Beijing mall wins top US award

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By Sun Yuanqing |   
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Malls used to be all about shopping, but as air quality becomes one of the top concerns globally, some of them have set out to make themselves urban retreats.   
Beijing's Parkview Green, a complex that includes offices, a shopping mall, an art center and a hotel, was recently awarded the LEED Dynamic Plaque by the US Green Building Council, a nonprofit organization based in Washington which promotes sustainability in buildings.   
This follows the LEED Platinum certification it earned in 2009.   
Parkview Green is the first building in the Asia-Pacific region to win the plaque.   
LEED, or Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, is a rating system developed by USGBC that encourages green practices in the real estate industry by measuring energy efficiency, water conservation, waste and recycling, transportation and user experience. It is used in more than 160 countries.   
The LEED Dynamic Plaque, which was launched recently, emphasizes a building's performance like real-time monitoring for environmental protection and energy conservation, and user experience.   
With its glass exterior and steel frame structures, Parkview Green's energy consumption is 50 percent lower than industry standards. It also has a rain collection system that filters rain water for irrigation, and an air filtration system that keeps the PM2.5 under 60 at all times.   
Oliver Lai, Parkview Green's general manager, says that environmental protection is not about design, but is in day-to-day operations. "This is not just an award. It is a lifetime motivator for us to be part of the green movement," he says.   
While this type of building requires more investment in the early stages, the cost will balance out in a few decades with the energy saved, he adds.   
Parkview Green will display real-time energy conservation data in the building.   
Sarah Alexander, the vice-president of USGBC, says that China is now the second country after the United States in LEED usage, with more than 3,300 projects, which cover more than 161 million square meters.   
"Market transformation happens one project at a time, and China has an opportunity to drive sustainability on a global scale."   
In the next five years, she says she hopes China will aspire to getting thousands of buildings certified and set a goal of 1 billion square meters of certified space.   
Feng Yi, vice-chairman of the Beijing Construction Association, says he hopes the construction industry in China follows the Parkview Green example and becomes part of the green building movement.   
   
   
   
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