

Merchandise Mart gets green nod

Notes environmentally responsible structures

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The Merchandise Mart Chicago, the world's largest commercial building encompassing 4.2 million square feet, was awarded and Environmental Design Silver certification for existing buildings, Merchandise Mart Properties, Inc. announced.

LEED certification is the nationally accepted benchmark for design, construction and operation of high performance green buildings that a building meets the highest performance standards and is an environmentally responsible and healthy place to live and work. LEED is a voluntary, consensus-based national standard for sustainable buildings that was designed by leading experts in the construction industry.

To earn LEED certification, a building must meet certain prerequisites and performance criterion within five key areas of environmental savings, energy efficiency, materials selection and indoor environmental quality. Projects are awarded Certified, Silver, Gold, Platinum, credits achieved.

"Our investors want long-term results," said Christopher Kennedy, president, MMPI. "Our city demands corporate responsibility. The LEED program helped us find common ground and proved that growth and sustainability are great partners."

LEED was developed to define and clarify the term "green building" by establishing a common standard of measurement, as well as to raise awareness in the industry while raising consumer awareness of the benefits of green building. LEED-certified buildings conserve energy and water, reduce costs and are healthy and comfortable for occupants and demonstrate the owners' commitment to environmental stewardship and social responsibility.

"The Merchandise Mart is to be congratulated for achieving LEED-EB silver certification," said Rick Fedrizzi, president, CEO, Environmental Design. "This message that The Merchandise Mart cares about the health of the building's users and employees."

The Mart's certification was accomplished with support from the Illinois department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, a state organization that works for a cleaner environment, healthier communities and a greener economy.

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