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Top Business

Building could get 'green' certificate

June 29, 2003

TIM KNAUSS
UTILITY NOTEBOOK

Syracuse might be on the way to having a "green building" certified under the national Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design (LEED) standard.

Baker Laboratory, a mostly four-story building tucked away behind the Carrier Dome on the campus of SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry, is undergoing a renovation that campus leaders expect to result in LEED certification.

To get the building certified, college officials must document that the renovation follows standards established by the U.S. Green Building Council that focus on reducing energy use, recycling materials, using natural light, reducing water use and so on.

Wednesday, about three dozen people - professors, students, architects, engineers and others - gathered at Baker to brainstorm ideas on how to proceed. College president Cornelius Murphy, one of the participants, said the session provided lots of ideas, including these:

Put photovoltaic cells on part of the roof to convert sunlight into power for the campus' electric vehicles.

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Establish a "green roof" of grass or plants on part of the roof to absorb water and insulate.

Collect any water runoff in a tank and use it for washing vehicles.

Incorporate skylights and glass panels for natural lighting.

Recycle demolition debris as appropriate.

Integrate with the heating and air conditioning system windows that can be opened.

Use geothermal heat to melt ice on the sidewalks.

Baker Lab was built in the late 1950s. It's been undergoing renovation for about four years and is about to enter the final phase, which will involve gutting and replacing the interior of the four-story section of the building, Murphy said.

The \$30 million project is due to be completed in 2006.

Consultant Rick Fedrizzi, who coordinated the brainstorming session, or "charrette," said Baker Lab will participate in a LEED pilot program for existing buildings, which means the project might contribute to refining the standards. Fedrizzi is founding chairman of the U.S. Green Building Council.

Fedrizzi said local interest in low-impact, environmentally friendly building design is on the rise. Nonprofit agency Enable and the village of East Syracuse recently convened sustainable design charrettes for planned building additions, he said.

The renovation of the Rosamond Gifford Zoo, completed last year, also followed guidelines established by the Green Building Council, but did not pursue formal LEED certification, Fedrizzi said.

PSC names security chief William Flynn, chairman of the state Public Service Commission, has appointed a veteran FBI agent to coordinate security programs for the state's utility system. John J. Sennett, a 23-year FBI veteran, on Tuesday will become the PSC's chief of utility security. Sennett, who worked most recently in the FBI's Albany office, has experience with criminal, counter-intelligence and counter-terrorism investigations.

He will be responsible for the PSC's program to monitor utility security planning and performance. The job pays \$87,000 a year. After the terror attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, the PSC started working with utilities to address the security of both physical systems and the computer networks that control them.

"Improving the security of New York's energy and telecommunications infrastructures will be one of my highest priorities as chairman," Flynn said in a statement released Friday. Staff writer Tim Knauss reports on energy and telecommunications for The Post-Standard. To contact him, call 470-3023, fax 470-2142 or send e-mail to his attention at business@syracuse.com

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