



Wellmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield is an Independent Licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association.

Wellmark building receives LEED® Platinum environmental rating

Wellmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield's corporate office in Des Moines has received LEED® Platinum certification from the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC), which makes it the only LEED Platinum certified office building of its size in the world.

LEED, established by the U.S. Green Building Council, is the preeminent program for the design, construction and operation of high performance green buildings.

Built with the future in mind and thoughtfully designed to provide a healthy environment for employees, Wellmark's corporate headquarters features systems that:

- Reduce energy consumption and electricity usage
- Lower carbon dioxide emissions
- Reduce potable water consumption
- Lower solid waste production
- Improve air quality and lighting

Four years in the making, the construction project employed more than 1,100 construction trade workers during one of the worst economic climates of our time. The outstanding work of these hard-working Iowans has produced a more efficient and effective headquarters, with flexible meeting space, a café with healthy food options, and spacious fitness center.

Environmental and efficiency initiatives allow the building to pay for itself in 10 years

Wellmark's primary goal is to *reduce* its administrative expenses by five percent as a result of moving into the facility. These savings, achieved on an ongoing basis, will allow the building to pay for itself in approximately 10 years, and Wellmark is already halfway to that goal.

- Through 2010, Wellmark has achieved \$10 million in administrative cost reductions associated with the new facility. This savings comes from a broad array of sources, including paper and printer reductions, outside labor costs, and technology.

- Moving into the new headquarters, for example, allowed the company to reduce the number of printers it uses, saving at least 800 boxes of paper (an entire truckload), 200 toner cartridges and more than \$130,000
- Wellmark's goal is to generate an additional \$10 million in building-related savings over the next 2-3 years
- The underflow air distribution system provides individual temperature control and improved air quality. This, in turn, reduces costs for modifying work spaces in the future

Environmental savings include:

- Over 20 percent savings in energy costs
- Over 50 percent reduction in overall water use
- 56 percent savings in sewage generation
- Nearly 90 percent of construction waste was diverted from the landfill

LEED® certification

What does it mean to be "LEED certified?"

To gauge just how "green" organizations' buildings are, the U.S. Green Building Council established the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED®) green building certification program, which provides a third-party tool for validating a construction project's green features, while also verifying that a structure is operating as efficiently as possible based on its design.

LEED designation works on a point system where projects earn points for satisfying specific green building criteria that fall into one of six categories:

- Sustainable sites
- Water efficiency
- Energy and atmosphere
- Materials and resources
- Indoor environmental quality
- Innovation in Design

The number of points a project earns determines the level of LEED certification the project receives. The four levels are Certified, Silver, Gold, and Platinum. Wellmark earned all of its submitted points it to attain Platinum status. Further, our 852,200 sq. ft. building and underground parking structure is the largest new construction project in the world to receive a Platinum certification.

(NOTE: A complete listing of the credits Wellmark applied for in its LEED application can be found at the end of this document. To learn more about LEED measurement and criteria, visit the [U.S. Green Building Council](#).)

Building partners

Wellmark's new corporate headquarters was designed by HOK's Chicago office and local partner RDG in Des Moines. The Weitz Company, Inc., served as the general contractor.

Building features

What types of "green" materials were used in the Wellmark's corporate headquarters?

As many recycled-content products as feasible were incorporated into the facility. Examples include:

- Paints, carpets, adhesives, and finishes have low Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs), which means they release lower levels of harmful vapor substances into the environment
- Products such as carpet, chairs, and furniture are made from elements that are recyclable, or from recycled materials
- New office furniture is *green guard certified*, meaning it meets the high requirements for green practices

Energy

Wellmark's headquarters features "daylight harvesting?" What is that and how does it work?

Daylight harvesting is the use of natural daylight as a primary source of lighting for the interior of the building. Daylight harvesting uses sensors to detect daylight levels in the building interior and automatically adjusts the electrical output level of interior lighting to reduce energy consumption.

Daylight harvesting is maximized by using lots of glass at the proper location on the exterior of the building, with minimal obstructions to daylight on the interior of the building. In addition, windows are designed to let the light *in* for daylight harvesting, yet have a film to reflect heat and eliminate glare.

Air control is cleaner, uses less energy

Air flow in the new headquarters is handled through an under floor system which allows for much more control than a system where air comes down from the ceiling. Building staff can monitor air temperature automatically and adjust it where needed. Rooms will have both thermostats and occupancy sensors to control the temperature and efficiently use energy.

Water

How much water is being saved in the facility?

Wellmark's headquarters employs a variety of water efficiency measures – including a cistern system and low-flow water fixtures that taken together save 2.4 million gallons of potable (drinking) water per year. That's enough to fill the average bathtub 67,000 times.

The water for the reclaimed water flushing system comes from the following sources:

- Rainwater collected from roof drains (example: a one inch per hour rain will supply approximately 68,500 gallons of water in an hour)

- Condensation collected from HVAC equipment (on a peak summer day we will receive more than 5,000 gallons of water)
- Ground water collected from the subsoil drainage system

The reclaimed water is routed through filters in an underground vault to a primary 50,000-gallon underground flushing cistern located in the bowl area. The cistern stores the large volume of reclaim water to be used when needed. To date, more than 900,000 gallons of water has been reclaimed and used to operate toilets and urinals. Overall, the cistern will offset 1.5 million gallons of water per year that would otherwise have come from the Des Moines Water Works supply.

The combination of the reclaimed water system, and using low-flow fixtures, will result in a over 50 percent water savings for flushing and a 100 percent savings for irrigation. Excess water from the flushing cistern is routed to a total of 160,000-gallon underground cistern system.

Landscaping

The property around Wellmark's headquarters is lined with 96 trees, 1,200 shrubs and 30,000 perennials, which equal one plant for every 3.5 feet.

Wayfinding system affirms commitment to sustainable environment

Each floor of Wellmark's headquarters has its own distinct "wayfinding" nature pattern. These patterns not only help identify specific floors and spaces, but are used as an integrated design element throughout the building. Wellmark chose a nature theme of prairie grass, oak leaves, water, wildflowers, trees and the sun to reflect our environmentally friendly building.

Ongoing recycling programs

Wellmark has a comprehensive in-house recycling program to reduce waste, and ensure personal health information and confidential company information is properly destroyed. In 2009, for example, the company shredded 9,615 containers of confidential information that was later fully recycled. Wellmark's in-house program includes:

- Recycle bins for glass and plastic in break rooms
- Paper shredding dispensers throughout the building
- Biodegradable serving materials and packaging in our Blues Café and Blues Market
- Blues Café composting program

Fun facts

- Approximately 4,000 tons of steel was used in the construction of the building, enough to build 32 Statues of Liberty
- Wellmark diverted more than 2.5 million pounds of waste away from the landfill during construction

- The raised floor access panels are made from material that contains more than 58 percent recycled content, and is manufactured in a zero landfill facility
- The building's design features sound masking to soften and weaken sound waves to reduce overall noise levels
- 77 different companies were used to provide the materials and labor for our Wellmark's new corporate headquarters, employing 600 on-site workers at the peak of construction

Specific LEED® credits

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The awarded points were based on a variety of factors, including:

Sustainable building site

- Construction activity pollution prevention
- Site selection
- Development density and community connectivity
- Brownfield development
- Alternative transportation, including access to public transit, bicycle storage and changing rooms, parking capacity, and low-emitting and fuel efficient vehicles
- Site development that protects or restores habitat, and maximizes open space
- Storm water quantity control
- Reducing light pollution
- Reducing the "heat island" effect, with both roof and non-roof factors

Water efficiency

- Water efficient landscaping that uses no drinkable water or irrigation
- Innovative wastewater technologies
- Overall reduction in water use

Energy use and atmosphere

- Fundamental and enhanced commissioning of the building energy systems
- Minimum energy performance standards
- Fundamental and enhanced refrigerant management
- Optimizing energy performance
- Measurement and verification
- Green power

Materials and resources

- Storage and collection of recyclables
- Construction waste management
- Recycled content

- Regional materials
- Certified wood

Indoor environmental quality

- Minimum IAQ performance
- Environmental tobacco smoke control
- Outdoor air delivery monitoring
- Construction IAQ management planning, both during construction and before occupancy
- Low-emitting materials, including adhesives and sealants, paints and coatings, carpet systems, composite wood and agrifiber
- Indoor chemical and pollutant source control
- Controllability of lighting and thermal comfort systems
- Design and verification of thermal comfort system
- Views for 90 percent of workspaces

Innovation & Design Process

- 40 percent reduction in potable water use
- Employee wellness program
- 100 percent covered parking underground
- Innovation in green cleaning
- Utilizing a LEED accredited professional

To learn more about LEED measurement and criteria, visit the [U.S. Green Building Council](#).