



"Built right from the start," FedEx Express' World Headquarters needed only few changes to earn LEED certification.

A low-flow shower head here, some recycled paper products there, and the decade-old FedEx Express World Headquarters is officially Earth-friendly.

The nine-building campus at Hacks Cross and Winchester has achieved the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy Efficient Design gold-level certification, the company learned last week.

Doormats at all exterior doors to reduce the tracking of contaminants inside is one step that helped win LEED status.

Tuesday, FedEx said all new FedEx Express buildings would follow the industry-leading standards, starting with a Las Vegas sorting facility that opened last year.

LEED projects incorporate various energy-, material- and water-conservation features in building design, construction and operation. The World Headquarters, which contains about 1.3 million square feet of floor area, qualified under an existing buildings rating system.

The Las Vegas facility, which includes vehicle maintenance and offices, is the first new project built to the standard. It also qualified for gold, third-highest of four LEED levels.

"This certification is third-party verification that FedEx is being a good steward of the planet," said Don Colvin, vice president of properties and facilities at FedEx Express.

Project architect Stephen Mangin said his initial reaction to adopting the green building standard was surprise.

"I didn't think I heard correctly," Mangin wrote on a company blog. "Surely we just want to specify that our buildings might go for LEED, not that we really intend to certify all our future projects, right? Wrong! Yes, we wanted to save energy, help the environment, and create better places for our customers and employees, but we also wanted to be sure that FedEx was doing it the right way."

Construction on the FedEx Express World Headquarters began in 1998 and was completed by 2000.

Planning for LEED certification began in June 2008, under the guidance of senior facility representative Roy Moore.

FedEx hired S.D. Keppler & Associates, an environmental engineering and consulting firm, because of its experience in existing building certification.



Since the facility was relatively new, the project involved a lot of little changes, FedEx spokeswoman Deborah Willig said.

"We were doing a lot of things right already," Willig said. "The campus was 10 years old and was built right from the start." Most of the plumbing and heating, ventilation and air conditioning were already certified as energy- or water-saving.

Installation of newer low-flow aerators and shower heads cut water consumption an additional 17-22 percent.

Suppliers furnished paper products and trash can liners that include more recycled and recyclable content.

Air filtration systems were upgraded, and door mats were added at all exterior doors to reduce contaminants coming into the buildings.

The company confirmed with vendors of cleaning and pest control that they were already using ecologically safe chemicals.

The waste collector, Republic Services, conducted a waste-stream audit and identified opportunities to increase recycling and reduce trash.

"As a result of their findings, we have a FedEx team that's working on improving opportunities for recycling throughout the headquarters," Willig said.

A U.S. Green Building Council database showed four other FedEx projects in Shelby County as registered for LEED, but not yet certified. They were a corporate aviation hangar, a hub sort expansion and the main screening facility, all at the airport; and expansion of the FedEx World Technology Center in Collierville.

"It's something that we're looking at," Willig said.