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Kitchell Manages Construction of First LEED® Silver-certified Facility for California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation

(Soledad, Calif.) March 12, 2010 – Completed this past summer, the Salinas Valley State Prison’s (SVSP) additional 64-bed mental health facility has become the first California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) project to qualify for LEED Silver.

The single-story, 36,783-square-foot mental health facility includes a 31,166-square-foot housing treatment facility and 5,617-square-foot administration addition. The treatment building is arranged in four wings of 16 cells each. The administration building expansion provides additional administrative offices, record storage, a pharmacy and training rooms. The existing administration building has also been remodeled to accommodate additional clinical staff.

The project required careful planning. After the original \$21.1-million budget was approved, California’s governor issued an executive order requiring that the design, construction and operation of new and renovated state-owned facilities paid for with state funds achieve LEED Silver criteria.

“We are very proud to have met the challenge of successfully leading the design of CDCR’s first LEED facility. We set the standard for this and future CDCR projects by reducing water usage by half and energy usage by a third,” says George Dyckes, Kitchell deputy program manager.

Kitchell, which provided program management, design review, value engineering and cost-estimating services, proceeded with these LEED certification requirements.

Qualifying for LEED certification is more straightforward for an office building than for a prison facility. In a secure setting, adding a window or skylight to achieve LEED credits for daylight and views becomes an expensive proposition. It requires security glazing and secure grills, which can cost 20 times more than standard glazing. And while landscaping is an easy, inexpensive way to contribute to LEED credits on an office building, prisons don’t include any landscaping because it creates hiding places for inmates and contraband.

CDCR relied on Kitchell to help identify which LEED strategies to implement. Kitchell and Nacht & Lewis Architects collaborated to hire Green Building Services, an experienced sustainable design consultant.

Because the level of LEED certification is based on accumulated credits, Kitchell reviewed sustainable design features that could be achieved based on feasibility and cost. “We developed a spreadsheet to track the cost of each LEED credit that we considered pursuing,” Dyckes says. This atypical step allowed Kitchell to document the incremental cost of LEED certification to budget for future projects.

For example, the SVSP has a very limited water supply, so Kitchell reviewed ways to lessen usage. One option was to install a rainwater collection system. However, at a cost of \$1 million to gain one LEED credit, it wasn't cost-effective. But installing an overhead vacuum plumbing system made sense. Vacuum plumbing reduces overall building water usage by half and it's almost impossible to clog. At an incremental cost of approximately \$300,000, it was a cost-effective way to gain four credits. This installation was the first of its kind in a U.S. prison and early feedback from use is very positive. In fact, CDCR plans to implement vacuum plumbing in some of its future designs.

Because water usage was reduced by half, wastewater generated by the facility was reduced by a commensurate amount. This was a significant achievement, since the City of Soledad's wastewater-treatment plant is at capacity. By finding a way to reduce generation of wastewater, the City did not have to upgrade its wastewater treatment plant, which saved a substantial amount of money.

In addition, 92 percent of construction waste (868,000 tons) was diverted from landfills through an aggressive recycling program.

One of the nation's top 35 construction management firms, Kitchell provides program, project and construction management services for public-sector clients in the western United States and other areas of the country. Clients include K-12 school districts, community colleges, universities and city, county, state and federal government entities. Services span all phases of construction, from pre-design, through design, construction, start-up and occupancy.

Kitchell has offices in Phoenix, Arizona and Sacramento, San Jose, Fresno, Carlsbad, Santa Barbara and Ontario, California. Kitchell Corporation also owns American Refrigeration Supplies, a wholesale distributor of air-conditioning and refrigeration parts, supplies and equipment, with 31 branches in six states. Learn more about Kitchell at www.kitchell.com.

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