



Case Study

Lompoc DMV Earns LEED Gold

There's a new LEED Gold building on the Central Coast designed for financial savings from energy efficiency – the newly constructed Department of Motor Vehicles Field Office in Lompoc, CA. After opening its doors in May 2010, the building was recently awarded LEED Gold certification by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC), and exceeded the building owner's request to achieve LEED Silver.

In response to the energy performance and interior finishes upgrades, the overall energy cost savings for the DMV is expected exceed California standard Title 24 by more than 45%, and its water use will be reduced by more than 35%. Since the DMV pays its own utility bill, their investment will have a quick payback.

Andy Pease, a LEED Accredited Professional with In Balance Green Consulting, facilitated the design team through this LEED documentation process, working with the Building Owner/Construction Manager, Morris Sobhani, and the Project Architect, April Palencia of the Peikert Group.

“When I joined the design team,” Pease said, “they were struggling with LEED documentation, especially the prerequisites, which can be tricky. I administered the certification process to make sure the designers earned credit for all the green strategies they were incorporating, and worked with the contractor to help achieve good indoor air quality management, high waste diversion, and effective building commissioning. The process was truly a team effort and we were proud to be a part of it.”

Energy Performance Upgrades: This 1960's concrete building was not an obvious candidate for a 'green' makeover; by capitalizing on the building orientation, energy systems upgrades, and water conservation opportunities, the building is now highly energy efficient.

Optimized Orientation: The team capitalized on the building's orientation by replacing the glass from both the south-facing windows (shaded by overhangs) and large north-facing storefront with dual-glazing.

Energy Systems & Equipment: High efficiency equipment, lighting, and controls were used throughout the building, and all energy systems were commissioned by the Palt Company of Santa Maria to ensure top performance.

Water Conservation: Specified fixtures reduced water use by 35%, and native landscaping further reduced potable water use and increased on-site storm water management.

Interior Finishes Upgrades:

Low Emissions: All interior finishes and furnishings were selected to be ‘low-emitting’, so that the products do not off-gas harmful chemicals such as volatile organic compounds (VOC’s) or formaldehyde.

Recycled & Local Content: More than 25% of the materials include recycled content, and 30% of the materials are manufactured within 500 miles of the project site, which reduces transportation impacts and supports the local economy. During construction, the contractor team recycled more than 95% of the demolition and construction waste.

Lessons Learned: According to Andy, there were a few key factors that helped the project earn the 69 points required to achieve LEED Gold using LEED for Commercial Interiors (LEED-CI):

- The architect prepared thorough specifications that clearly laid out the LEED requirements.
- Since it was a quick project and they were unsure which LEED points would ultimately be met, the team pursued more points than the minimum.
- The building’s original orientation, top-notch glazing and equipment upgrades all contributed to the overall energy performance opportunities.

“The DMV has incorporated LEED certification into our new construction because we recognize the health and environmental benefits as well as the financial return for our operations,” notes Genevieve Agustinez, Project Manager for the DMV.

Building owner Morris Sobhani adds, “We are very happy to see our team’s hard work and efforts were rewarded and recognized with the Gold Certification.”



South elevation with overhangs



North elevation with new storefront



Interior lobby