



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Pepper Construction Promotes Susan Heinking to Chief Sustainability Officer

*New role underscores the firm's commitment to Sustainable and
High Performance Construction*

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS – January 15, 2026 – Pepper Construction Group today announced the promotion of Susan Heinking, FAIA and LEED Fellow, to Chief Sustainability Officer. In this new role, Susan will lead the company's vision for transforming tomorrow by advancing sustainable practices across all markets and regions, helping clients realize healthier, more resilient buildings and communities.

Susan joined Pepper in 2015 and has been a driving force behind the company's high performance and sustainability initiatives. She and her team have played a key role in delivering some of the nation's most progressive projects including the world's first LEED v4 data center and Pepper's own Net Zero Energy Office in Cincinnati. Her leadership has helped shape Pepper's approach to integrating sustainability into every phase of construction from early planning to project delivery and beyond.

"Susan's passion for sustainability and her ability to connect technical expertise with real-world impact have made her a trusted advisor to our clients and teammates," said Chris Averill, CEO of Pepper Construction Group. "Her vision and collaborative spirit are essential as we continue to push the boundaries of what's possible in the built world."

A nationally recognized thought leader, Susan is a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects and a LEED Fellow with more than 20 years of experience in sustainable design and construction. She has served on the USGBC's LEED Steering Committee and the AIA's Committee on the Environment, and she is a frequent speaker on topics ranging from embodied carbon to healthy materials.

In her new role, Susan will oversee Pepper's sustainability strategy, working closely with project teams, clients and industry partners to deliver buildings that are healthier, more efficient and better for the environment. She will also continue to champion Pepper's commitment to research, education and advocacy, ensuring that sustainability remains at the core of the company's mission.

Susan is an active advocate for sustainability in Chicago and other regional markets. She has initiated and participated in many influential projects and groups, such as Chicago's Energy Benchmarking Ordinance, the AIA2030 Chicago Working Group, Chicago's AIA COTE, RETROFIT Chicago, the Chicago Biomimicry Group, the Illinois Green Alliance Board of Directors and the Associated General Contractors of America Environmental Steering Committee.

Currently, she serves on the Illinois Energy Conservation Advisory Council, where she uses her technical expertise in commercial buildings to advocate for energy efficiency to develop a new stretch energy code for the State. She also serves on the board of Turning Point, an organization that supports domestic violence survivors in McHenry County.

Susan holds a Master of Architecture degree from the University of Oregon and is a frequent speaker at national sustainable conventions.

About Pepper

Now in their fourth generation of family leadership, Pepper Construction serves clients across the country with comprehensive teams in Illinois, Indiana, Ohio and Wisconsin. Ranked by ENR (Engineering News Report) magazine as one of the top builders of sustainable projects in the nation, Pepper serves clients in a variety of markets such as aerospace, healthcare, science and technology, education, manufacturing and industrial, data centers, entertainment, hospitality and interiors, among others. Pepper's High Performance and Sustainable Construction group is part of their Integrated Construction Services (ICS) team, which represents some of the most advanced thought leadership in our industry — investigating new technologies, evaluating new methodologies and integrating innovative solutions in the field. For more information, please visit www.pepperconstruction.com.

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