

Firms see green:

San Bernardino area buildings aim to be Earth-friendly

San Bernardino Sun

July 27, 2008

By Sandra Emerson

Local businesses are joining in on the "green" craze by implementing energy efficient and environment-friendly technologies at their facilities.

With support from San Bernardino County and the U.S. Green Building Council, businesses can take advantage of making the transition from traditional energy sources to more efficient ones.

"In the past incorporating sustainable features in buildings has always involved an incredible amount of cost," said Jim Strodbeck, redevelopment director for Ontario. "As energy prices increase and as more and more corporations and businesses adopt sustainable policies, we see a demand for green features."

Saving money has been a major factor in the decision to rethink energy usage, according to Bonnie Montoya-May, chairwoman of the Inland Empire chapter of the Green Building Council.

"Businesses are going to save some money in the long run," said May. "The energy and water bills will also be lower."

Through the council, buildings can become Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design certified and gain a title of certified, silver, gold or platinum by using solar modules, greywater irrigation, placing timers on outlets and other Earth-friendly technologies.

The Ontario Airport Towers, which should be completed in August, is being built to LEED silver certification standards. The certification of the Ontario Airport Towers will be based on the exterior shell of the building, the lobby and the elevator.

"This is a core and shell speculative office building," said Peter Vanderburg of PGP Partners in Lake Forrest. "There are no interiors. We will submit the information to the USGBC for core and shell LEED certification."

Certification does not include future tenants, but once tenants move in, guidelines on how to keep the office space sustainable will be offered, according to Jake Smith, manager of PGP.

During construction, a waste management plan required half of the waste materials to be reused. Fifty percent of the wood came from a sustainable forest and other recycled materials were used.

"In the long term you will have a building that is more efficient," said Smith. "It's operating costs should be cheaper than a typical building."

The request for LEED certification will be submitted once the entire building is completed.

The Corona Summit Corporate Center is another business park in the Inland Empire waiting for LEED certification. The center consists of two three-story buildings and one six-story building.

"We wanted to design the buildings to be environmentally friendly," said Taylor Ing, senior vice president of CB Richard Ellis in Ontario. "We wanted to be part of the solution and not part of the problem."

According to Ing, the buildings will have dual pane windows and a climate controlled docking and storage facility to bring down the cost of air conditioning.

On a broader scale, the newly formed Green Valley Initiative is an organization that encourages Inland Empire businesses to implement green technologies as a means of strengthening the local economy.

"The GVI project focuses on bringing the two counties together to focus on economic development, green technology, energy efficiency and the environmental sciences," said Daniel Cozad, project director for the initiative. "A major reason to do all of that is to bring and increase local jobs so people are not on the freeways as much creating fossil fuels."

According to a recent news release, 17 public agencies in the San Bernardino and Riverside counties region have formally endorsed the organization.

"The only setback is that it takes a lot of coordination," said Cozad. "In order to get the benefits we have to build on neighboring cities efficiently and work close together to get the value out of it.

"It takes a little extra time, but the payback is huge."

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Publication: San Bernardino Sun