



VICKI THOMPSON

APRIL OPENING: Two six-story buildings currently being built will have 427,600 square feet and are expected to open in early 2009.

America Center inspired by its surroundings

BY CATHY BUSSEWITZ

When it's complete, the America Center will rise above the intersection of Great America Parkway and Highway 237 in San Jose. The office development will have four buildings and be surrounded by a 30-acre wildlife preserve.

Green Project of the
Year — Private
AMERICA CENTER

Owner and developer Legacy Partners of Foster City brought the inspiration of the panoramic surroundings and bike trails into their plans when they designed the environmentally-friendly building.

To encourage future tenants to use the trails, they included bicycle parking, showers and changing rooms on the ground floor plans for the buildings.

"That's become a standard in all of our projects, because people like to work out, so we like to support some form of exercise at the facility," said Steve Dunn, senior vice president of acquisition and development at Legacy Partners. "And obviously, we want to encourage people to use other modes of transportation."

Legacy is also setting aside preferred parking for low-emission and fuel-efficient vehicles in the parking lots.

The two six-story buildings that are currently being built on the America Center's 32-acre site, totaling 427,600 square feet, are scheduled to be complete in April 2009. The complex has been precertified as meeting Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design standards at the Gold level by the U.S. Green Building Council.

Lusardi Construction Co., based in San Marcos,



RENDERING COURTESY OF LEGACY PARTNERS

PANORAMIC SURROUNDINGS: The environmentally friendly complex that borders Great America Parkway and Highway 237 has been precertified as a Gold-level LEED project by the U.S. Green Building Council.

is the contractor for the project. Architecture was done by Dallas-based HKS Architects.

The green building design goes beyond the structure of the building itself and extends into the long-term daily use of the facility.

To that end, Legacy plans to offer guidelines to tenants to encourage sustainable use of the buildings' interiors. The company will provide a menu to the tenant that suggests options for painting, carpeting and lighting that meet LEED standards at the Silver, Gold or Platinum level.

"The whole theory behind it is that since the community, and the United States, is trying to go green, the guidelines are there for a tenant to help sustain a level of LEED certification," said Jeff Ramirez, vice president at Cornish & Carey Commercial/ONCOR International, the company that is representing the property for lease.

While building the core of the structure, build-

ers used low-emission paints, sealants, adhesives and carpeting. All of the wood used was certified by the Forest Stewardship Council. And at least 10 percent of the materials used came from renewable resources.

"This is kind of the wave of the future, and any new construction is coming out with LEED certification," Ramirez said. "It's just a pressing need that's not going to go away, and tenants and companies, they're always looking to do their part."

The team also found ways to reduce the building's light pollution, by installing low-pressure sodium fixtures in the parking lot, which emit a yellow light, and by making sure all the lights face downward, rather than up into the sky.

"The tenants in the marketplace appreciate LEED. That's really why we're doing it," said Dunn. "We feel responsibility as a developer to build the right way in today's market."