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## **Kirksey Architecture and County Officials Celebrate Harris County's First LEED Platinum Building**

**HOUSTON, TEXAS** — Harris County Precinct 3, together with Kirksey Architecture, held a LEED plaque ceremony and building tour of the Burnett-Bayland Gym, the county's first LEED Platinum building, on Thursday, May 4<sup>th</sup>.

The gym is the first municipal building on the Texas Gulf Coast to receive the highest certification awarded by the U.S. Green Building Council. It features energy efficient design and the effective use of natural resources – including energy generated by a rooftop solar array and rainwater collected in a 10,000 gallon cistern.

Speakers and county officials in attendance included County Commissioner Steve Radack; Harris County Engineer John Blount; Tom Brooks, the exec. director of Harris County Juvenile Probation Department; USGBC Texas Gulf Coast Chapter Chair David MacLean; Nicola Springer, vice president at Kirksey Architecture; and Kirksey EcoServices team member and architect, Colley Hodges, who led the green building tour.

"This building is much more than a gymnasium. It's a multi-service facility where 100+ youth are exposed to many positive opportunities," said Tom Brooks, the Executive Director of the Harris County Juvenile Probation Department.

"They walk onto the basketball court and express amazement at how beautiful the facility is. They treat the gymnasium with respect and see it as a privilege to play in. The Burnett-Bayland gym is an energy-efficient and environmentally designed venue that will bring years of positive entertainment to the community."

Located at 6500 Chimney Rock Road in Houston, the gym's achievement of LEED Platinum for New Construction was recognized through its sustainable features including:

**GREEN BUILDING FACTS:**

**• Energy Efficient Design**

The gym is designed to use 44% less energy than a typical code-compliant building. LED fixtures throughout the space both save energy and reduce the presence of toxic materials like mercury, which is contained in fluorescent light bulbs. An energy recovery system ensures that cooling and heating energy is recovered from exhaust, thereby reducing the energy required for HVAC operation.

**• Harnessing Free Energy**

8 kW Rooftop-mounted solar panels offset 31% of the building's lighting energy usage. Daylight sensors automatically dim or shut off artificial lights when adequate natural light is being let in by the building's skylights.

**• Water Efficiency**

One of the most water-efficient buildings in the city, the gym swept the LEED Water Efficiency category, earning all available points. Low-flow plumbing fixtures help reduce indoor potable water use by an estimated 38% compared to a conventional building.

**• Sustainable Site**

100% of the stormwater that falls on the site is treated by bioswales that naturally remove pollutants before the water is discharged from the site. Drought-resistant native landscaping requires less water, pesticides, and maintenance.

- **Utilizing Natural Resources**

Rainwater is collected from the roof and stored in a 10,000-gallon corrugated metal cistern. This water is stored for emergency purposes and used to irrigate an on-site community garden.

- **Healthy Indoor Environment**

Less toxic paints, adhesives, sealants, and flooring were used to ensure healthy indoor air for occupants. Access to adequate daylight levels helps regulate occupants' circadian rhythms, and views to the exterior in more than 90% of spaces provide a connection to nature and the outdoors.



**PHOTO CAPTION:**

(L to R): Steve Radack, Harris County Precinct 3 Commissioner; Benito Guerrier, Kirksey Architecture; John Blount, Harris County Engineer; David MacLean, USGBC Texas Gulf Coast Chapter Chair; Tom Brooks, Exec. Director of the Harris Co. Juvenile Probation Department; Nicola Springer, Kirksey Architecture



**PHOTO CAPTION:**

The 14,000 sf concrete tilt-wall building includes high-performance polyisocyanurate insulation and energy-efficient glazing. Runoff from the roof and parking area flows into a vegetated bioswale whose plants, rocks, and engineered soils slows the movement of the water and removes pollutants and suspended solids before the water leaves the site.



**PHOTO CAPTION:**

The gym includes multiple linear skylights and high-impact glazing to provide a constant source of natural light. A daylight harvesting system modulates artificial lights in the gym in proportion to the amount of natural light in order to maintain consistent light levels and save energy. Materials used throughout the building were selected based on environmentally preferable aspects, including low VOC emissions, high amounts of recycled content, and local manufacturing to reduce transportation emissions and support the local economy.



**PHOTO CAPTION:**

An approximately 10,000-gallon corrugated metal cistern collects rainwater from the gym roof. This rainwater harvesting system helps reduce the burden on the local storm sewer system and provides water to irrigate a small community garden located on site. Water runoff from the roof and parking area flows into a vegetated bioswale whose plants, rocks, and engineered soils slows the movement of the water and removes pollutants and suspended solids before the water leaves the site.



**PHOTO CAPTION:**

A rooftop solar array offsets 6% of the building's energy use. The white Hydrostop roof reflects the sun's heat, minimizing the building's cooling loads and lowering operating costs while reducing the urban heat island effect.

**About Kirksey Architecture**

Kirksey is a Houston-based, sustainable architecture and interior design firm with more than 29 million sf of LEED® projects in their portfolio. Team-based in structure, Kirksey serves Commercial, Collegiate, Community, pK-12, Government, Healthcare, Hospitality, Science & Technology, and Multi-Family Residential markets.

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