

Chubbock apartment complex earns LEED platinum

By Dani Grigg

IDAHO CONSTRUCTION REVIEW

Glancey Rockwell & Associates shot from zero to hero in the green building world when it designed Cardona Senior Apartments, the first apartment complex in Idaho to be certified through the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design system.

On the Boise firm's first LEED project ever, it earned platinum certification – the highest level possible.

"We jumped in with both feet," said project manager Justin Wall.

The certification was awarded March 19, a year after construction of the 48-unit Chubbock complex finished up.

The architecture firm partnered with Boise-based Thomas Development Co. and Butte, Mont.-based Markovich Construction on the project. Cardona was Markovich's first LEED project, as well.

And two more LEED projects have followed for Glancey Rockwell and Thomas Development: Working with Pacific West of Idaho Falls, they recently completed Rosslare Senior Apartments and are halfway through construction on Summerhill Apartments, both in Idaho Falls and both aiming for platinum certification.

"It was a steep learning curve at first; it was a great experience, though, just learning what can be done," Wall said. "A big part of the success was bringing in LEED consulting early on and assembling the team, getting involved early."

For Cardona, the team brought in consultant Tady Duby of Boise-based OnPoint, LLC.

Wall said building to strict green standards meant looking at the process through different eyes: Each step had to be examined for environmental impact.

The site was selected for proximity to existing development, and it incorporates low-water landscaping. Interior plumbing also strives for water efficiency, and the apartments include fluorescent lights and Energy Star appliances. Efficient windows and insula-



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Cardona Senior Apartments in Chubbock is the first apartment complex in Idaho to earn LEED certification.

tion meant the complex exceeds energy code performance requirements by more than 30 percent.

Almost all the construction waste – 99.5 percent – was diverted from the landfill through reuse and recycling. Structural analysis and advanced framing techniques led to savings of \$128,000 on framing costs, according to a press release from the project team.

Wall said upfront additional costs weren't too much of an issue, but the main added expenses came from third-party verification and upgrading to efficient and environmental products.

"Obviously we focused on local materials where possible, and that doesn't always mean the cheapest materials, but it helps the local economy and reduces the carbon footprint of the project," he said.

Claire Casazza, director of development for

Thomas, said the company is planning on focusing on green building in all its affordable housing projects from now on. She said that decision was made in 2006.

"For one thing, it felt like it was the right direction to go in in reducing our footprint and cutting down waste, and also improving the durability and maintenance of the development," she said.

"Reducing utility costs is a win-win situation: It's helpful for the owners and also helpful for residents. As utility costs continue to rise, we want to ensure that we do everything possible to keep those possible for our residents."

Other companies involved in the project included Twin Falls-based EHM Engineers, Boise-based Pinnacle Engineers and Meridian-based Harvest Design.