Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary Receives Gold Certification for Its Green Library Building

On June 4, 2009, the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS) celebrated receiving Gold Certification for its Library Building from The United States Green Building Council. This coveted award is among the final steps in a building project that began with planning in 2004.

Librarian Eileen K. Saner was honored in the event since she had the initial vision and executed the leadership to make the building a green building. Others honored included The Troyer Group of Mishawaka, the architectural firm; and DJ Construction of Goshen, the general contractor. Other key participants in the project were Primera Engineers of Chicago, and Marcus Sheffer of 7group, who led the green building design process.

The Gold Certification marks the level to which AMBS Library Building met standards set by USGBC in its Leadership in Environment and Energy Design, or LEED® program. LEED is a rating system that sets nationally accepted benchmarks for the design, construction, and operation of green buildings. Of the 69 points possible in the rating system, AMBS received 47, qualifying the building for the coveted gold certification.

The building comprises approximately 25,000 square feet, including the AMBS Library, bookstore, gallery, and restrooms. Among many green building features, these eight, not in any particular order of significance, are especially important to mention:

- Geothermal ground-source heating and cooling system that uses the temperature of the earth to heat and cool the building so that no natural gas is used.
- Triple-pane windows and efficient insulation to reduce heating and cooling energy.
- Designed windows, including north-facing clerestories that use daylight effectively and reduce use of electricity for interior lighting.
- Utilization of photocells that control lighting according to how much natural light is available.
- Sustainable building materials, such as lumber, purchased from the region to reduce transportation distance. About 92% of the building waste was recycled.

- Rain gardens planted next to the building to retain roof water runoff rather than sending it through city storm drains. Deep-rooted, drought-resistant native plants were selected for their ability to cleanse the water as it returns to the aquifer below.
- Prairie grasses planted and restored near the building to minimize time and fuel spent on lawn mowing and to promote the land's natural sustainability.
- Paints, adhesives, and fabrics used throughout that do not emit fumes, thereby enhancing air quality of the building's interior.

To view AMBS Library photos, floor plans, or other information about this event, visit www.ambs.edu/news-and-publications/events-and-news/certification.

[Submitted by Eileen K. Saner, Librarian, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, ALI Board Member, 06-08-2009]