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U.S. Green Building Council awards LEED Platinum Certification of new headquarters

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According to the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) its new headquarters has been awarded Platinum certification, making it one of the first projects to certify under the latest version of the LEED green building rating system. The Council, which moved into its new office in March 2009, outgrew its previous space as a result of the explosive growth it experienced over the last few years. More than 35,000 projects are currently participating in the LEED system, comprising over 5.6 billion s/f of construction space in all 50 states and 91 countries. The new office space triples the size of its previous space, reflective of the green building industry itself, which is projected to soar to \$60 billion by 2010.

"The vision of the space was to exemplify everything a LEED building is: high-performing, resource-efficient, healthy and productive," said Rick Fedrizzi, president, CEO & founding chair, USGBC. "Using the newest version of the rating system renders our space on the cutting edge of building science and technology, and will serve as an educational learning lab and highly representative of a transforming building market."

The 75,000 s/f office, divided between two floors, is connected by an open staircase in the lobby, behind which is one of the space's most prominent design features: a two-story tall water feature, which helps bring the outdoors inside the space. The elevator lobby, reception and conference breakout areas are clad in 500-year-old gumwood that was salvaged from the bottom of the Tennessee River. Carved into a two-story section of the gumwood paneling is an off-centered relief of the USGBC logo that clearly brands the space.

Aggressive water and energy reduction goals were set to reduce water use by 40% and energy use to be less than half that of a typical office. A dashboard system was implemented to provide real-time feedback on energy use. Floor to ceiling glass windows provide abundant daylighting to any workstation in the office, while the electronic window shade system maximizes natural light while minimizing glare. These and other design integrations helped USGBC achieve 36 out of 37 points in the Energy and Atmosphere category of the rating system.

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