

Operations Center Buildings Earn LEED Gold Certification

The two 150,000-square-foot office buildings recently completed in the first phase of the County Operations Center and Annex redevelopment in Kearny Mesa have earned Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design Gold certification by the U.S. Green Building Council.

The four-story buildings, developed by **Lowe Enterprises** on behalf of the county, incorporate the latest in sustainable design, construction practices and building materials. The buildings are managed using sustainable practices that reduce environmental effects and also reduce daily operations costs. Approximately 1,100 employees from nine county departments have relocated to the new buildings since they were completed in fall 2010.

“Creating a sustainable building is not only better for the physical environment, but it also creates a better work environment,” said **Mike McNerney**, senior vice president at Lowe Enterprises Real Estate Group. “Earning LEED Gold is the result of the county staff and everyone on the project team working together to bring sustainable aspects to the campus.”

The County Operations Center buildings’ sustainable design incorporates a variety of energy-efficient, green building technologies. Abundant windows allow for natural light, while energy-efficient roofing and glazing systems reduce heat gain. The new office buildings use 28 percent less energy compared to a building designed to only meet California’s minimum energy performance requirements and consume 40

percent less water by using high-efficiency plumbing fixtures rather than conventional devices. A **San Diego Gas & Electric Co.** solar electric system, hosted on Parking Structure A, supplies the electrical grid with an estimated 627,216 kilowatt-hour per year of clean energy, enough to supply 103 average single-family homes in San Diego County.

Landscaping features drought-tolerant plants and an irrigation system that has provided a 50 percent reduction in irrigation water usage. Other building systems allow for internal water consumption to be reduced by 40 percent. In addition, the project recycled 90 percent of its construction debris.

The 38-acre County Operations Center, located on Overland Avenue, is being developed by Lowe in three phases. The second phase of development, including two additional 150,000-square-foot office buildings and a 15,000-square-foot conference center and a cafeteria, is currently under way. When completed, the new campus is expected to include 900,000 square feet of modern, efficient office space, built to LEED Gold certification standards, along with two multi-level parking structures.

The project team also includes **RJC Architects**, **Roel Construction Inc.**, **Howard Wright Construction** and **Arciero Bros. Construction with Project Management Advisors** and the county of San Diego Department of General Services overseeing the project on behalf of the county Board of Supervisors.



Photos courtesy of Lowe Enterprises

Sustainable design, construction practices and building materials incorporated in the County Operations Center and Annex redevelopment helped the first phase of the project achieve a Gold LEED certification from the U.S. Green Building Council.