



Central Texas - Balcones Chapter

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact:

Jane Baxter Lynn

jbaxterlynn@usgbc-centraltexas.org

512-470-9923

GREENING THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT IN CENTRAL TEXAS IS A REALITY:

NUMBER OF LEED® CERTIFIED BUILDINGS IN THE REGION DOUBLES IN TWO YEARS

Biggest wave is yet to come with more than 400 green buildings currently in planning or construction

San Antonio/Austin, TEXAS – (April 21, 2010) – According to the Central Texas – Balcones (CT-B) Chapter of the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) the number of LEED certified high performance buildings in Central Texas has more than doubled in two years, from 24 in 2008 to 62 in the first quarter of 2010, marking a more than 60 percent increase. Since September 2009 alone, 18 buildings have been certified in the 55-county region.

“This number highlights the increasing move toward green building practices, particularly in the major centers of Austin, San Antonio and Waco,” said James Andrews, 2010 chairman of the USGBC CT-B board of directors. “It appears to reflect growing recognition by owners, operators, contractors and the community at large of the return on investment, both financially and environmentally, that green building and sustainable development bring to a region.”

According to the USGBC CT-B Chapter there are also more than 400 projects in the Central Texas region currently LEED registered, an increase of more than 30 percent in the past year. LEED registered projects are in the planning or construction phase and pursuing LEED certification.

“The fact that this growth in green building is occurring during an economic downturn, indicates both that green building has become main stream, and that owners and developers are seeing it as a way to compete in the new marketplace,” Andrews added.

Buildings in the United States are responsible for 72 percent of electricity consumption, 38 percent of carbon emissions, 39 percent of energy consumption and 14 percent of water consumption. LEED® is a third-party certification program and the nationally accepted benchmark for the design, construction and operation of high performance green buildings. By using less energy, LEED-certified buildings save money for families, businesses and taxpayers; reduce greenhouse gas emissions; and contribute to a healthier environment for residents, workers and the larger community.

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Austin

LEED certified buildings can be found throughout the Austin area. There are currently 43 LEED certified green buildings in the Greater Austin area, with more than 190 registered. In Austin the most recent buildings to achieve LEED certification are the Lance Armstrong Foundation's Headquarters in East Austin (LEED Gold) and the Department of Veteran Affairs Financial Services Center (LEED Silver).

Greg Lee, chief financial officer for the Lance Armstrong Foundation, said: "After completing a year in the building, we couldn't be more excited about the impact and positive results of having built according to green building practices. Following a third party certification process like LEED also helped us both navigate the system and achieve success."



Lance Armstrong Foundation headquarters building received LEED Gold certification.

Photo courtesy LAF.

Since September 2009, other LEED certified projects include: Baker Botts LLP Austin (LEED Certified); Catellus Seton Administration Offices (LEED Gold); Domain Gateway Office building (LEED Silver); Legacy on the Lake (LEED certified), and UT at Austin's Biomedical Engineering Building (LEED Silver) and the recently constructed AT&T Executive Education and Conference Center (LEED Gold). The conference center opted to use local limestone and brick to reduce the amount of fuel used and the level of pollution caused as a result of material transportation. Recycling operations and low-flow plumbing are used in operations to reduce waste levels In December 2009.

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The Mueller Development at the old City of Austin airport site achieved the first LEED Gold for Neighborhood Development, having been selected as a pilot for this new LEED program. The City of Austin led the way with the City Hall achieving LEED Gold in 2006.

Georgetown

In Georgetown, Southwestern University's Wilhelmina Cullen Admission Center received LEED Gold in August 2009. By implementing green construction and operations, the Admission Center expects to use nearly 40 percent less energy compared to other buildings of the same size.

Round Rock

In September 2009, Jo-Ann Fabrics and Crafts in Round Rock achieved LEED Silver under LEED for Commercial Interiors rating system. By following LEED standards, the store expects to save over 30 percent in operating expenses, according to an article in Chain Store Age. These savings are triple the national average. As a result of the positive impact of the Round Rock building, the Jo-Ann chain plans to include high efficiency building systems in its 2010 prototypes, according to the company's blog.

Also in September 2009 in Round Rock REI obtained LEED Gold under the LEED for Retail rating system.

San Antonio

There are currently 14 LEED certified green buildings in the San Antonio area, with more than 160 registered. Since September 2009, the following certifications were achieved: CBNA Heritage Branch San Antonian (LEED Certified); H.E.B. Store 45 (LEED Certified); Port San Antonio Headquarters (LEED Gold); Rackspace Headquarters (LEED Gold) and Tesoro Corporate Headquarters (LEED Silver).

In December the 29,400 square-foot Port San Antonio headquarters at 907 Billy Mitchell Blvd., was awarded LEED Gold certification, becoming only the fourth LEED Gold-certified project in the city. To achieve this designation, Port San Antonio officials invested in a series of improvements to the building to conserve electricity and water, use recycled materials, reduce waste and improve the indoor working environment.

"The LEED Gold certification of our headquarters building underscores our organization's commitment to transform a former 2,000-acre military facility into a livable, pedestrian- and transit-oriented community following best business practices and high environmental sustainability standards," said Bruce Miller, president and CEO of Port San Antonio.

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Other LEED-certified projects in San Antonio include; Trane San Antonio's district office, and the Overlook at the Rim, now home to Medtronic's Diabetes Therapy Management and Education Center.



Port San Antonio's headquarters building received LEED Gold certification in January 2010.

Photo courtesy Port San Antonio.

Waco

There are currently 4 LEED certified green buildings in the Waco area, with nine registered. In October 2009, Baylor University celebrated its third LEED certification, with the LEED Silver for its Baylor Allison Practice Field; the nation's first football field to achieve LEED Silver under the LEED for New Construction rating system. Also, in October, the Greater Waco Chamber of Commerce achieved LEED Gold for its headquarters and regional marketing center, the first green Chamber building in America.

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ABOUT U.S. Green Building Council Central Texas – Balcones Chapter (USGBC CT-B):

The USGBC CT-B chapter is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization committed to accelerating growth in sustainable building and land development practices in Central Texas through innovation, advocacy and partnerships. Established in 2003, USGBC CT-B has over 700 members and serves 55 counties. The chapter hosts LEED® workshops, holds educational sessions on sustainable technologies and applications, and offers networking events for the region's green-building professionals. To learn more visit www.usgbc-centraltexas.org or email ED@usgbc-centraltexas.org.

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What is LEED®?

The LEED® green building certification program is considered the national standard for third-party certification and is nationally accepted benchmark for the design, construction and operation of high performance green buildings. LEED provides a complete framework for meeting sustainability goals and assessing building performance in six categories: Sustainable Sites; Water Efficiency; Energy and Atmosphere; Materials and Resources; Indoor Environmental Quality; and Innovation and Design process. Four progressive levels of LEED certification—Certified, Silver, Gold and Platinum—can be achieved by a building project based on a point system. Certain prerequisites must be achieved in order to qualify for certification. By using less energy, LEED-certified buildings save money for families, businesses and taxpayers; reduce greenhouse gas emissions; and contribute to a healthier environment for residents, workers and the larger community.

Other facts and figures about LEED from USGBC:

\$36-49 billion: The annual market for green building in products and services

(McGraw Hill Construction (2009). Green Outlook 2009: Trends Driving Change.)

7.9 million: Number of jobs supported by green building over the next four years (2009-2013)

\$554 billion: Green buildings Contribution to U.S. Gross Domestic Product over the next four years (2009-2013)

(USGBC/Booz Allen Hamilton, Green Jobs Study (2010).)

Almost 7.5 billion: Square feet of commercial building space registered or certified under the LEED® Green Building Rating System™

140,000+: LEED credentialed professionals

20,000: USGBC member organizations, including corporations, governmental agencies, and nonprofits

4,416: Total commercial LEED-certified projects

27,025: Total commercial LEED-registered projects

15,862: Building projects are LEED for New Construction registered and an additional 5,090 building projects have completed LEED-NC certification

2,772: Building projects have registered with LEED for Commercial Interiors and an additional 1,075 have completed certification

4,148: Building projects have registered with LEED for Existing Buildings and an additional 441 have completed certification

2,885: Building projects have registered with LEED for Core and Shell and an additional 372 have completed certification

23,807: Residential units have registered with LEED for Homes and an additional **4,947** have completed certification

29%: of LEED certified projects owned by federal, state, and local governments
International:

100+: Countries with LEED projects

50: States with LEED projects

202: Local Governments have adopted LEED

33: States have adopted LEED

When compared to structures built to conventional construction standards, green buildings experience:

26: Percent less energy consumed

33: Percent fewer greenhouse gas emissions

13: Percent lower maintenance costs

27: Percent higher occupant satisfaction

(GSA Public Buildings Service. "Assessing green building performance: A post occupancy evaluation of 12 GSA buildings" (2008).)

Investments in green buildings pay dividends and reap rewards, on average resulting in:

6.6: Percent improvement on return on investment

8-9: Percent reduction in operating costs

7.5: Percent increase in building value

3.5: Percent increase in occupancy ratio

(McGraw-Hill Construction. "Green Building SmartMarket Report" (2006).)

Jane Baxter Lynn
Executive Director
USGBC Central Texas – Balcones Chapter
jbaxterlynn@usgbc-centraltexas.org
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