



Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED)
by Dennis Burton, Executive Director



The Schuylkill Center has registered the education building with The United States Green Building Council to earn a LEED Existing Building certification.

The U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) is a non-profit organization committed to expanding sustainable building practices. USGBC is composed of more than 12,000 organizations from across the building industry that are working to advance structures that are environmentally responsible, profitable, and healthy places to live and work. Members include building owners and end-users, real estate developers, facility managers, architects, designers, engineers, general contractors, subcontractors, product and building system manufacturers, government agencies, and nonprofits.

The Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) is the Green Building Council's Rating System that encourages and accelerates global adoption of sustainable green building and development practices through the creation and implementation of universally understood and accepted tools and performance criteria.

LEED is the nationally accepted benchmark for the design, construction and operation of high performance green buildings. LEED gives building owners and operators the tools they need to have an immediate and measurable impact on their buildings' performance and helps

them measure operations, improvements and maintenance on a consistent scale. LEED promotes a whole-building approach to sustainability by recognizing performance in five key areas of human and environmental health: sustainable site development, water savings, energy efficiency, materials selection and indoor environmental quality.

Of course nothing comes easy. The Center's education building was constructed forty years ago when environmental consciousness was focused on issues such as rain forests, holes in the ozone, clean air, and endangered species. Energy efficiency was just in its infancy, if considered at all, in large part because of the abundance and low cost fossil fuel at the time. As a result little thought went into the five key areas of the human and environmental health of our education building. To meet the LEED standard we must evaluate the building's insulation, windows, heating pipes, lighting, water use, energy performance, and material resources such as light bulbs, waste management, and cleaning products.

The process seems daunting, especially when reading through the 125 page Rating System manual, but when we tallied the points at the end of the checklist the building fared better than we expected. Of course we don't expect to go off the energy grid any time soon, but the process of evaluating the building and assessing our inefficiencies will help us to become more energy efficient, reduce our energy consumption and, as a bonus, save us money. Best of all, there is a LEED for Homes rating.

Visit: www.usgbc.org for details.