

# Rocky Mountain News

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## Green building plants a new image in cityscape

By **John Rebchook**, Rocky Mountain News  
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At today's official grand opening of the EPA Region 8 headquarters building, the roof, with 40,000 different plants and a stunning view of Denver's skyline, is sure to take center stage.

"It's the first green roof in downtown Denver," said Aaron Nelson, project manager for the nonprofit Alliance for Sustainable Colorado.

The group is a neighbor of the new EPA building, which was built on the site of the former Postal Annex building at 15th and Wynkoop streets.

Nelson, who toured the building recently, noted that more than 50 percent of the materials in the roof come from the Denver area, which means less time being transported, reducing emissions.

"That's something that is seldom mentioned with green building - it's good for the local economy," Nelson said.

Marshall Burton, a vice president of Opus Northwest, the developer, said the company has applied for a Gold rating for the building under the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, or LEED, standards.

Not only do the plants on the roof help manage and clean rain water by filtering out pollutants, "it reduces the heat island effect" found in cities because of sunlight reflecting off concrete, Burton said. "Green roofs should help with global warming."

Burton said the EPA building can serve as a model for future construction.

"In the life of each city there are only a few chances to build beyond the known and deliver an addition to the skyline that forges a path forward," Burton said.

He said the EPA building marries the "historic character of the area with sustainable technologies that will carry all of us into the future. This building isn't simply a signature project for Opus; it is the beginning of better building we believe will become a standard in the region."

Robert E. Roberts, the Environmental Protection Agency's regional manager, said that the building at 1595 Wynkoop St. "well represents the mission" of the agency.

In a statement, he said the building is "on the cutting edge of what a green building can offer . . . and is an example for future office development projects."

## EPA Region 8 headquarters building at a glance

- **Address:** 1595 Wynkoop St., on site of former Postal Annex building.
- **Size:** Nine stories, 292,000 square feet.
- **Owner:** Government Properties paid \$91.3 million for it last year.
- **Developer:** Opus Northwest
- **Architect:** Zimmer Gunsul Frasca Architects of Portland, Ore.
- **Energy-saving and sustainable features:** 20,000-square-foot green roof that uses drought-resistant native vegetation to manage and clean rain water; 48 photovoltaic panels on the south side of the roof that can generate 10 kilowatts of power; bamboo, a fast-growing and renewable wood, used throughout a two-story lobby; a nine-story atrium increases natural day lighting and reduces light energy loads; energy efficient heating and cooling systems; recycled materials used throughout. Also, the roof was built so it can accommodate wind turbines.

Source: Opus Northwest

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EPA Region 8  
headquarters building