



## **Cincinnati Zoo: The Greenest Zoo in America**

*Cincinnati Zoo's Historic Vine Street Village Receives LEED NC Platinum Rating*

CINCINNATI, OH (October 27, 2009) – The Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden's Historic Vine Street Village, which opened in May, received LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) NC Platinum certification – the highest rating awarded by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC).

This new, green entrance complex helped make the Cincinnati Zoo the greenest zoo in the country. The Cincinnati Zoo is now the first zoo in the country with multiple LEED projects and the 2<sup>nd</sup> zoo in the country to receive LEED Platinum certification. Locally, this is the first LEED NC Platinum for Cincinnati and the third for the State of Ohio.

“The Zoo's strong commitment to natural resource conservation starts at the front door,” said Mark Fisher, Cincinnati Zoo Senior Director of Facilities. “We have been and will continue to aggressively invest in our infrastructure. Building green is the right thing to do for the planet and for the wallet.”

Green building not only provides an obvious, direct, and positive impact on the environment; from lower emissions of greenhouse gases to less storm water entering the sewer system to diverting construction waste from the landfill, but also offers long term financial sustainability.

“With utility rates doubling across the board in the last 5 years and with the uncertain future of energy, we cannot afford to sit back and hope for the best,” added Fisher. “The proof is in the numbers, as we have lowered our utility bills by over a million dollars in the last few years, spending less than half that amount to achieve those savings. The tired old myth that going green is not affordable is ignorant, and we have data to prove otherwise.”

The LEED Green Building Rating System is the nationally accepted benchmark for the design, construction, and operation of high performance green buildings. LEED certification provides independent, third-party verification that a building project meets the highest green building and performance measures. It emphasizes state of the art strategies for sustainable sites, water efficiency, energy & atmosphere, materials & resources, indoor environmental quality and innovation & design process.

The Cincinnati Zoo's first LEED-certified building (and the first Silver-certified building in Cincinnati) was the Harold C. Schott Education Center, which opened in 2006. With the success of the Education Center,

the Zoo pledged to pursue LEED certification on all new construction projects, including the Historic Vine Street Village. The Cincinnati Zoo is the first zoo in America to make such a commitment. One critical goal is to brand the Zoo's green initiatives to the public so environmental stewardship is an important message communicated each day its more than one million annual visitors.

"The Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden, one of the foremost zoos in the world, is all about People, Planet and Prosperity," said Alan Warner, President of the Cincinnati Chapter of the USGBC. "They choose to extend their environmental mission beyond flora and fauna to incorporate the needs of the visitor with the management of the facilities into one complete life support system."

Inspired by the Zoo's original architect James McLaughlin, Historic Vine Street Village is a fun and modern interpretation of a neo-Victorian style, designed by Cornette-Violetta Architects, LLC and built by HGC Construction. Some of the green highlights include:

**The buildings are 78% more energy-efficient than standard buildings thanks to:**

- 10 kW of solar panels that reduce the demand for coal-fired power by 15%
- Geothermal heat pumps that meet all of the heating and cooling demands
- Spray foam insulation that reduces heating and cooling demands
- A solar water heating system that meets all of the hot water needs for the restrooms
- Renewable energy credits that make the Membership and Ticketing building a Net-Zero carbon usage facility

**Rainwater is managed to eliminate runoff through the use of:**

- Over 30,000 square feet of pervious pavers and an extra thick layer of porous gravel underneath that stores over one million gallons of rain water
- A rainwater harvesting tank that collects water from the roofs
- The existing elephant moat as an overflow mechanism to handle excess rainwater

**Reduce, reuse & recycle are important connects of the Historic Vine Street Village design as:**

- 30% of the building materials were recycled
- Over 60% of the building materials were purchased locally, reducing the fuel costs of shipping
- More than 80% of the wood used is certified by the Forest Stewardship Council as sustainably harvested
- About 80% of construction waste was sent to recycling centers for reuse
- Waterless urinals and highly water-efficient toilets and faucets use 50% less water than standard facilities
- Captured rainwater is used to irrigate landscape

While energy efficiency was the major focus for the design team, storm water management was also a key design element. Each year, billions of gallons of sewage and untreated storm water enter the Ohio River

due to combined sewer overflow events (CSO's). The Zoo partnered with the Metropolitan Sewer District to design the new entry as a zero storm water discharge facility.

“The partnership between the Metropolitan Sewer District and the Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden is a win-win situation,” said Tony Parrott, Executive Director, Metropolitan Sewer District. “The Zoo gets recognized for its outstanding effort to embrace sustainable storm water management practices such as pervious paving and rain water harvesting. MSD gets a great opportunity to test whether installation of these types of practices can have a positive influence on our local waterways by reducing combined sewer overflows.”

In addition to its multiple LEED-certified buildings, the Cincinnati Zoo has been the recipient of numerous other “green” awards. The Cincinnati Zoo was named the 2008 Conservation Partner of the Year by the Hamilton County Soil & Water Conservation District and received the Cincinnati Sustainability Award from the American Institute of Architects earlier this year.

The Cincinnati Zoo will also be submitting two other projects for LEED Certification later this year including the newly opened Gift Shop in the Historic Vine Street Village.

To learn more about how you can “Go Green” visit the *Historic Vine Street Village* at the Cincinnati Zoo or log on to [.cincinnati.zoo.org](http://cincinnati.zoo.org) and click on “Saving the Earth.” Experience the wonders of the Zoo’s new energy efficient technology, while also enjoying the animals and sights that we all know and love.

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**The world famous Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden** was rated the #1 attraction locally and one of the top zoos in the nation by Zagat Survey. It was recognized by Parents Magazine as #7 on the “Top 10 Best Zoos for Kids.” It has also been recognized by Child Magazine as one of “The 10 Best Zoos for Kids.” Over one million people visit the Zoo’s award-winning exhibits, and more than 500 animal and 3000 plant species annually. The Zoo is an accredited member of the American Zoo & Aquarium Association (AZA) and the American Public Gardens Association (APGA), is internationally known for its success in the protection and propagation of endangered animals and plants, and engages in research and conservation projects worldwide.