

Watson, Hillwood Buildings Earn LEED

By Bob Howard
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Watson Building

CHINO, CA - Developers Watson Land Co. of Carson, CA and Hillwood of Dallas have earned LEED certifications on industrial buildings totaling more than 1.5 million square feet that the two companies developed here and in San Bernardino, underscoring the momentum that the sustainability movement is gaining in new commercial real estate construction. Watson Land Co.'s new 297,107-square-foot industrial building in Chino has won a LEED Gold rating, while buildings totaling more than 1.2 million square feet that Hillwood developed in San Bernardino and later sold to CB Richard Ellis Investors have earned LEED Silver.



Hillwood Building

The Watson building is at 6810 Bickmore Ave. It is one of four new buildings in Watson Commerce Center Chino, a 1.2-million-square-foot project featuring industrial buildings that Watson markets under its Legacy Building brand, a series of energy-efficient class A buildings designed and constructed in accordance with LEED guidelines.

According to Lance Ryan, vice president of marketing and leasing for Watson Land, customer demand for energy-efficient green buildings "is stronger than ever. The Chino building is occupied by Motivational Fulfillment & Logistics Services Inc., one of the largest full-service fulfillment and logistics services providers in the nation. Since moving to the new facility in May 2007, the company reported that its electricity bill has dropped 50% and its landscaping fees are nearly 40% less, Watson says. By the end of 2009, Watson will have completed construction on more than two million square feet of speculative industrial buildings designed for LEED certification.

The Hillwood LEED buildings are at Interchange Business Center in San Bernardino, which Hillwood describes as the largest LEED-certified speculative industrial project in the US. The five speculative buildings, which were completed in 2008, range from 94,108 square feet to 448,108 square feet. Hillwood developed the project, then later sold the five buildings to CBRE Investors.

The Interchange center was developed on a 144-acre former Brownfield site in the State College Redevelopment Project Area that dates back to before World War II, when it housed a facility to manufacture silica gel, later being converted for uses involving the testing of incendiary bombs for the military and the production of mineral-based composites used in water softening.

The redeveloped site is the result of a public-private partnership between the city of San Bernardino's Economic Development Agency (EDA) and Hillwood to redevelop a blighted property. The EDA, Hillwood and the San Bernardino Municipal Water District also worked together on a four-million-gallon water reservoir for fire suppression.