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Contact: Holly Childs
Executive Director, GBA
(412) 431-0709
hollyc@gbapgh.org

Green Building Alliance Offices Receive LEED Platinum Rating, the Highest Possible

PITTSBURGH, PA (June 12, 2009) – Green Building Alliance’s (GBA) 3,850-square-foot office space in the South Side neighborhood of Pittsburgh, PA, has been awarded Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED®) Platinum certification from the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC).

Located in the historic River Walk Corporate Centre, GBA’s offices were designed and constructed in 2008 as a model of resource and material efficiency, as well as a green building teaching tool and demonstration project. They serve as an example of how old industrial buildings can be converted into environmentally friendly spaces, and are the first project in Western Pennsylvania to receive USGBC’s highest rating. GBA is also the first USGBC chapter or affiliate to achieve LEED certification for its offices.

“The USGBC’s vital work toward market transformation would not be possible without the dedicated grassroots commitment of our regional chapters and affiliates,” said Rick Fedrizzi, USGBC’s president, CEO, and founding chair. “It is extremely gratifying to see such an affiliate—the Green Building Alliance—achieve the exemplary success of LEED Platinum certification for its offices. This remarkable project will stand as an example and will greatly benefit the Western Pennsylvania community, while also helping us heal our planet’s environment and economy.”

The LEED Green Building Rating System™ is the nationally accepted benchmark for the design, construction and operation of high-performance green buildings. There are four levels of building certification under the LEED system: Certified, Silver, Gold and Platinum. GBA’s space was awarded 75% of the total points available under the LEED for Commercial Interiors program.

(more)

RIVER WALK CORPORATE CENTRE
333 EAST CARSON STREET, SUITE 331
PITTSBURGH, PA 15219
WWW.GBAPGH.ORG

“I am thrilled to be part of an organization that not only strives to make this region a beacon of green building best practices, but that also continues to push the boundaries of what we can accomplish in the green building arena,” said Holly Childs, GBA’s executive director. “It is critical that we continue to devise ways to build, renovate, operate and maintain buildings in a more economically, environmentally and socially beneficial manner.”

Many of the original building components in GBA’s offices were retained, including leaded glass windows and brick walls. Wood floors in the two enclosed office spaces were salvaged from the renovation of Vincentian Convent in Pittsburgh and reused. The HVAC system is a model of high efficiency, maximizing fresh air flow to contribute to an optimal indoor environment that, combined with the use of materials that do not off-gas volatile organic compounds, creates a space that is both comfortable and healthy. GBA’s offices use 22% less energy than conventionally constructed office space, and all appliances and fixtures have high efficiencies. Forty percent less water is used as a result of low flow fixtures, including toilets, showers and faucets.

Nearly all furnishings in the offices are reused, salvaged or refurbished. New materials employed in the project include a number of products made by local manufacturers, as well as some made from recycled materials and rapidly renewable materials such as bamboo. Additionally, 99.9% of construction waste generated by the project was diverted from a landfill by reusing materials on-site, recycling and donating items to Construction Junction, which is Pittsburgh’s building material reuse retailer.

“What impressed me most about this project were the team members and their attitudes,” said Michael Kuhn, project executive, vice president, Jendoco Construction Corporation. “The goal was to create an energy-efficient, highly sustainable, healthy space, not a ‘LEED Platinum’ space. It was clear that our team was not going to chase points where they were inappropriate for the sake of earning a certain level of certification. Difficult decisions had to be made regarding systems, budgets, and schedules--just like on all other projects--but because of the depth of knowledge, experience and creativity represented on the team, strategies were developed that allowed the project to be a success. The end result is a great and fitting achievement for the Green Building Alliance, an organization that has always been a leader in sustainable building initiatives both regionally and nationally.”

In Western Pennsylvania, there are more than 55 LEED-certified projects—and another 130 projects that are registered as pursuing LEED certification.

About GBA

Green Building Alliance is a nonprofit organization that advances economic prosperity and human wellbeing in Western Pennsylvania by driving market demand for green buildings and green building products across every aspect of the built environment.