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ABOUT MIKE ARMSTRONG



Mike Armstrong, a business editor and writer for nearly two decades, is the Inquirer's business columnist and PhillyInc blog editor.

TEXT SIZE: A A A A

FRIDAY, MAY 1, 2009

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SAP America plants 'green' office building behind Newtown Square HQ

Less than 10 years ago, **SAP America Inc.** moved into its 400,000-square-foot headquarters in Newtown Square. Today, executives will snip the ribbon on a 200,000-square-foot expansion.

Back then, the businesssoftware maker had 1,100 workers in Delaware County. Today, headcount tops 2,000.

If the design of the original structure sought to reflect the changing role of the office in the 21st century, the new one embodies SAP's embrace of "corporate sustainability."

Yes, it's another "green" office building.

Engineered to cut energy use by as much as 49 percent compared with conventional structures, SAP's building aspires to that loftiest state of greenness: the platinum level of the **U.S. Green Building Council's** standard known as Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design.

Locally, only one building has attained it, according to the council's Web site: **Liberty Property Trust's** One Crescent Drive at the **Philadelphia Navy Yard Corporate Center**.

SAP America president **Rob Enslin** described how all building materials came from within 500 miles of Newtown Square. Wood used for the huge structural ribs inside the glass exterior wall came from trees felled to make way for construction.

New York's **FXfowle Architects** pulled out all the recycled stops for this project:

The requisite grass roof helps reduce the urban heat island effect. Rainwater gets collected in a 50,000-gallon cistern for use in flush toilets and landscape irrigation. A hybrid air-conditioning system makes ice in storage tanks at night when energy demand and electric rates are low. There are geothermal wells, "daylight harvesting" and more.

SAP wouldn't disclose how many greenbacks it took to attain this level of eco-consciousness.

Asked why tech firms seem to lean green more than others, Enslin quibbled: "SAP is not really a tech company. We're a business company."

Having helped other companies become more efficient and reduce waste, SAP understands the benefits of operating in a sustainable manner more than most, he said.

To Enslin, the green building is as much about SAP following its own advice as it is about being a good corporate citizen.

Posted by Mike Armstrong @ 2:30 AM Permalink | File Under: Real Estate | | Technology | 1 comment

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Posted by **Trugbydog** 09:20 AM, 05/01/2009 Sign in to report abuse
Kind of a joke. A green suburban building with 2000 employees draws in each day probably 2000 not-so green SUVs and other one-trip vehicles. If SAP was so "green" they would have located their offices in a commuter hub say, like Center City which is centrally located and served by mass transit trains and buses. There is little debate that suburban office campuses are highly energy inefficient and energy hungry. You don't even mention the chemicals the dump on the ground to keep all that mono-breed grass so green. I would have thought a "journalist" would have at least addressed these issues...

1 comments

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