INFORMATION RELEASE
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Valley Library is more than a pretty building; it's a model of sustainability
Juneau public library receives Gold LEED certification

The Mendenhall Valley Public Library is a showcase example of sustainability and environmental responsibility, according to the nonprofit U.S. Green Building Council. Earlier this month, the library received a Gold certification under the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) system.

This is the first City and Borough of Juneau facility to receive a Gold LEED certification, a sought-after achievement in the building industry and not widely accomplished in Juneau. LEED, the globally recognized standard for sustainable design and achievement, has four rating levels: Certified, Silver, Gold and Platinum.

"It's a lot of work to do a LEED building. What we tried to do was invest our resources in good design decisions that would benefit us long-term from an operations standpoint and reduce the overall cost of operating that facility," CBJ City Architect Nathan Coffee said.

Good air quality from the use of low VOC materials in the library's construction, an efficient heating system, an electric vehicle charging station and the library's proximity to a public bus system were all factors in the Gold LEED certification.

"The Valley Library is a good example of sustainable design principals – everything from the ground source heat pumps to the natural light that the windows let in. It's more than just about building materials; it's about the user experience," Coffee said.

Several years ago, the Juneau Assembly passed an ordinance making it a requirement to comply with LEED certification for all buildings and improvements over $5 million. Glacier Valley, Harborview and Auke Bay elementary schools have all received the basic LEED Certified rating.

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