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St. Louis Community College's Wildwood Campus Is Good as Gold

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St. Louis Community College's environmentally friendly "green" campus in Wildwood, which opened in August 2007, is the largest community college facility in the United States to receive a U.S. Green Building Council Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED™) gold certification.

The LEED green building rating system is the nationally accepted benchmark for the design, construction, and operation of high performance green buildings. The gold rating is the second highest ranking obtainable under the LEED system. LEED emphasizes state-of-the-art strategies for sustainable site development, water savings, energy efficiency, materials selection, indoor environmental quality, and innovation.

College officials chose to build green in an effort to use key resources like energy, water, materials, and land more efficiently, as well as create a healthier, more comfortable, and more productive work and learning environment for present and future generations.

"Our founding president, Joseph P. Cosand, believed that as the education and training needs of this community shift and grow, so must St. Louis Community College," said Pam McIntyre, president of STLCC-Wildwood. "The Wildwood campus represents the college's commitment to provide even more of our neighbors with the world-class learning opportunities and to continually improve this region. We also hope those responsible for advancing other public and private sector projects are inspired to follow our lead."

The three-story, 75,000-square-foot facility houses high-tech classrooms and labs, a library, student services, lounges, a bookstore, multipurpose room, and rooms equipped with sophisticated presentation and Web-based technologies that will allow faculty to help stimulate different learning styles and clarify difficult concepts. It also provides high-speed internet access as well as wireless connectivity within and around the campus site.

STLCC-Wildwood is the region's first green-roofed college building. The roof features trays that contain sedum plants, a drought-tolerant plant that has water-storing leaves. The plants help overcome the heat-island effect from the building by preventing heat absorption in the roofing materials as well as insulating the building.

The building was constructed with extensive use of recycled materials in structural and finish components as well as furniture. All materials were selected to ensure a high level of indoor air quality. The majority of materials were manufactured within a 500-mile radius of the campus to prevent pollution due to shipping. The contractor

diverted more than 95 percent of the construction waste generated from the landfill by reusing and recycling materials.

Other features include daylight-harvesting lighting and ceiling fans. The building's lighting system automatically balances to accommodate variations in natural light. Rooms have T-shaped windows to allow more natural light in, as well as light shelves to reflect light further into the room. Each room also is equipped with a ceiling fan to uniformly distribute fresh air, enhance ventilation, and reduce energy consumption. The building is 30 percent more energy efficient than a typical code-compliant building of its size. A water savings of more than 30 percent is anticipated by using low volume restroom fixtures, waterless urinals, and rainwater collection and storage.

STLCC-Wildwood has earned two national awards for design excellence. The campus offers associate degree programs in business administration, general transfer studies, and teaching, as well as introductory career and technical education courses, and developmental courses needed to attain degrees. STLCC also signed a partnership agreement with University of Missouri-St. Louis that allows students to take courses at Wildwood and earn bachelor's degrees in business administration, elementary education, and liberal studies.

In 1998, the college purchased 66 acres in Wildwood to build the new campus. The decision to purchase land was the result of discussions concerning population migration toward Eureka and Pacific, about six miles southwest of a site that the college had leased since 1989 to operate an education center in that area. That facility, 25,500 square feet, was unable to accommodate growing enrollment. Future construction at the site is planned. The new campus serves one of the fastest growing areas in the college's service area, with a population exceeding 225,000.

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