

Press Release

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Construction Manager Skanska Achieves Platinum Certification for its Own New Offices in the Empire State Building

New York City – The United States Green Building Council has certified that the new space that Skanska USA Building has built for its flagship offices on the 32nd floor of the Empire State Building has achieved LEED CI Platinum, the highest level of certification USGBC confers for corporate interiors.

According to the USGBC, “LEED enables project teams to deliver certified performance for their buildings. An organization’s participation in the voluntary and technically rigorous LEED process demonstrates leadership, innovation and environmental stewardship.”

“This is America’s most iconic office tower,” observes Steve Pressler, Skanska New York Executive Vice President and Area General Manager. “This Platinum designation – along with the considerable operational savings we’ve achieved – proves that even landmark buildings can be retrofitted to high-performance green buildings and for a lower overall cost.”

Skanska has committed its company globally to high sustainability standards. It is the only US construction company to be designated ISO 14001 compliant by the International Organization for Standardization. Skanska globally has 524 LEED Accredited Professionals; in the US, it has built 113 LEED buildings.

“It is vital to Skanska that leadership in sustainability be visible in all offices,” explains Elizabeth Heider, AIA, LEED AP, Skanska Senior Vice President and Chair of its National Green Council. “That’s why we are gratified to have our Empire State Building flagship offices join three other Skanska offices across the US – Seattle, Orlando and Atlanta – with an exceptional level of LEED certification.”

Credits for the achievement

Skanska’s “very green” team included Terrapin Bright Green, which facilitated an intensive pre-construction LEED planning session; Swanke Hayden Connell Architects for programming; Cook+Fox Architects, whose own offices are certified LEED Platinum; Cosentini Associates for MEP engineering and Arup for lighting. There was also active participation from building owner W&M Properties.

How Skanska did it

The threshold for LEED Platinum is 42 points. Tri Tran, Skanska Pre-Construction Director, reports that Skanska achieved 44 points. Many of Skanska's LEED "points" were derived from features that improve indoor air quality. To achieve this, the Skanska space includes an underfloor air system that has operable diffusers that permit temperature control for each individual workstation, adding to comfort and productivity. Other points came from natural daylighting, sensor-controlled lighting systems, the use of low VOC-emitting materials, locally-sourced and recycled materials, innovation and design, location near public transit and water efficiency.

"The 80-year-old building's original design helped us to achieve this designation," explained Mr. Tran. "The new offices were designed to utilize the abundant natural light from the oversized windows and spread it across the 28-foot distance from the elevator core to the exterior wall." As a result, Skanska earned points because 90% of the office receives natural daylight and 99% of employees have outside views.

Energy Star-compliant appliances and the automatic lighting control system collectively use 35% less energy than ASHRAE standards call for. Lastly, waterless urinals, low-flow toilets and hand-sensored faucets reduce water usage to 40% below Energy Policy Act standards.

The other half of the LEED points come from sustainable materials, the overall design and building practices. Skanska recycled 80% of the construction waste and preserved 40% of the non-structural interior components. Recycled products were used throughout the office, and 28% of materials were manufactured within 500 miles. The Forest Stewardship Council also certified 89% of the wood-based materials used throughout the office.

Extent of energy savings

Last month [June], Mr. Pressler announced that "we've occupied our 24,000 sf Empire State Building offices for eight months now and the systems are on target to achieve a projected energy savings of 46%." This noteworthy statistic compares energy utilization against Skanska USA Building's smaller previous offices in a Murray Hill office building. "The corporate challenge was to build out the space to the highest standards of sustainability for no additional cost over the life of the lease. At this rate, we expect to save \$556,436 over that term," he predicts.

Skanska as both Client and CM

In the move to the iconic building, Skanska was both client and construction manager. "We had the advantage of being able to totally drive the process, but we also have an obligation to share our experience with our partners in the design, construction, and real estate industries and government agencies. Our message to owners is that they can achieve the same level of savings with their existing and even historic buildings," says Mr. Pressler.

From the signing of the lease to move-in was a scant five months. “We had an excellent team that knows how to make decisions,” Mr. Pressler remarked. “This entire project demonstrates every team member’s abilities; everyone really had to perform. I am especially proud of Skanska’s team, led by Mr. Tran, Project Executive Chris Viola and Project Superintendent Terry Shay”.

The cost of going green

“We kept meticulous records of the actual cost,” Mr. Pressler remarked. “This exercise will provide more insight into the decision-making process, from initial costs to life-cycle value. Skanska provides these services to help our clients be more successful, and our own experience sharpens our ability to understand the best way to build sustainably on their behalf.”

Based on projected savings calculations, the reduction in energy consumption will compensate for the slight initial cost premium to build to a Platinum standard producing a return on investment in less than five years. Over the course of the 15-year lease, Skanska predicts a net positive return of \$368,380. “Should energy costs rise faster than our conservative projections, these savings will be greater. In addition, the risk of carbon-related costs will be avoided should carbon cap and trade be implemented during the lease period,” Mr. Pressler notes.



Long view. Access to daylight and views was central to the organization of the floor plan for Skanska’s space; in fact, 99 percent of the staff has outside views. All executive offices have a window wall along the corridor that continues around the perimeter of the floor. Cook+Fox placed orange cushions atop file cabinets to create benches where people can gather informally. The floor is raised 10 inches; individual diffusers control air flow from the under-floor air distribution system. [Each office has its own diffuser set-up, as well.]



Conference room view back to the executive offices: view to the interior shows the line of offices along the interior wall of the office. A lighter gray carpet separates these functions. The frosted graphics are decals.

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This and previous releases can also be found at www.skanska.com

****Note to Editors:** An extensive green fact sheet specifically for the media is available from Anthony Angelico (aangelico@capelin.com). Formal photography will be completed in July. Floor plans are also available.

Skanska USA Building Inc. is a leading national and local provider of construction, pre-construction consulting, general contracting and design-build services to a broad range of U.S. industries including science and technology, healthcare, education, high-tech, aviation, transportation and sports and entertainment. Skanska USA Building also provides pharmaceutical validation services to clients. The company, part of the Skanska AB global group of companies, is headquartered in Parsippany, New Jersey, and has approximately 4,700 employees.

Skanska is one of the world's leading project development and construction groups with expertise in construction, development of commercial and residential projects and public-private partnerships. The Group currently has 56,000 employees in selected home markets in Europe, in the U.S. and Latin America. Headquartered in Stockholm, Sweden and listed on the Stockholm Stock Exchange, Skanska's revenue in 2008 totaled \$21.8 billion.

Besides the Empire State Building renovation, the New York office is involved in several "green projects," including the new Brooklyn Bridge Park, Brooklyn Children's Museum (just completed), and the City University of New York Advanced Science Research Center at City College of New York.

Skanska's Commitment to Sustainability

Skanska is committed to contributing to a more sustainable world and devotes considerable resources to this goal. A leader in green building worldwide, Skanska is consistently ranked as a top green contractor in the United States by Engineering News Record. Country-wide, Skanska has built close to 113 LEED buildings, including the first LEED Gold-certified hospital in the country. In 2005, Skanska formed the Skanska National Green Council to "lead Skanska to be the green builder of choice." Skanska also joined the US Green Building Council in 2000. All Skanska worldwide offices comply with ISO 14001, the environmental management standards of the International Organization for Standardization.