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New building continues to make favorable impression on local trade publications

While the Victoria Wellens Center of the Wisconsin Humane Society Ozaukee Campus in Saukville has become a haven for animals and animal lovers, it also continues to rack up prestigious honors for its innovative building.

The latest addition to the shelter's trophy case came last week when it was named the recipient of the 2011 Business Real Estate Award presented by the Milwaukee Business Journal.

The nomination was made in the "best new development, special purpose" category.

Judging for the award was done by a panel that included Ricardo Diaz, president of the United Community Center in Milwaukee; Bob Greenstreet, dean of the School of Architecture at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and Milwaukee city planner; David Krill, founder of the Marquette University Center for Real Estate; and Deborah Tomczyk, a real-estate attorney with Reinhart Boerner Van Dueren in Milwaukee.

The building was also chosen as a top project by The Daily Reporter, the regional newspaper of the construction trade. The award is to be presented at a ceremony next month.

The shelter, which is named in honor of the Humane Society's former executive director who died in 2009, opened in March 2011.

The 22,000-square-foot building is undergoing certification in the LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) program, an achievement which would make it among the first LEED Gold animal shelters in the Midwest.

Attention was given to design details so that animals can be kept in stress-free environments. Classroom space was also incorporated into the building, allowing the Humane Society to host a variety of classes.

Kubala Washatko Architects of Cedarburg worked with the engineering firm Ring & DuChateau and general contractor CG Schmidt in creating the state-of-the-art building.

As many as 50 dogs and 80 cats are housed in cage-free adoption spaces intended to replicate home environments.

Thanks to the inviting new facilities at 630 W. Dekora St., animal adoptions have more than doubled in the shelter's first year.

Prior to the facility opening, the Humane Society maintained a shelter in the former concessions stand of the 57 Outdoor theater in Grafton.

The $6 million facility was designed and built with energy saving and preservation of resources in mind.

The new building has energized the shelter's corps of volunteer, too. According to shelter officials, the local program now has 366 volunteers, with 200 of those offering their help since the building opened.

The Humane Society has been able to enhance its educational programs at the shelter, attracting even more people.

Officials report that 550 students took part in educational outreach programs at the shelter last year. Another 220 Scouts were involved in activities at the building.

The educational components extend to four-legged students, too. Officials said nearly 100 dogs and their human counterparts participated in puppy or dog-training classes at the shelter.

Image Information: THE WISCONSIN HUMANE SOCIETY'S new shelter in the Village of Saukville has received numerous awards for its innovative design from regional trade publications. Photo by Mark Jaeger