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## **Columbia Credit Union Earns Second LEED Gold Certification**

### **Grand Central branch realizes energy and water savings in first year**

Vancouver, WA – Columbia Credit Union was awarded the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Gold Certification by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) for its Grand Central branch, located off Highway 14 in Vancouver, Washington. Completed in June 2008, the branch is Vancouver's first LEED Gold Certified financial institution. The credit union's Washougal branch was awarded LEED Gold Certification earlier this year.

“We've created a healthy environment for our members, a productive atmosphere for staff, and invested in a sustainable future that benefits everyone,” said Columbia Interim CEO Steve Kenny. “Building sustainable and healthy branches is one way we choose to give back to the communities we serve.”

Built to rigorous LEED standards for sustainable building design and performance, the branch has realized significant energy and water savings in its first year. “Our Grand Central branch uses about half the gas and electricity and 40 percent less water on average than our comparable branches,” said Kenny. Additional water savings are anticipated in year two, after this first year of establishing the landscape plants with extra water.

(more)

To earn LEED certification, the USGBC uses a points-based system for satisfying criteria meeting specific environmental impacts. Columbia applied for and earned 42 points toward Gold Certification for site selection, energy use, lighting, water and material use, waste management, air quality and innovation in design.

Significant environmental savings that contributed to the gold status includes a 75 percent reduction in construction waste. “Throughout the construction process, work crews carefully separated scrap metal, wood and concrete for recycling,” said Kenny. “This prevented excess building materials from going to landfills.”

EHS Design Architects developed the branch design in cooperation with Paladino & Company, Inc., an internationally recognized leader in green building design and LEED certification. Notable green features include an omni-directional skylight, a cistern for rainwater collection, porous concrete, FSC certified lumber, corn fiber work station panels, and guest chairs made from recycled seat belts.

For more information about Columbia Credit Union, please visit [www.columbiacu.org](http://www.columbiacu.org).

**About Columbia Credit Union:** Established in 1952, Columbia Credit Union has more than \$750 million in assets and 12 Clark County, WA locations. Columbia serves nearly 64,000 members and garnered an industry benchmark member satisfaction rating of 97 percent. Columbia is nationally recognized for employee satisfaction from experts PBS and Associates as a “Best Place to Work.” Columbia was voted “Best Financial Institution” in Clark County by The Columbian newspaper and ranks as the top local Clark County auto lender. Committed to sustainability, Columbia is home to Clark County’s first financial institution branches built to strict LEED standards set by the U.S. Green Building Council. Individuals and businesses in Washington State are eligible for membership. For more information, visit [www.columbiacu.org](http://www.columbiacu.org).

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