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## **DNR EMPLOYEES ADJUST TO GREEN WORK ENVIRONMENT (Published June 18, 2005, in the Columbia Business Times) - 6/18/2005**

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### DNR EMPLOYEES ADJUST TO GREEN WORK ENVIRONMENT

COLUMBIA, Mo. – It's taking time, but Missouri Department of Natural Resources employees are getting used to their new "green" building.

Last month, nearly 400 employees moved into the 120,000-square-foot Lewis and Clark State Office Building on the grounds of the former Jefferson City Correctional Center. The move consolidated employees from several offices in one building that serves as a showcase for sustainable design technologies, features that minimize an office building's impact on the environment.

Registered with the U.S. Green Building Council and likely to receive either a gold or platinum rating from Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, the building may provide data to help other state agencies or businesses cut energy costs. The building's technology is expected to cut energy costs by about 30 percent, studies have shown green buildings can save as much as \$50 to \$65 a square foot over 20 years.

Now that the building is occupied, the Office of Administration will monitor the heating and air conditioning system during the heating and cooling seasons over the coming year, according to Leonard Langendoerfer, an emergency project coordinator who oversees major state construction projects.

"So far, folks have settled in; it's been an adjustment for some people," said Larry Archer, spokesman for the department. "There was a big brouhaha at one point about things like parking, but if you are on the shuttle bus every morning, people are laughing and chattering, and it's actually become kind of a fun little gathering place that kind of draws people together before they disperse into the building."

Last year, many employees were upset when they heard a rumor that only one nearby parking lot would be built, for senior managers and the handicapped, in an effort to limit water runoff from impervious paved surfaces. As eventually built, the lot only allows handicapped and visitor parking. Until two future parking garages arrive as part of the planned renovation of the former prison grounds, a bus provided by the Jefferson City Transit Authority, Jefftran, picks up employees from a distant lot every 10 minutes and shuttles them to the building. Or they just

walk up a hill about a quarter mile as the crow flies, or half a mile along the road.

"People have adjusted to what it takes to get to work on time," Archer said. "Most folks were used to some sort of commute after their commute. They've adapted pretty well to knowing that you have to maybe get to the shuttle lot by a quarter 'til if you're going to catch the bus that gets you up to the building to get to your desk by eight."

While the official department line says employees have gotten used to the building, there are employees who still grumble about the lack of nearby parking. But the biggest complaints about the new building now deal with noise and lack of privacy. Many employees who once had offices now inhabit cubes. To spread the daylight more evenly, the side walls of the cubes graduate from 6 feet down to 3 feet, which means employees must be as quiet as librarians, answering the phone and conferring with colleagues in breathy tones just above a whisper.

Designed by renowned green architect Bob Berkebile of Kansas City, a long-time friend of previous DNR Director Steve Mahfood, the building utilizes such high-tech features as external concrete light shelves above the windows that allow sunlight to help heat the building during the winter and shade it during the summer. To cut energy use, internal light shelves extend more natural light into the building, and high-efficiency mechanical sensors turn lights on and off automatically. Solar collectors on the roof supply part of the energy for the building, and an internal recycled paper chute and collection system eliminates the need for recycling bins.

A solar water heater partners with a regular water heater, waterless urinals line the restroom walls, and a cistern collects rainwater to flush toilets. The landscaping uses indigenous plants, and a system of drain tiles, bio swales and detention ponds reduces storm water runoff.

Carpets and paints without volatile organic compounds were carefully chosen for the \$17 million building, and building materials included recycled content. Native Missouri wood flooring from sustainable wood forests was used, and exterior walkways, benches and landscaping materials were made from reused demolished building brick. Builders followed a construction waste management plan to reuse materials on site and reduce landfill disposal.

A side benefit to the new location appears to be in employee health. To encourage fitness, locker rooms and showers are provided in the building for those who want to work out on their lunch hours or ride a bicycle to work. The department even has a bicycle pool to borrow from if employees need one to run an errand.

One long-time DNR employee said it has taken him a month to adjust to the new facility, but he has grown to like taking the shuttle bus downtown, allowing someone else to fight traffic, and not having to put miles on his own car or find a parking space.

"If you put everything out on a balance beam, there's more positives than there are negatives," said John Buchanan, a senior planner with the agency. "We're having to learn to adjust to a new environment that's been conducive to the philosophies we've been advocating out of DNR for years. If you're going to talk the talk, you've got to walk the walk."

