

Winnipeg Free Press - PRINT EDITION

Hydro headquarters named Canada's greenest office tower

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Photos by BORIS MINKEVICH / WINNIPEG FREE PRESS Manitoba Hydro Place, at 360 Portage Ave., received an LEED platinum rating. (WINNIPEG FREE PRESS)

The greenest office tower in the entire country sits smack dab in the middle of Winnipeg.

Manitoba Hydro's headquarters at 360 Portage Ave., is the first building of its kind in Canada to receive an LEED platinum rating by the Canada Green Building Council, an organization that rates buildings on their environmental friendliness.

"This is a really, really big deal," said council president Thomas Mueller, who flew in from Vancouver on Thursday to present a plaque to the Crown corporation. "It's a big deal for Canada."

Premier Greg Selinger and the building's principal architect, Bruce Kuwabara of KPMB Architects in Toronto, also attended the ceremony.

The Hydro building, completed in 2009 at a cost of \$283 million, is a 690,000-square-foot, 22-storey structure that houses 1,800 workers. It uses 30 per cent of the energy of a typical similarly sized building, saving the Crown corporation more than \$500,000 a year.

It has already received several architectural awards, including the 2010 Royal Architectural Institute of Canada, national urban design award and the Best Tall Buildings America award in 2009.

Selinger noted Hydro employees have been setting an example for energy conservation in that 60 per cent go to and from work by bike, bus or as part of a carpool. "The building has really transformed the way that many in the building work," he said.

Kuwabara said his firm's first goal was to create a great workplace, with the best air quality and light, a place that would



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attract and retain workers. He said the energy savings the building is achieving have far exceeded initial goals.

The Hydro building is one of only a few certified LEED platinum buildings in North America and the only one in a cold-weather city.

Kuwabara said a key reason for the success of the project was that it was led by a Crown corporation and supported by the province. "The demonstration of public leadership is huge. This is a long-term proposition of a building. It's not just real estate. It's an expression of values and a way to look toward the future."

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What is LEED?

The Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design green-building rating system is the North American standard for assessing green-building design. There are four LEED rankings: certified, silver, gold and platinum.

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