

***Clackamas*Review**

Innovations make Red Soils government campus 'so tomorrow'

Clackamas County marks the opening of new services center at Red Soils

By Ellen Spitaleri

The Clackamas Review, Nov 4, 2008

On the count of three, Commissioner Bill Kennemer picked up a huge pair of scissors and cut the blueprint “ribbon” as he and a group of county dignitaries officially dedicated the brand new Development Services Building on the Red Soils county government campus in Oregon City.

All the speakers at the ceremony, which took place last Wednesday, Oct. 29, praised the new building for its design and beauty, but also offered kudos to Sera Architects and Hoffman Construction for creating the four-story, 125,000-square-foot building using “green” techniques, in order to meet Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification standards. The building – which houses several government service departments – was built as one of the most environmentally friendly government offices in the state.

Oregon City Mayor Alice Norris said the building “enhanced the aesthetic of the city and reduced its carbon footprint.”

She held up a T-shirt that said “We are so tomorrow,” and added, “This is what this building is all about. We must appreciate the past, celebrate the present and visualize the future.”

Commissioner Martha Schrader thanked Norris for “her vision for Oregon City,” and said that the county “was growing in regional significance as a key employer and quality service provider to our citizens.”

Speaking next, Kennemer pointed out that county workers “used to be housed in over 100 different locations,” and it was a positive step to bring all the departments together onto the Red Soils campus.

He added that he was “excited about this building” and pointed out how the site was set up to showcase local art. He thanked Cheryl Snow, of Clackamas County Arts Alliance, for bringing in art “which adds an extra dimension to our lives.”

Snow accepted Kennemer’s thanks and noted that “Clackamas County believes in art access to all citizens; art enlivens public spaces.”

She was particularly enthusiastic about the “Granite Rug” art piece by Washington state artist Brian Goldbloom, which is right outside the entry way to the new building.

“It is composed of different colored stones, and from upstairs it looks like a rug. It is intended to be a focus and a welcome, and it can also be thought of as a history carpet,” Snow said, adding that some of the granite pieces represent Willamette Falls, and others are a reference to the Oregon State University Red Soils Research Facility which used to occupy the original site.

DSB part of Oregon City’s master plan

Don Eggleston, president of Sera Architects, said the building represents part of Oregon City’s long-term future, noting that eventually the county courthouse will move onto the campus as well.

The area is “one of the most sustainable campuses” in the state, he noted, adding that the firm designed the DSB to take advantage of “water-use savings and energy-use savings.”

Water from the roof will cascade down a series of steps into bioswales, containing native and drought-resistant plants to help deflect water runoff, while a water feature “reminiscent of Willamette Falls” with its curve, frames views of Mt. Hood, Eggleston said.

All the faucets in the building are low-flow, he added, and there are recycling stations on all the floors.

Jeff Jorgensen, county facilities manager, said the internal lighting features “light-harvesting lights to save energy usage and are self adjusting to light from outside. They are also on motion sensors.”

He added that it is possible to restrict power to one section of the building only, so that other sections may be closed off if no one is working there.

Public waiting areas are “customer friendly” and provide wireless computer access, Jorgensen said, while all employee workspaces have been set up for comfort and efficiency.

There is a large parking lot under the building to house county cars and bicycles in a secure environment, he said, adding that there is also a room set aside where county employees can wash off muddy boots and hang wet rain slickers.

Employees may also hose down county vehicles, and all the water goes into a filter, where it is cleaned before going into the sewer system.

There are over 400 parking spots, and some spots are designated for carpools and hybrid vehicles only, Jorgensen noted.