

## P R E S S   R E L E A S E

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### WHITE TANK BRANCH LIBRARY & NATURE CENTER ACHIEVES LEED PLATINUM CERTIFICATION

The Maricopa County Library District recently announced that its White Tank Branch Library and Nature Center has achieved LEED® Platinum certification (New Construction). The facility is the first public library in Arizona certified to the Platinum level, one of only three libraries in the United States, and the 11<sup>th</sup> LEED Platinum certified public building in Arizona. The U.S. Green Building Council's LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) green building certification system is the foremost program for the design, construction and operation of green buildings; Platinum is the highest level of LEED certification attainable.

Part of this accomplishment is attributed to a rooftop mounted photovoltaic collector system that provides 27% of the power for the building. The building's power is generated entirely from clean energy sources on a net zero pollution basis. Through the project's solar energy generation and energy efficient design strategies, over \$20,000 is saved annually in operating costs.

"LEED Platinum certification places us in elite company as a leader in designing and building an environmentally friendly facility. More importantly, it demonstrates to our customers and the community that we are well aware of the benefits of creating a dual-use, green space for learning and exploring books and nature," said Harry R. Courtright, Maricopa County Library District director and county librarian.

"Certainly, the Library District is ecstatic about the certification. The certification and the ease of design and construction would not have been possible without the creative foresight and collaborative efforts of the Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department, our contractor, Mortenson, and our architect, DWL," Courtright allowed.

"Not only is this a proud moment for our Departments, it is a tribute to Maricopa County's leadership which has placed a tremendous effort on the importance of green government projects in our communities," added R.J. Cardin Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department Director. "The educational components found throughout this project will enhance our efforts to teach the public about sustainable energy practices."

The building was designed by DWL Architects + Planners, Inc. and built by Mortenson Construction under a Design-Build partnership. ESD provided Electrical, Mechanical and Plumbing engineering, Paragon Structural Design engineered the concrete and steel structure, and SCL Consulting provided the site landscaping design and civil engineering.

"The Mortenson/DWL Design-Build team is proud of surpassing the project goal of LEED Gold to achieve LEED Platinum," said Adam Hardy, Project Manager, Mortenson Construction. "It is the result of a collaborative and cognizant effort with the Maricopa County Library District and DWL Architects to address each aspect of the project with a commitment to environmental sustainability. We exceeded our goal at no added cost to the project; we set our sights high and the result is beyond satisfying. "

Ron Vokoun, Construction Executive, Mortenson Construction, added, "This outstanding facility underscores Mortenson's commitment to sustainable design and construction, as well as renewable energy. The enabling leadership of the Maricopa County Library District made all of the difference."

Surrounded entirely by desert, the 29,000 square foot \$8 million library and nature center is located at the entrance to White Tank Mountain Regional Park. The exterior is patterned and colored to blend into the desert plant life. Architect interpretations of local petroglyph designs are also part of the building design esthetic.

The library's collection capacity of 35,000 items will serve about 49,000 people within a five mile radius, but any county resident is welcome. The activity room is able to accommodate up to 137 children seated on the floor or 38 adults seated at linear tables. The building is Wi-Fi enabled with 44 public computers available.

The southeast portion of the building houses the Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department's Nature Center. The center features a sales area, information counter and animal habitat room where the public can view animals native to the park. Visitors can access the 25 miles of hiking trails winding through the park via a trailhead just steps from the Nature Center.

"This is an absolutely breathtaking location," said Adam Sprenger, project architect and project manager for DWL. "And to maintain the pristine beauty of this site, every saguaro, tree, cactus and bush that could be salvaged before construction started was moved to a nursery and maintained until it could be replanted around the building. Saving every part of the native desert possible, while minimally impacting the area, was foremost in our minds. Rarely do you have the opportunity to build on this type of site."

There are numerous design features that contribute to the large reduction in energy usage. Natural light pours in through windows that provide sweeping panoramic views, giving visitors a strong connection with nature. These windows are high quality energy efficient 1-inch dual pane insulated glazing units with a high-performance Low-E coating. Sixteen-foot-long vertical concrete shade fins and deep perforated metal overhangs self shade the building. Through computer modeling, the design team analyzed the shading patterns at various times of the year to optimize the lengths and angles of these projections.

The building has an automated Mecho Shade system. The radiometers measure the amount of light hitting the building and natural light coming through the windows. The system will automatically raise and lower the shades to adjust light levels. This is used in conjunction with sophisticated automated lighting and dimming controls supplemented with occupancy sensors throughout the building.

Extensive insulation includes an R30 foam roof with a highly reflective coating that both insulates the building and reflects the sun's light off the roof to reduce the heat island effect. The building's 12" thick tilt-up concrete walls are backed up with liquid air barriers and R13 foil faced batt insulation to minimize the impact of the desert's harsh temperature swings.

The building also minimizes water consumption. Plumbing fixtures are all 'low flow,' contributing to a 30% reduction of water consumption compared to a typical library. This project uses low flow water closets, jet flush valves, low flow lavatory fixtures, waterless urinals, occupancy sensors and aerators to create a combined savings of over 50,000 gallons of water annually.

"DWL places an emphasis on making designs both esthetically pleasing and environmentally sensitive, regardless of a project's goals for LEED certification," said DWL's Jeremy Jones, project principal for the architect. "Building orientation, material colors and use of topography for air flow around the building all add to effectiveness of formal energy saving systems, while use of local colors and emulation of land forms makes the building fit in to its site. The central tower also serves as a beacon for the surrounding region."

### **About DWL Architects + Planners, Inc.**

Founded in 1949, Phoenix-based DWL Architects + Planners, Inc. is among the most dynamic and respected locally owned architecture firms. DWL has established itself as the leader in loyal client relationships, strong design stewardship, and the expectation that our materials, systems and processes will create enduring and timeless architecture. DWL's work has been consistently recognized locally, nationally and internationally. Learn more about DWL at [www.dwlarchitects.com](http://www.dwlarchitects.com).

## **WHITE TANK BRANCH LIBRARY & NATURE CENTER**

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