



# **VERTEGY HELPS SIMMONS LAW FIRM IN ALTON, ILL., EARN LEED CERTIFICATION**

March 15 2012 9:18 AM

St. Louis, Mo., March 14, 2012... St. Louis-based Vertegy, which has already helped a significant number of buildings in the St. Louis region earn LEED certification, has added another local project to its portfolio. The sustainability consulting firm was recently notified by the U.S. Green Building Council that Simmons Law Firm's national headquarters building, located in the Middletown Historic District in Alton, Ill., earned LEED certification. The building is the 34th LEED project Vertegy has had a hand in and the firm's first project certified under the new LEED 2009 rating system.

Simmons Law Firm is a leading asbestos and mesothelioma law firm. It was founded in 1999 and has offices in Alton, St. Louis, Chicago, San Francisco and El Segundo, Calif. The firm's local employees had been housed in seven offices throughout the region, so Simmons decided to unite all the regional offices and employees in one location. The firm purchased the former Smurfit-Stone Container Corp. building, located at One Court St. in Alton, with the goal of transforming the five-story, 1970s-era building that overlooks the Mississippi River into an environmentally friendly headquarters building. Along with Vertegy, the project team that worked to turn the firm's dream into reality also included Swansea, Ill.-based Holland Construction and Hurford Architects, Inc., of Glen Carbon, Ill.

The site was selected due to its close proximity to Alton's major transportation infrastructure, and the fact that 96 percent of the existing structure could be re-used. Vertegy assisted with the sustainable design process, incorporating a number of green

features throughout the 68,000-square-foot building, which houses 70 offices, 130 workspaces, six meeting rooms and an auditorium. Features that helped Simmons Law Firm garner the LEED certification include the following:

- Light-colored, highly reflective roofing material and a green roof with patio access for employee enjoyment, which were incorporated to reduce the heat island effect.
- The installation and specification of water-efficient flush and flow fixtures in the restrooms and low-flow faucets in the kitchen and employee break rooms.
- Recycled materials, which can be found in many of the products specified and installed in the building, including steel, concrete, roofing membrane, masonry and tiles.
- Numerous windows, which allow for maximum natural lighting.
- Preferred parking for low-emitting/fuel-efficient and carpool vehicles.

Energy-efficiency was also very important to the project team and Simmons Law Firm. However, because the design team was using an existing building and needed to maintain as much of the structure as possible, the task of achieving the optimum glass-to-skin ratio to minimize energy loss posed some challenges. To solve this problem, an energy-efficient glass was used to maximize efficiency and reduce glare from expansive views. The team also chose to use whole-building simulation for energy modeling and utilized a DOE-2 energy model to help provide information about the energy efficiency of the building and to guide the design process. This resulted in an estimated energy savings of more than 35 percent from a conventional building.

To help provide the healthiest indoor air quality possible for employees, clients and visitors, the project team followed a no/low-emitting VOC policy as well as a Construction Indoor Air Quality Management program during construction. The building was also designed and constructed to minimize indoor chemicals and pollutants commonly found in many building products.

"We were thrilled to be a part of this project team and not only transform this old facility into an environmentally friendly office space but also help the owners fulfill their goal of creating a LEED certified building," said Thomas Taylor, general manager of Vertegy and sustainable building industry leader. "The attorneys at Simmons Law Firm are now working in an occupant-friendly facility which will be a model for sustainability for years to come."

For more information about the project or Vertegy's services, call 314.733.2666 or visit [www.vertegyconsultants.com](http://www.vertegyconsultants.com).

Founded in February 2005, Vertegy provides clients with design, procurement and construction consulting services for green and sustainable facilities. One of the key ways

Vertegy serves clients is by helping them gain certification for their projects from various nationally and internationally recognized certification bodies, such as the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC), which provides LEED (Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design) certification. Vertegy - which is derived from combining the Latin root for green and strategy - is based in St. Louis at the LEED Platinum Alberici Corporate Headquarters.