

Firms earn well-deserved gold



By **RUTH HEIL**
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When economic development planners named the roads within the seventh Lehigh Valley Industrial Park, they honored former LVIP board members for their contribution to the group's mission of diversifying industry and creating jobs within the region. In 2008, after producing six other parks, LVIP relocated its headquarters from a double-wide trailer to a beautiful building on the route with Otto Spillman's nameplate: Spillman Drive.

Its new headquarters, which sits on the former Bethlehem Steel Site, is now the first building you see when entering LVIP VII (i.e., the gateway building), and it is an accredited example of environmental stewardship.

On Oct. 26 Janet Milkman, executive director of the region-encompassing Delaware Valley Chapter of the U.S. Green Building Council, traveled to Spillman Drive. There she presented not one, but two Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Gold awards. The building received the awards for its high efficiency standards and for environmentally sensitive construction and maintenance strategies. Gold is the second-highest LEED rating possible, which means both the nonprofit LVIP and for-profit Spillman Farmer Architects didn't just deliver a winning performance, they won big.

LVIP was recognized for the building's shell and core (walls, floors, heating system, etc.), and Spillman Farmer received LEED Gold for the interior of its own 7,700-square-foot space (furnishings, lighting, carpeting, etc.). "It takes leadership and hard work to get a gold certification," Milkman said during the award ceremony. "There really aren't that

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many; there's about 14, I think, in the state of Pennsylvania overall out a total of 85 LEED-certified projects." The higher the LEED rating, the higher the standards. Platinum is the highest certification available.

Besides being kind to the environment, green buildings are great for the occupants. There are no harsh smells from the new carpet, glue or paint because the ecofriendly materials do not contain the toxic compounds found in traditional products. The natural lighting, quiet mechanical system and well-designed space all contribute to a pleasant atmosphere. Deirdre Kwiatek, who works for Spillman Farmer, said, "I think it's fabulous to work in a green

office." Even though her company designed the space, she expressed surprise at how much she noticed the improvement.

The concept has gained popularity over the last few years, and architects, project managers, tenants and others are beginning to see substantial economic and health benefits from eco-friendly construction. Efficient buildings cost less to maintain and, as Deirdre's comments illustrate, they increase employee moral and productivity because they are simply nice places to work in.

Although LEED was not originally considered when LVIP decided to move, it turned out to be quite fitting that board chairman Jeffrey Feather agreed with Kathleen McGinty, the former secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, when she encouraged him to construct a green building. This is for a few reasons:

- LVIP was already helping the region's environment by redeveloping unusable, sometimes polluted, land into vibrant economic growth: LVIP VII is located on 1,000 acres within the Bethlehem Steel site.
- Both LVIP and Spillman Farmer are in a great position to serve as a model for future tenants.
- LVIP envisions a bright future for the

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region through increased, diversified employment opportunities and smart infrastructure improvements. Many construction materials were obtained from local manufacturers, which is a measured component when rating a green building, as are bike- and alternative-fuel-car friendly features.

It was anticipated that LVIP would see a 25 percent premium added to the construction costs overall. In the end, however, the actual premium for this building was just 3 percent. LVIP president Kerry Wrobel thanked Spillman Farmer and the following partners for this achievement:

- Allied Building Corp.;
- Snyder Hoffman Associates Inc.;
- Barry Isett and Associates Inc.;
- Hanover Engineering Associates Inc.;
- Concord Facility Services, Inc.;
- Architera PC; and
- 7group.

PPL Corp. was also recognized for its original funding support, and ServiceMaster by Round the Clock Cleaning contributed to the certification through its green cleaning services.

There is an irony within this story that alert readers may have spotted: Spillman Farmer Architects' new address is 1720 Spillman Drive. This was not intentional; it just happened because they wanted to locate their offices within the green space. I would

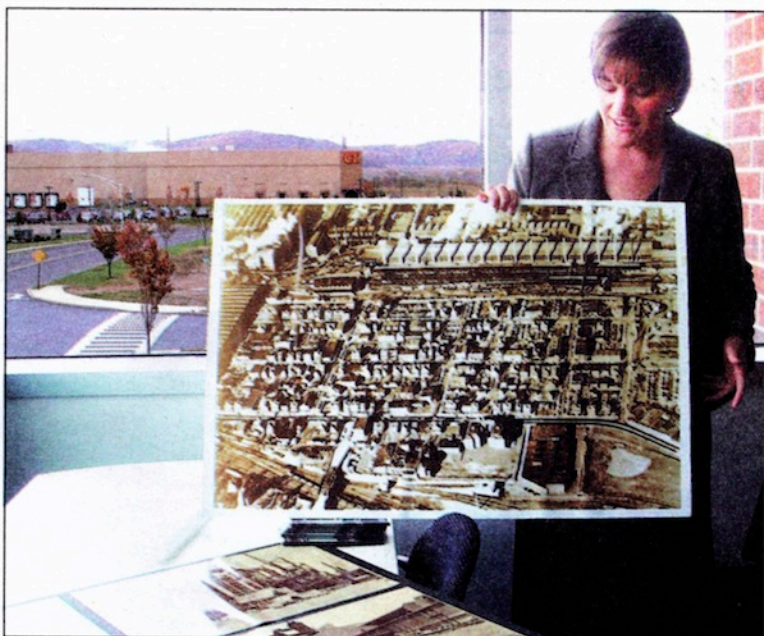


Photo by Ruth Heil

During the green-office tour, Spillman Farmer's Deirdre M. Kwiatek displayed a photo depicting the neighborhood that once existed on the Bethlehem Steel site which LVIP VII now occupies.

guess that the visionary Otto Spillman would have been quite proud.

More information about the Spillman Farmer Architects is available at www.spillmanfarmer.com.

The website of LVIP, including Class A can

be found at www.lvip.org. More information about LEED can be had at www.dvgbc.org.

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