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Edith Green-Wendall Wyatt Federal Building in Portland

Union-rebuilt federal building: A model of green remodel

The revamped Edith Green-Wendall Wyatt Federal Building opened up May 30 for a public look — and received glowing accolades from architects, project managers and federal officials at a mid-day rededication ceremony. The \$139-million project employed union labor under a project labor agreement, and was completed

on time and on budget two years and four months after site work began.

By almost any standard, it's a remarkable makeover: The 18-story 1974 structure was stripped down to its girders and rebuilt from the ground up as a model of cutting-edge sustainability.

"This project turned an ugly duckling into a beautiful swan," said

Dorothy Robyn, public buildings service commissioner for the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA), at the ceremony. GSA managed the project, along with SERA Architects and Howard S. Wright construction.

It was also the largest stimulus project in the Pacific Northwest, funded by the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act — 90 companies, 760 on site jobs, and 652,000 labor hours, not to mention the stimulus of construction materials and the impact of downtown commercial leases from federal tenants displaced during the remodel.

"It came at a critical time," said Oregon Congressman Earl Blumenauer. "It put money in the pockets of hardworking Oregonians, and it is going to save money for the taxpayers for years to come."

The building, expected to qualify for LEED Platinum certification, will achieve an estimated 55 percent energy savings compared to the original building, saving \$300,000 to \$400,000 a year in utility costs. It will also use 60



two sides of the building look the same, because they were designed to maximize light entering while minimizing heat gain during the summer.

Look up, and you can also see the tilted 13,000-square-foot solar canopy, which will generate 200,000 kWh a year, or 3 percent of the building's electricity needs — and also double as a water collection surface. Other "green" features:

- A state-of-the-art destination dispatch elevator by Otis generates power as it descends.

- 10,000 radiant ceiling panels use water to deliver heat and cooling — requiring 32 percent less energy than a forced-air system, and freeing up space for higher ceilings.

- An innovative air system provides 100 percent fresh air and recovers heat from exhaust air before it's released.

- Water-conserving fixtures reduce potable water use, and a 165,000-gallon cistern stores rainwater to flush

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Special delivery

Letter carrier Allison Schmuck, a member of Portland-based National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) Branch 82, takes part in the Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive May 11 sponsored by the Letter Carriers union. Roughly 4,000 urban and rural letter carriers in Oregon and Southwest Washington collected 1,108,315 pounds of food from postal customers while delivering their mail on May 11. Of that, 538,748 pounds were donated in the Portland metropolitan area (Clackamas, Multnomah, Washington, and Clark counties). "This is truly a community effort, and we thank the many unions and community organizations who participated," said Jean Kempe-Ware of the Oregon Food Bank, which collects and distributes the food through its network of regional food banks. The event is billed as the largest one-day food drive in the nation. National results were not tabulated at presstime.

Machinists Union engaged in national organizing drive at Oregon's Jeld-Wen

The union movement is being reawakened in rural Oregon — Stayton, Bend, Chiloquin and Klamath Falls — where employees of Jeld-Wen, one of the world's largest manufacturers of doors, windows, millwork, and specialty wood products, are engaged in a national organizing campaign with the Machinists Union.

The campaign began in February in response to calls for assistance from Jeld-Wen workers. The "Justice for Jeld-Wen Workers" campaign is active in 15 states and two Canadian provinces, where workers are engaged in preliminary actions required to get an election with the National Labor Relations Board.

In Oregon, Jeld-Wen employs about 3,000 workers, depending on the season and the state of the national housing market. The company was founded in 1960 in Klamath Falls and grew to become Oregon's largest privately held

percent less potable water.

From the outside, the building's most noticeable feature is the series of vertical aluminum "reeds" on the west and east façades of the building — combined with horizontal light-reflecting "shelves" on the south and east. No

company (all nonunion). Its late founder, Richard Wendt, was a longtime supporter and funder of anti-worker ballot measures and political candidates in Oregon. A 1999 Northwest Labor Press article reported that Wendt gave \$25,000 to the gubernatorial campaign of union foe Bill Sizemore. Wendt also worked for decades on a plan to abolish unemployment benefits, food stamps, and welfare benefits, and use the money to put recipients of those benefits to work in subsidized jobs at 10 percent less than the minimum wage.

Wendt died in 2010, and a year later the Canadian investment firm Onex Corp. purchased a 58 percent stake in Jeld-Wen in a deal worth \$864 million.

Onex owns many other companies, and several of them have contracts with the Machinists Union.

Likewise, Jeld-Wen's profitable European operations are produced by

union workers who are paid union wages, have more social protections, and better fringe benefits.

"Those workers know that being union has made a positive difference in their life," said Chip Elliot, assistant directing business representative of Machinists District W24, based in Gladstone.

Jeld-Wen has responded to the organizing effort in the United States by hiring an anti-union consultant who is holding captive audience meetings in an effort to convince employees that working for near poverty level wages without a viable pension plan and with high-cost health insurance is in their own best interest.

Elliott said many Jeld-Wen employees work paycheck to paycheck in physically demanding and stressful jobs. Turnover is high and the company relies on a large number of temporary

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