

2009 Green Dot Awards – Built Category

Heery International focuses on green to minimize environmental impact and maximize efficiency of the built environment

What makes Heery International uniquely deserving of the 2009 Green Dot Award? In short, the answer is our long and well documented history of consistently thinking green to benefit owners, shareholders, occupants and the community at large.

Heery International first began addressing the issues of energy conservation and efficiency as well as sustainability in the late 70s on the tail of the Arab Oil Embargo. More than two decades before the US Green Building Council established guidelines for LEED Certification, it launched an energy division to study the built environment as it relates to energy conservation and cost reduction.

When Atlanta based Georgia Power contacted the firm in 1978 to provide design, engineering and energy analysis services for its new downtown headquarters, it was with the understanding that the building would become a working laboratory of energy saving ideas and features, a role model for other Atlanta structures. For example, the 67,000 square foot roof was used as a solar collector field in what was one of the largest commercial applications of an active solar system in the United States. Careful space planning to consolidate common functions among other programming innovations led to the design of a building with a smaller carbon footprint. A stepped back south façade and sun shade tubes helped eliminate solar heat gain in the summer but allow the admission of the sun's rays in winter. The Heery team also specified a 10,000 gallon underground chilled water storage tank, allowing chilled water generation during off-peak demand hours. The bottom line is that careful research enabled the team to help the utility provider create a facility that uses one third the energy of comparable office buildings in the metro Atlanta area.

That may have been Heery's first major sustainable project, but it certainly wasn't the last. Renowned office furniture maker Herman Miller called on Heery in 1979 to provide master planning, design and engineering services for a 1 million square foot office and manufacturing facility. Energy conservation and eco-friendly land usage played critical roles in the facility's siting and design. Building orientation, use of ample natural light and various passive energy conservation features such as passive solar heating, active solar domestic hot water heating, daylighting via horizontal skylights with adjustable louvers were but a few of the features that put Herman Miller at the forefront of companies seeking to be good stewards of the environment while creating a natural and healthy environment for employees.

When Home Depot decided the time was right in 1993 to consolidate and expand its corporate offices, it tasked Heery with designing and engineering a sustainable, energy efficient campus known as the Store Support Center (SSC). First, a commitment was made to using sustainable materials wherever possible. Additionally, a control system for the lighting, low-e glass, and a tight building envelope helped the SSC use less energy. The variable-speed pumping slows when loads taper off at night, while exhaust from the building is cycled through an energy recovery wheel. Key to its efficiency and a unique aspect of the center's infrastructure is Home Depot's central energy plant. In most office complexes, every building stands on its own. Each has its own incoming power and transformers, its own cooling towers, chillers and boilers. An effective master plan allowed the team to specify more efficient systems that take up less space. The campus uses approximately 60% less energy than comparable Atlanta office buildings. It also enjoys some of the lowest life cycle costs of any building in Metro Atlanta, which has pleased executives and shareholders.

When Turner Properties, the manager of Atlanta's CNN Center, wanted to get a better handle on managing energy costs, they commissioned Heery in 1998 to conduct both an energy audit and a benchmarking study of energy-use indicators to predict future use and understand how future renovations would impact energy use. More than ten years later, Heery and Turner are proud of the results they've achieved. Over the course of the partnership, Turner has kept 1,600,000 tons of carbon dioxide from entering the atmosphere, the equivalent of taking 254,000 cars off the road.

Fast forward to the 21st Century and Heery continues to promote sustainable, energy efficient design and construction. The firm's architects and engineers have used the design build delivery method to bring Oak Ridge National Laboratory's first LEED Certified buildings to fruition. In Loveland, Colorado, Heery architects were responsible for designing Medical Center of the Rockies, a LEED Gold targeted hospital. Our Atlanta Interior Design group provided the impetus to help GA Power earn LEED Gold on two daycare facilities, a first for Georgia daycare facilities. Our project managers have played critical roles in managing the design and construction of the first LEED targeted facilities on CalTech's Pasadena, CA campus, first LEED Certified library for the city of Fontana, CA, first LEED Certified K-12 school in South Carolina, first LEED Targeted K-12 school for City of Atlanta Public Schools, and the first LEED Targeted Ronald McDonald House in California. Our commissioning staff played a critical role in bringing about the first LEED Gold winery in the nation and is currently hard at work consulting on what will be the first LEED Certified power plant in the nation.

Heery engineers are currently helping Cousins Properties achieve LEED Certification on the 999 Peachtree Building, an energy efficient facility for which Heery provided architecture and engineering services more than 20 years ago.

While more than 250 employees have gained their designation as LEED Accredited Professionals, the company isn't only focused on sustainability as it applies to US Green Building Council standards. Our team members are equally adept at sustainability criteria created by organizations such as the Collaborative for High Performance Schools. Heery recognizes that not every client will seek formal certification, but believes it's critical to educate clients and prospects about the long term benefits of sustainable design and construction as well as specify materials and processes that are as sustainable as possible.

While facilities such as Home Depot headquarters and Medical Center of the Rockies show the public side of Heery's sustainability philosophy, much of its efforts take place within the firm's own walls. Several years ago, for example, Heery commissioned a researcher to help the company get a more global sense about the state of sustainable building in Georgia. Given the company's expertise in both sustainable building and school construction, Heery was asked to author a white paper for a national school building publication. Heery also initiated an e-group community that allows architects, designers, engineers and commissioning agents from offices around the country to support each other and stay abreast of regulatory changes through the firm's intranet. Atlanta Public Schools may be installing its first geothermal system, but Heery can draw on experience from projects in cities like Denver and Seattle to address potential challenges and ensure the employment of best practices. This same system is used for communication between employees seeking LEED Accreditation and those that have already been accredited. Suggestions for study tools flow freely for all interested parties.

Thinking green also plays a role in Heery's Heery from the Heart Annual Community Service Month program. During the month of April, employees from the company's more than 30 offices are encouraged to give back to their local communities through activities that impact the environment, schools/children, or home building/repair. Approximately 700 employees were involved in physically revitalizing communities while participating in activities ranging from tree planting in Los Angeles to park landscaping in Atlanta to beach cleanups in Jacksonville.

And the company continues to expand on its own internal sustainability standards using recycled materials and fine tuning online documentation systems to conserve paper usage.

The bottom line is clear. While some companies in recent years have begun recognizing the need to jump on the sustainability wagon, Heery has, for more than thirty years, been at the reins, shaping our skyline one sustainable project at a time.