

Discovery Center receives LEED Gold status

By Dee Dee Nilsen - 4/16/2007

Springfield Business Journal Staff

The Discovery Center in downtown Springfield has received Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design Gold certification for its recent addition and renovations.

The nonprofit interactive science center's new building is the first in southwest Missouri to become LEED Gold certified, according to Marketing Director Charlotte McCoy. In a \$6 million renovation and addition, completed late last year, the center took steps from the beginning to make the building as environmentally responsible as possible, she said.

"Green's not just a color anymore," McCoy said of the certification.

To be LEED certified, a building must score well in five areas: sustainability, water efficiency, energy and atmosphere, materials and resources, and indoor environmental quality. The Discovery Center added categories in innovation in design, green-building education and green housekeeping – and scored well in those, as well, McCoy said.

Platinum is the highest level of certification, followed by gold, silver and certified levels.

Aside from being built with environmentally friendly materials, the new building collects rainwater and has large windows and photovoltaic solar panels to light and heat the inside. It also was constructed in a particular shape that lets light in but shades the windows to regulate indoor heating.

The team of project contractors comprised DeWitt Associates, general contractor; Environmental Market Solutions Inc., sustainable design and LEED consultant; H Design Group, architect; Malone Finkle Eckhart & Collins, mechanical, electrical and plumbing; and Mettemeyer Engineering, structural.

The benefits to being LEED certified are many, McCoy said, especially for an organization that works directly with the public.

"We're the service, by providing it to the public to say, 'Hey, learn this stuff, and take it home and do it yourself,'" she said, adding that she's fielded numerous inquiries from other businesses wanting to incorporate green techniques at their facilities.

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