

Belden Brick Supplies Permeable Pavers for “ Greenest Building ”

Summit County building is Ohio’s „greenest“

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Summit County is home of the greenest or most environmentally friendly building in Ohio.

Metro Parks, Serving Summit County announced Monday that its ranger/natural resources building has won top honors from the U.S. Green Building Council in Washington, D.C.

The renovated building near the Akron-Fairlawn border off Sand Run Parkway in Sand Run Metro Park garnered enough points in the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design rating system from the green building group to earn its highest award, a platinum ranking.

“We don’t have the first platinum building in Ohio, but we have the greenest,” said David Whited, the park district’s chief of planning and development. “And we’re the first to receive platinum in Northeast Ohio.”

The building that opened in mid-2008 earned 55 points of 69 possible points.

In late 2008, a structure near Cincinnati earned Ohio’s first platinum award with 53 points.

Points are awarded for energy and water efficiency, building materials, the building site, indoor environmental quality and innovation/design.

Green features incorporated into the Akron building include geothermal heating, waterless toilets, solar panels, a rooftop rain garden, lumber from down trees in the park district and recycled carpet, furniture and cabinetry.

Outside features on the 3.8-acre site include 24,000 tan-colored bricks that lets water drain into the ground, a rain garden, rain barrels and native landscaping.

The park system spent just under \$1 million to turn the one-time ranch house into offices for its rangers and resources management staff.

The park district worked with Peninsula Architects and Akron construction company Thomarios, the general contractor.

The building's green features added about 15 percent to the cost but that added cost will be recouped in lower energy bills in the future, Whited said.

The building's solar and geothermal features will reduce the need for nonrenewable energy by more than 40 percent, and water use will be reduced by 56 percent through innovations including composting toilets.

Ninety-six percent of the construction debris from the remodeling project was recycled rather than sent to a landfill.

Material from the gutted house that the park district couldn't use was sent to Habitat for Humanity's Restore in Canton.

The project required adding 1,700 square feet of space to the existing 2,200 square feet.

"One of the great myths of sustainability is that we have to change our lifestyles and accept a lower standard of living," said Michael Johnson, the park district's chief of natural resource management who works in the building. "This proves that you can be green and maintain a high standard."

The park district had been shooting for 59 points but got 55, still within the platinum requirements of 52 to 69 points, said park spokesman Nate Eppink.

As of last June, about 70 buildings in the United States had earned platinum rankings in the United States.

At that time, five other Ohio buildings have earned gold ratings (39 to 51 points) and 23 others have won certification from the council.

