance on incumbent products of the past towards products that provide better performance, utilize resources more conservatively and save the operator money. The Ambassador is applying his considerable knowledge and passion to tackle one of our biggest challenges; energy efficiencies in the built-environment. Often this is a test of wills reflecting the Ambassador's steadfast commitment that solutions are not about sacrifice, but rather about doing more, for less cost. Bruce Oreck's commitment certainly predates his role as U.S. Ambassador and reflects decades of experience as a developer and a restorer of historic buildings culminating in his founding of the Zero Carbon Initiative.

For the Ambassador, energy efficiency in the built-environment is just part of his role illustrating our new relationship with energy, which defines where and how we live, as well as how we manufacture and transport goods and people. This new relationship defines the very competitiveness of our economy.

Embassy Helsinki took over the League of Green Embassies in 2010 and the Ambassador immediately began to grow the League from a State Department effort sharing best practices among the twenty or so members to an active global conversation with just shy of ninety U.S. Embassies. He inspired his fellow Ambassadors to be out front in talking about U.S. leadership in high-performance, energy efficient buildings. At the same time, he inspired U.S. companies to illustrate and sell their products in this global market by using the Embassies as showcases for their products to the vast marketplace that exists beyond the collective fences of our Embassies. He also opened the door to non-U.S. Embassies telling their Ambassadors that our challenge is global and so too must be the solutions and leadership.

The work is far from finished and Brussels was not a one-off exercise. ASE and the League, in the largest public-private partnership ever undertaken in this space, committed to energy makeovers in ten Ambassadors' Residences across Europe, including Berlin, two in Vienna, Bratislava, Sofia Rome, Warsaw Bern, Madrid, and Lisbon. The last American official that moved across Europe with this speed was Patton.

One might be tempted to ask, "to what end?" A fair question and the results are clear. Participating U.S. Embassies pay less for electricity because they are more efficient. We lowered cooling requirements using nanotechnology, reduced our heating costs and re-lighted the residences and chanceries with long-lasting LED bulbs. We are better stewards of the taxpayers' money and the earth's resources. At the same time, we helped U.S. companies to advance their interests by telling their stories globally.

The Ambassador constantly engages in the energy efficiency conversation, tirelessly managing his staggering travel and speaking commitments. This activity ranges from remarks across Europe and in the U.S., to keynoting significant events such as EE Global, GreenBuild and Lightfair International as well as contributing his vision of our new relationship with energy with interested beneficiaries, including a recent trip to Afghanistan with the NATO Supreme Commander focusing on energy. Ambassador Oreck has led this noble, herculean effort bringing about positive change using his own brand of diplomacy; one that touches, inspires and motivates each of us. The staff of Embassy Helsinki proudly nominates Ambassador Bruce Oreck for the Charles Percy Award for Public Service.