River Crest Elementary Earns Sustainability Honor, Meets 'WOW' Factor on Price
Project completed well below average costs

River Crest Elementary School in Hudson, Wisconsin, designed and built by Appleton-based Hoffman LLC, was recently awarded the esteemed designation of Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED®) Gold from the United States Green Building Council (USGBC), the nation's foremost authority on green buildings. With the honor, River Crest became the first elementary school in Wisconsin to receive Gold under the USGBC's new LEED for Schools Rating System.

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> —Mary Bowen-Eggebraaten, Hudson Superintendent of Schools

An impressive accomplishment on its own, River Crest's story becomes even more remarkable when learning the school was designed and built for $166/square foot—including design, site work, construction, furnishings, fixtures, and equipment. That total project cost is ***$57/square foot less than, or 29% below***, the average cost for public elementary schools built in Illinois, Minnesota, and Wisconsin in 2008 as reported in *School Planning & Management's* "2009 Construction Report".

That's quite a bargain for a school that became just the second public elementary school ***in the nation*** to receive Gold under LEED for Schools. Additionally, it is the second of only two public school buildings in the state to receive LEED Gold designation—the first being Hoffman's Northland Pines High School project in Eagle River in 2006.

"River Crest's LEED Gold certification validates and confirms that sustainable design and construction can be done at or below conventional costs," stated Mark Hanson, Hoffman's Director of Sustainable Services.

While creating a highly-sustainable learning environment was key to the project, equally important was providing the community with a 21st century school that was functional and aesthetically pleasing. But could it be done at a cost so low?

"My first thought when I saw River Crest is that it had a very smart design," commented Kathleen Mullvain, River Crest fifth grade teacher. "I'm really passionate about keeping grade levels together so that teachers and students can work together within their grade level teams. So, my first thought was, how wonderful that all of the fifth grade classrooms would be together and that we can share resources and rooms."

Pat Hodges, River Crest Principal, agreed that there is something special about the school's architecture. "I was very impressed with the design of the school. I love its soft, contemporary look. The comments I've heard from the public have been very positive. People really like the feel, flow, and details of the building."

According to Mary Bowen-Eggebraaten, Hudson Superintendent of Schools, community residents' enthusiasm for the design of their new elementary school was exceeded only by

their delight in the cost to have it built. “The final ‘WOW’ for community members was when the cost per square foot was beneath the area cost per square foot of conventional construction, not even green construction,” said Bowen-Eggebraaten. “That was the extra ‘WOW’ that people in the community were thrilled about. We wanted our community, our taxpayers, to know that they were getting a great value for their investment.”

Said Paul J. Hoffman, Hoffman LLC owner and CEO, “In River Crest Elementary, the district has a school that not only showcases their commitment to sustainability as a LEED Gold building, but one that has impressed the community from both an aesthetic and financial standpoint.”

From the project’s beginning, the Hudson School District, led by Bowen-Eggebraaten and the Hudson Board of Education, set their sights on creating a school that would be a model of sustainable design and practices for River Crest’s students and staff, the entire district, and the greater community. Pursuing LEED certification was at the core of that goal. “We are committed to environmental sustainability,” explained Bowen-Eggebraaten. “Designing and building with LEED certification in mind pushed us and I wouldn’t want to create another building without it.”

“We really wanted to create a green school, but we didn’t know much about LEED,” added Bowen-Eggebraaten. “We interviewed a number of firms and were very impressed with Hoffman’s sustainable design expertise and LEED experience. As a result of the high quality Hoffman provided during design, we selected them as our construction manager as well.”

Bowen-Eggebraaten recognizes that River Crest’s success is due to the commitment of Board members who started the process and believed in building sustainably, and those members who worked to make sure the district was pushing itself for LEED Gold throughout construction.

“It’s an honor and validation to receive LEED Gold,” continued Bowen-Eggebraaten. “And to achieve it well below average costs is extremely satisfying. Hoffman, through its design of River Crest, has set a new standard for construction in the Hudson community and given the district the proud distinction of being a leader in sustainability—and more importantly—a leader in designing space for learning.”