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ENR Awards Its Best of the Best for 2015: Green Projects LEED the Way

CONSTRUCTION

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Sustainable and green building continues to prove that it's not a passing fad, and has had substantial impact across many construction genres. In March 2016, the publication *Engineering News Record* (ENR March 14, 2016) announced its Best of the Best for 2015 in construction projects. And it was no surprise when no fewer than eight projects that were named winners had achieved some level of LEED (Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design) certification.

The project winners, which were judged based on teamwork, safety, overcoming challenges, innovation and quality, comprised projects that were completed between June 2014 and June 2015 in 20 different categories. Perhaps, what may have been a surprise to some though, was the diversity of the winning projects in those different categories. Construction categories from Education and Research, Health Care, Government and Public Building, Residential and Hospitality, Sports and Entertainment, Education and Office/Retail/Mixed Use all included winners with LEED certifications.

Specific project winners included the Benjamin P. Grogan and Jerry L. Dove Federal Building in Miramar, Florida, the Brock Environmental Center in Virginia Beach, Virginia and One World Trade Center in New York City, New York.

The Benjamin P. Grogan and Jerry L. Dove Federal Building, dedicated in the honor of two fallen special agents, has earned LEED Gold Certification for Commercial Interiors and LEED Platinum for Core & Shell. Key features of the building include a 95% reduction in water consumption achieved through rainwater, well water, and municipal reclaimed water capture; a high-performance, glass curtain façade that harvests daylight and reduces heat gain, and rooftop solar panels that generate nearly 20% of the building's energy usage.

The Brock Environmental Center, a Chesapeake Bay Foundation project, utilizes natural ventilation, daylighting and sun shading, geothermal wells, solar power and wind turbines to produce more electricity than it actually consumes. Additionally, the LEED Platinum certified building is designed to capture, store and filter ALL of its water needs. The Center treats and reuses rain water, utilizes rain gardens and composting toilets, and has constructed wetlands to treat gray water (wastewater generated from sinks and showers) through a process called biofiltration. The Center also utilized donated salvaged building materials and avoided any building materials on the Living Building Challenge's Red List (items that include chemicals and materials harmful to humans and the environment such as PVC, chemically treated wood and halogenated flame retardants).

One World Trade Center, the LEED Gold Core & Shell Certified building winner in the Office/Retail/Mixed Use Category, boasts 104 floors in a 1,368-ft. tower (not including the 408-ft. spire) and is a stunning vision in the New York City skyline. The Trade Center has sustainable features that ensure energy efficiency and reduce its environmental impact, including high-efficiency plumbing, utilization of low-VOC paints, rainwater harvesting systems, preferred parking for fuel-efficient vehicles and the use of sustainably harvested wood products. Additionally, the Center has facilities for alternative transportation and utilizes renewable energy power sources.

These award-winning projects not only showcase the best and brightest in project design and execution, but also serve as examples that sustainable building can be completed in all genres of construction innovatively and in an environmentally conscious manner.

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