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Architect, Futurist, and Sustainability Guru Authors Call to Action Veteran of Community Reinventions Sees Progress

Thirty years ago the White House recognized young architect and economist Bill Asti for designing the first Third Wave, sustainable “community of the future.” For the three decades since, Asti has been a leader among architects and urban planners for his visionary designs and for helping to answer the important questions about the types of communities our grandchildren and great-grandchildren will inhabit. Now recognized as a sustainability pioneer among his peers coast-to-coast, Asti has collected his ideas into a new book, *The Chicken Came First: a primer for renewing and sustaining our communities*.

“Over generations,” Asti says, “time-honored beliefs develop. The institutions that have served us for so long are there because . . . they are there. In most cases, they were there before we were born, and even before our grandparents were born. We become the slaves to these institutions rather than the other way around.” He goes on to say, “For purposes of this book, eggs are . . . concepts, and institutions, and businesses, and governments, and laws, and all the things that surround us and their effects on our lives. We humans are the chickens. The chickens came first . . . we came first. We are the ones that create the concepts and the institutions. We are the ones that create the businesses and governments and the multitudes of laws. We’re the ones in charge. We’re the grown-ups.”

He notes that we have the ability to shape our future by understanding that we create the institutions that surround us, and can change them or create new ones which are functional for our world today.

Asti’s book is not more political talk and dreams of what can be . . . it is what’s being done. It is a compelling vision of a post-industrial world by a visionary architect, and is both a review of sustainability movements and thinkers who have brought us to the current point and a vision of where we can go from here.

Bill Asti gives concrete examples as to how diverse groups are able to work together to accomplish the common goal of creating sustainable communities. He also helps us to better understand how the post-industrial economy will change our built environment for generations to come; changes brought on by the need for greater efficiency in the built environment and changes necessitated by the rise of heightened levels of competition in a global economy.

“Where can we go in the Twenty-First Century?” Asti asks, “Wherever we go, we will succeed if we remember *The Chicken Came First*.”

William Henry Asti, AIA, a native of Miami, Florida, studied architecture under Frank Lloyd Wright protégé Fay Jones at the University of Arkansas. As an architect and economist and as an advocate for sustainability in buildings, communities, and public policies, Asti has worked on projects on four continents, including projects in twelve states and the District of Columbia. He has worked on corporate headquarters, university and school buildings, hospitals and clinics, casinos, prisons, private residences, entertainment and broadcast projects as well as large scale community development projects; to include the project which is the focus of his book, a redevelopment model which is currently being implemented in the neighborhood made famous by the 1957 integration crisis at Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas.

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