

[Scottsdale](#)

SkySong earns certification from Green Building Council

by **Jane Larson** - Jul. 20, 2009 10:42 AM
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SkySong is officially "green."

The first two buildings at SkySong, the [ASU Scottsdale Innovation Center](#), received Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design certification from the U.S. Green Building Council this month .

It is the fifth project in Scottsdale to earn [LEED certification](#), and just the third new commercial project in the state to be certified in the core-and-shell category, which is for buildings minus tenant improvements.

"It was important for us from the very beginning to set a different standard at SkySong in everything we are doing," said Sharon Harper, [chief executive officer](#) of Plaza Cos., the Glendale company that is co-developing SkySong with Chicago-based Higgins Development Partners. "In addition to the focus on being a global portal for innovation and technology, this is setting a new standard."

The project earned certification at the silver level in the core-and-shell category. Silver is the third of four levels of certification from the green-building council, behind platinum and gold and ahead of certified.

Two four-story, 150,000-square-foot [office buildings](#) have been built at SkySong so far. Designed to attract global, high-tech companies interested in working with Arizona State University faculty and students, the innovation center replaced the shuttered Los Arcos [shopping mall](#) at Scottsdale and McDowell roads.

SkySong scored green-building points in a good mix of categories, said Matthew Pridemore, senior manager at Higgins. They included:

- Water efficiency and reduction, for the use of native plants and water-saving landscaping.
- Energy performance, for systems that have reduced actual energy use more than 14 percent below the green building council's base standards.
- Materials, which include much of the recycled steel used for the building frames.
- Indoor environmental quality, for the use of low-emissions materials, green cleaning products and designs that take advantage of daylight and views.

The green-building certification is helping SkySong set itself apart in the tough commercial real-estate market, particularly with prospective tenants in environmentally friendly businesses. "It means something to them, as well," Pridemore said.

The first building houses ASU innovation and entrepreneurship programs, offices for Canon U.S.A. Inc. and a number of smaller firms. The second building, where Ticketmaster is the largest tenant, is nearly 50 percent leased, Pridemore said.

The shade structure over SkySong's plaza, though "LEED-friendly" and useful for reducing the heat-island effect, is not part of this certification, Pridemore said. It was still under construction when developers submitted the LEED application, and they plan to include it when they seek certification for the third office building.

The design for that 159,000-square-foot building was approved unanimously last week by the city's Development Review Board. The building would occupy the southwest quadrant of the plaza.

A construction start date has not been set, but Harper said the approval will allow the developers to "move very quickly when the right tenant is available."

The SkySong certification means some 62 buildings in Arizona now have received LEED certifications.

The other Scottsdale locations are the Granite Reef Senior Center and Vanguard Group's offices, both at the gold level; Moran [Architects](#)' office, silver level; and General Dynamics Corp.'s Roosevelt facility, certified level.

Dial Corp. says it will seek LEED certification for its new headquarters in north Scottsdale.