

ISO Gets Milestone Gold From USGBC

By Joe Clements

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HOLYOKE, MA — Project officials and the tenant have struck gold after achieving that LEED ranking from the USGBC for the renovation and expansion of the ISO New England complex. The two-building 160,000-sf facility is the first corporate headquarters and the largest office property in the region to achieve the coveted gold certificate, according to ISO, which among other things operates 350 power plants that encompass New England's electrical grid.

"It's a strong designation," acknowledges an ISO spokeswoman, while CFO Robert Ludlow is praising the design and construction team that allowed the development to win the second-highest level in the LEED rating system. Architect Paul Comeau of Spagnolo Gisness & Associates Inc. says ISO management made it clear early on to his firm and to project manager Jones Lang LaSalle that sustainability would be a cornerstone of the undertaking. Others commended for championing the cause were construction manager Barr & Barr, AHA Consulting Engineers and structural engineer McNamara/Salvia Inc.

"It's exciting," Comeau tells GlobeSt.com of the gold ranking, with only 18 buildings in New England having earned that distinction to date, and just two office properties, both smaller than the Holyoke project. The initial goal was a basic LEED certificate, but as the process matured and adaptations were made, the silver LEED then became a target. When the two-year initiative concluded of developing a new 100,000-sf building and renovating the existing 60,000-sf structure, the team felt a gold might be in the offing because of the extensive checklist compiled. "It really took everybody working together," he says of the achievement, an outcome he was not sure of until being informed by the USGBC.

Among the practices contributing to the designation was 97% recycling of the construction and demolition



By: Andy Wainwright
ISO New England complex

waste; use of materials from within a 500-mile radius to limit gasoline usage; and at least 17% recycling content for interior building materials and finishes. Novel drainage systems and native plants were sustainable elements for the landscaping, and another 311,000 gallons of water will be saved annually thanks to low-flow and automatic plumbing fixtures, a 26% reduction. "The design and renovation of ISO New England's buildings incorporated a number of features that were both environmentally friendly and cost-effective," says Ludlow. To ensure efficient operation, the firm is adapting purchasing programs and waste management techniques, while Foley explains ISO has created an employee "Green Team" to promote ongoing sustainability ideas.

Sustainability is a big part of ISO's makeup, notes Comeau, but SG&A is seeing the issue rise in import among other clients as well. "It comes up on every single project," he says, even for the most basic interior renovation. As such, SG&A has a goal that 25% of its Boston-based staff of 40 professionals will earn their professional LEED accreditation over the near term. ISO is SG&A's first LEED gold, but the firm did win a sustainability prize for a project in Nashua, NH.