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Sun Harbor Marina The World's first LEED-Certified Building

Seeing Sun Harbor Marina on San Diego Bay for the very first time, one notices the beautiful Mediterranean architecture and rich colors of the buildings. Take a closer look, and you immediately see the care and thought put into its sustainable features. Whether it's the recycling bins or recycled paving, these features add up to a shining example of San Diego architecture and the reason Sun Harbor has the distinction of being the first LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Certified Marina in the world.

Sun Harbor Marina boasts three energy efficient buildings including a restaurant, office and retail space and docks for 105 boats. In business for 60 years, former Sun Harbor Marina owner/manager Mary Lou LoPreste wanted to do something different when it came time to rebuild the marina—she wanted to go “green” and use sustainable environmental practices. “Choosing the right materials, minimizing energy use, maximizing water efficiency and creating a healthy work environment is absolutely the future of building,” said LoPreste.

Inspired by a European village, the marina's design proves that “green” buildings can also be beautiful. A mosaic fountain sculpture creates a focal point and central meeting place that attracts visitors to a LEED information center where they can learn more about designing environmentally friendly buildings.

The LEED Green Building Rating System is the nationally accepted benchmark for the design, construction, and operation of high performance green buildings. There are four levels of certification: LEED Certified, Silver, Gold and Platinum. LEED promotes a whole-building approach to sustainability by recognizing performance in five key areas of human and environmental health: sustainable site development, water savings, energy efficiency, materials selection, and indoor environmental quality.

Sun Harbor sustainable elements cover a wide spectrum and include everything from advanced lighting controls that take advantage of day lighting to using renewable building material such as bamboo flooring. Entry grates are made from recycled airplane tires, and designated parking spots are provided for carpools and hybrid vehicles. Water efficiency is a key component too. Low flow faucets and showerheads, sensors on faucets and automatic drip irrigation for plants are all incorporated into the marina's design.

The beauty of the surrounding environment enhances the enjoyment of the building for tenants. Magnificent views of San Diego harbor from most offices enable the occupants to connect with the outside marine environment. In a day and age when many people work in buildings with windows that do not open, these buildings offer natural ventilation through operable windows in each office that catch the ocean breeze.

This showcase building participated in San Diego Gas & Electric's Sustainable Communities Program (SCP), which encourages sustainable development, promotes green building design practices and creates demonstration sites that serve as models for other projects. Incentives are given to projects that greatly exceed California Energy Efficiency Standards, obtain LEED certification and evaluate on-site renewable energy systems. This unique program was launched in 2004, becoming the standard for future utility sustainable community programs in California.

Sun Harbor Marina joins a wide range of green projects that have participated in SDG&E's SCP. Pioneer SCP projects include LEED Gold buildings, TKG Consulting Engineers—the original LEED certified building in the San Diego region—and the San Ysidro Department of Motor Vehicles—the first state building in San Diego County to achieve LEED Gold. In addition to San Diego's two ground-breaking LEED Gold buildings, the Ranch House at Del Sur is currently seeking LEED Platinum status, which will make it the first LEED Platinum building in San Diego County.

Environmental benefits for the San Diego community are easily measurable. Already completed SCP projects, with 12 more currently in development, create an annual energy savings exceeding 2,430,580 kilowatt hours (kWh) combined. This translates into reductions of greenhouse gases totaling 2,580 pounds of nitrogen oxides, 1,494 pounds of sulfur dioxides, and 2,131,497 pounds (1,066 tons) of carbon dioxide (CO₂). A reduction of 1,066 tons of CO₂ emissions is the equivalent of removing 186 cars or 133 SUVs from the road, and/or the benefit received from planting 288 acres of trees. Other direct impacts include reduced transportation, landfill waste, water usage, waste water run-off, and overall healthier work spaces.

According to LoPreste, “Development that satisfies the objectives without sacrificing our natural resources for future generations, is ‘building responsibly.’”

Through exquisite design practices and extraordinary energy efficiency, award winning Sun Harbor Marina exemplifies the term “sustainable building”. Visitors, tenants and boat owners alike, enjoy the efforts made to live and work in a sustainable, beautiful, and natural setting.



The Sun Harbor Marina in San Diego, Calif. is LEEDS certified.



Green buildings can also be beautiful, as Sun Harbor Marina proves.