

The Royal Bank Building



It may be one of the city's oldest skyscrapers, but it shows no signs of slowing.

The last three years have all been banner ones for Winnipeg's Royal Bank Building, located at 220 Portage Avenue owned and managed by CREIT Management LP. In 2009, the Royal Bank Building won the National Air Filtration Association's Clean Air Award, for management's commitment to indoor air quality and the utilization of high-efficiency filters.

2010 saw the building achieve a BOMA BEST Level 3 certification. BEST – which stands for Building Environmental Standards – is the leading environmental designation

for commercial buildings in Canada. The building's Level 3 achievement indicates not only commitment to best practices as they relate to energy efficiency, water conservation and waste reduction, but also a score of 80% or higher on the BOMA BEST assessment.

And if that weren't enough, the 45-year old building was recognized with two prestigious awards in 2011. At BOMA Manitoba's Awards of Excellence event held in June, CREIT walked away with both the BOMA Earth Award and TOBY (The Outstanding Building of the Year) Award for 220 Portage Avenue.

Building at a Glance:

- Name: Royal Bank Building
- Building Owner: CREIT Management L.P. and 5055874 Manitoba Limited
- Managed by: BOMA Member Sue Ziernski of CREIT Management L.P.
- Location: 220 Portage Avenue, Winnipeg
- Building type: Office building with concourse level
- Number of floors: 17
- Size: 222,842 square feet
- Notable tenants: Royal Bank, Great-West Life Assurance Company, Aurora Sustainable Buildings Group, Canada Grains Council, Canadian Special Crops Association, Pulse Canada



A waterfall cascades over four levels to a pool below, creating a soothing atmosphere to the common area, while acting as a natural filter to freshen the air.



Polished granite floors, marble walls, brushed stainless accents and linear ceiling blend the modern with the original features of the common area.

It has certainly been quite a run for the iconic 17-storey tower. And Sue Ziemski, Property Manager for the building, acknowledges that it is tough to pinpoint any one award of which she's most proud. But certainly BOMA BEST Level 3 is noteworthy, and the program has helped CREIT kick it up a notch in more ways than one.

"BOMA BEST goes beyond a certification," says Ziemski. "The program's framework allows users to continually monitor and implement operational improvements from the BEST Practices and Recommendations. It is an excellent tool that outlines the building's baseline performance, and then guides the user to implement further improvements."

"Royal Bank Building has shown that its accomplishments are more about the journey than the destination of Level 3 certification," says Alex Fleming, President of Demand Side Energy. Fleming knows the building well. Not only did his firm provide the energy audit used for the building's first BOMA BEST application (in 2006), Demand Side Energy has since become a tenant.

"Unlike a new building which can be certified green by design, BOMA BEST buildings have the opportunity to establish, improve, and maintain sustainability targets," says Fleming. "As part of the certification, an action plan for the Royal Bank Building was developed with a commitment to invest in energy and water-saving technologies and strategies. Building owners should pursue sustainability as a value proposition, and not just as a certification level."

With a sizable portfolio of properties across Canada, CREIT Management certainly recognizes the value of transforming a commercial property into a sustainable building – from decreased utility and other operational costs, to improved comfort and wellness of building occupants. Locally, CREIT has also participated in Manitoba Hydro's Power Smart programs to identify additional energy conservation opportunities.

"You can be truly successful when you get the wholehearted buy-in of your tenants. After all, the key to CREIT's success comes from satisfied tenants," says Ziemski, whose notable tenants include the likes of Royal Bank, Great-West Life, Aurora Sustainable Buildings Group, Canada Grains Council, and Pulse Canada. "We're very pleased to provide our tenants and the owners with BOMA BEST value."

Indeed, the Royal Bank Building has set a remarkable environmental standard for commercial real estate in Winnipeg. And with the ongoing commitment of management and tenants alike, it will probably continue to do so for years to come. Not bad for a 45-year-old.



Sue Ziemski and Doug Hoover of CREIT Management L.P. accepted the TOBY Award (Office Category – 100,000 to 249,999 category) from BOMA Past President Glenn Cayer.

Building Upgrades:

ENERGY EFFICIENCY

- High-efficiency boilers are used to reduce fuel consumption.
- CO2 sensors are installed to accurately gauge the amount of required fresh air.
- Motion/sound sensors to control area lighting.
- Compact fluorescent bulbs and other high efficiency interior lighting designs to ensure lower electricity costs.
- Variable speed drives are installed on fan and pump systems to reduce energy consumption.
- Use of on-site renewable energy: active solar and photo voltaic to save energy.

WATER EFFICIENCY

- Replaced 23-litre with 6-litre flush toilets to reduce water consumption.
- Use of low-flow toilets, urinals, and faucets to lower water usage.
- Tenants moved from using water-cooled air conditioning units to waterless units (or installing larger air exchange grills) to reduce operating costs.
- Written policy intended to minimize water use, and encourage water conservation.



Unique and above standard lobby finishes are applied throughout the building, with each floor's lobby boasting its own distinctive character.



Concourse level common area with concierge.