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Pepper Construction's Cincinnati office achieves LEED Zero Energy Certification
110-year old building pushes the performance envelope

CINCINNATI, OH – February 25, 2025 Pepper Construction's Cincinnati office has officially achieved LEED Zero Energy certification, a milestone that underscores our commitment to sustainable innovation and environmental responsibility. Having previously obtained LEED Gold certification while maintaining historic-preservation standards, the building is now one of the oldest in the country to reach Net Zero Energy status.

Originally built more than 110 years ago, the 23,000-square-foot office demonstrates that even historic buildings can be transformed into models of energy efficiency and high performance. Our renovation approach combined cutting-edge technology with a respect for the building's history, proving that sustainability and preservation can go hand in hand.

Key strategies that enabled this achievement include the following:

- **Geothermal Energy:** A system of 16 geothermal wells—each extending 400 feet beneath the parking lot—fuels the building's radiant floor heating and provides year-round thermal comfort.
- **Onsite Solar Power:** With 390 rooftop and parking canopy solar panels that generate approximately 220,000 kWh per year, the building produces the power it needs to operate plus contributing surplus energy back to the grid.
- **All-Electric Operations:** The building operates entirely on electricity, with high-efficiency mechanical systems ensuring energy demand matches the output of its solar arrays.
- **Optimized Daylighting:** Expansive windows and glass partitions maximize natural light, reducing energy loads while preserving and restoring nearly half of the original historic window woodwork.

Heavily involved throughout the life of this project, [Susan Heinking](#), FAIA, LEED Fellow and Pepper's Senior Vice President of High Performance and Sustainable Construction, said, "This project proves that historic structures can be both highly efficient and future-ready. By integrating geothermal energy, onsite solar and an all-electric operation, we've created a space that not only meets today's sustainability standards but sets a new benchmark for what's possible. This isn't just about energy efficiency – it's about driving real change in how we think about the built environment."

“Our Cincinnati office is more than just a workspace; it’s a statement of what’s possible,” said Chris Averill, President of Pepper Construction Group. “Achieving LEED Zero Energy certification on a century-old building is incredibly rare. We’re proud to lead by example, showing how the built environment can contribute to a more sustainable future.”

We are now continuing our commitment to holistic well-being by pursuing WELL certification, ensuring that Pepper’s office not only benefits the planet but also prioritizes the health and wellness of our employees.

About Pepper

Now in their fourth generation of family leadership, Pepper Construction serves clients across the country with comprehensive teams in Illinois, Indiana, Ohio and Wisconsin. Ranked by ENR (Engineering News Report) magazine as one of the top builders of sustainable projects in the nation, Pepper serves clients in a variety of markets such as aerospace, healthcare, science and technology, education, manufacturing and industrial, data centers, entertainment, hospitality and interiors, among others. Pepper’s High Performance and Sustainable Construction group is part of their Integrated Construction Services (ICS) team, which represents some of the most advanced thought leadership in our industry – investigating new technologies, evaluating new methodologies and integrating innovative solutions in the field. For more information, please visit www.pepperconstruction.com.

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