

# San Diego to be Recognized for “Green” Building

The first building in the nation to receive the Energy Star Label for Buildings is **San Diego’s Ridgehaven Building**, home to the city’s Environmental Services Department (ESD).

The Ridgehaven building, profiled in the Summer 1997 Partner Update, earned a score of 90 on the Energy Star Benchmarking Tool, meaning the building’s energy performance is in the top 10 percent of buildings in its class.

“I’m happy we’re being recognized because it will raise awareness of what we’ve done, and it will help us serve as a role model for other communities,” said ESD Director **Richard L. Hays**.

The Energy Star Label for Buildings recognizes public and commercial buildings that have energy performance among the top 25 percent of buildings nationwide. It is a joint project of the U.S. Department of Energy and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (see Nov.-Dec. 1998 *Partner Update*).

San Diego bought the three-story, 73,000-square-foot building in 1996 for \$3 million to house the ESD’s headquarters. Employees encouraged Hays and Mayor **Susan Golding**

to turn Ridgehaven into a national model of an energy-efficient, environmentally sound workplace.

They partnered with Rebuild America, San Diego Gas & Electric, the Electric Power Research Institute, Public Technology Inc., and the U.S. Green Building Council to complete a \$2.7 million top-to-bottom renovation. The work included:

- Reusing interior items like doors, partitions, acoustical tiles and window blinds.
- Installing a new HVAC system with high-efficiency water source heat pumps, radial open-type cooling towers that use 5 hp fans, and a computer based centralized control system.
- Applying high-performance window film and vinyl awnings, and lighting the building with T8 fluorescent lamps, electronic ballast and occupancy sensors.
- Installing water-conservation features like low-flush toilets and electronic sensors on faucets.

In addition, the construction crew separated and recycled more than 40 tons of debris. Throughout the project, emphasis was given to materials that were minimally toxic and were recycled, recyclable or renewable.

The results are impressive. Ridgehaven uses 65 percent less energy than it did before the renovation – a savings of \$84,000 a year from the baseline annual costs of \$129,000. The building is also more comfortable for employees, enhancing their productivity.

“Now the building can fulfill its role – and we’re going to continue making improvements and extend the life of the building,” Hays said. One result of the Ridgehaven project was inspiring the San Diego City Council to pass a Green Building policy that codifies the city’s commitment to sustainable development.

*For more information about Ridgehaven, contact Lisa Wood at (619) 573-1236 or e-mail [lfw@sdcity.sannet.gov](mailto:lfw@sdcity.sannet.gov). For more information about the Energy Star Label for Buildings, visit [www.epa.gov/buildinglabel](http://www.epa.gov/buildinglabel).*