

Opportunity's knocking



Recent Columns

Educating builders about sustainability
Oregon is one of four states to get solar-powered Walgreens
Will prevailing wage be a non-issue in 2009?

Article Tools

[Printer friendly edition](#)
[E-mail this to a friend](#)
[Building and Construction Feed](#)

Most Read Stories

- [Renovation Roundup](#)
- [Block by Block](#)
- [Light rail goes green](#)
- [General contractors anxious about future](#)
- [No park redevelopment plan yet](#)

save more, matter more™

make a pledge to save energy

Pledge and enter for a chance to win a \$3,000 lighting retrofit for your business.

www.PortlandGeneral.com/SaveEnergy

A green alternative to portable classrooms

Da Vinci Arts Middle School will get Portland Public Schools' first LEED platinum building

POSTED: 04:00 AM PDT Monday, September 15, 2008
BY [LIBBY TUCKER](#)

Portland Public Schools plans to start work this fall on its first "high performance" classroom – a prototype net-zero energy building that could eventually replace the district's portable classrooms.

Da Vinci Arts Middle School in Northeast Portland has secured more than \$770,000 to build a sustainable stand-alone classroom addition to house its music program, which currently occupies a portable trailer. The 1,500-square-foot space would be built to LEED platinum standards with the goal of generating all of its own electricity on site.

When it's complete, the Da Vinci addition would be the first LEED platinum-rated public school in Portland and perhaps in the nation, according to the Portland Office of Sustainable Development.

"I see schools turning to these mobile units, and they're not always healthy or energy efficient; they're chosen for the low cost," said Alisa Kane, a green building coordinator with OSD. "If (PPS) can be the first out of the gate with a new portable classroom model, I could see it have a widespread use across the country."

"It will be setting a standard and a model nationally for green design," said Robb Cowie, a spokesman for Portland Public Schools. "It's a way of not just demonstrating the school district's commitment to sustainability, but testing, at a small scale, what kind of return we get in using green design."

The school board approved the project last spring, and the district pledged \$250,000 to help cover the cost. Da Vinci administrators, teachers and parents then set about collecting more than \$400,000 in gifts, grants and incentives toward the cause, including pro bono design services from SRG Architects and consultant Green Building Services.

But the project, originally scheduled to break ground in August, stalled after construction estimates came in higher than the district expected. General contractor Todd Hess Building Co., which submitted the lowest bid for the project, has worked with the district to bring costs down to \$557,000 from an original construction cost estimate of \$645,000 – far from the school's original budget of \$410,000.

Facing an \$80,000 budget gap, the school district has applied for a grant from the Gray Family Fund, which will announce the recipients in November. But until then, the school district decided late last week to step up with a loan from its 2008 facilities budget in order to begin construction this fall.

"The school district will close the gap," said Nancy Bond, resource conservation specialist with PPS.

Other funding sources include a \$50,000 green investment fund grant from the city of Portland and the Energy Trust of Oregon and a carbon offset grant through the Bonneville Environmental Foundation.

To target net-zero energy, photovoltaic tiles will replace an asphalt roof providing enough solar energy to power the whole building. The design also features a daylight diffuser, natural ventilation and other green features to save energy and lower the building's carbon footprint.

"In terms of overall energy savings as a percentage of the whole school, it would be a small percentage," said Glen Phillips, a consultant on the project with Green Building Services. "And in terms of overall global energy use it's probably nominal. But in terms of the ability to educate the students, there is a real impact."

The new 900-square-foot building will provide space for the school band rehearsals as well as an individual practice room and a recording studio. After-school music programs such as a garage band class and jazz ensemble would also use the space, which the school would make available to the community for music education, said Connie Cheifetz, community

John Gray

Architecture Foundation of Oregon

2008 Honored Citizen

Wednesday evening, October 15, 2008
Oregon Convention Center

Tickets and sponsorship opportunities available.

e-mail jane@af-oregon.org or call 503-942-3825
www.lookaroundsoregon.com

CONSTRUCTION SAFETY

MEDICAL MARIJUANA HIGH PRIORITY

A MIGHTY COURT DECISION

REGISTER

RAINMAKER AWARDS 2008

Get the DJC mailed to your home for 2 weeks FREE!

liaison with Da Vinci Arts Middle School.

During construction the builder will also bring students from the Northwest College of Construction and the Architecture Construction and Engineering Academy charter high school to demonstrate green building concepts.

“(Da Vinci) wants to show the school district what all can be done on school buildings,” said Todd Hess, owner of Todd Hess Building Co. “They’re trying to do a smaller, all-encompassing test project and see what really works.”

The school board, which meets again Sept. 29, must still give final approval for the project before the builder can sign a construction contract. But if the contractor is given the green light to proceed, work can begin as early as October, said Hess.

on this story.

Comments

Leave
a
comment

You
must
be
logged
in
to
comment