



"The Leader in Glass Fabrication™"

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Going Green with Glass

*Viracon Glass Gives Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality
its Green Edge*



Hi-resolution images available upon request

OWATONNA, Minn. – August 28, 2008 – A famous frog once sang that it isn't easy being green, but the Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) is working to prove otherwise. The department's mission is to protect, enhance and restore the environment, so when designing its new headquarters, the group wanted a building that reflected its green goals – in a functional, practical and affordable design. To create a sustainable, comfortable and eye-catching building, architects turned to Viracon's high performance glass.

When the state outlined its plan to become the first green state-owned office building in Arkansas to architects at Little Rock's Taggart Foster Currence Gray (TFCG) Architects, the design team immediately thought of glass.

“Our concept was to create a narrow building with as much glass as possible,” says Jerry Currence, principal in charge of design at TFCG. “Using glass, we could introduce as much daylight as possible and offer views of the nearby river and mountains.”

Although daylighting was important, the six-floor, 124,310 square-foot building also needed to be energy efficient to attain the LEED certification it desired. This meant consulting with the team at Viracon.

Coatings are Key

“The key to successfully using glass for daylighting is to combine the glass with one or more high-performance coatings that can control and direct the light and reduce solar heat transmission,” says Don McCann, manager of architectural design at Viracon. This is where Viracon’s coatings and silk-screen options can make a significant impact.

“The architect specified Viracon’s VRE coating, and we didn’t even consider anything else,” says Rob Young, vice president and general manager of Ace Glass, the glazing contractor on the project. “There’s not another product out there that can meet the performance and achieve the look of the VRE coating.”

The insulating glass curtainwall which envelops the building in 35,216 square-feet of glass is protected by Viracon’s VRE-38 coating on the #2 surface of a green substrate in both vision and spandrel areas. A radiant low-e coating, VRE-38 provides a neutral exterior color and allows two-way vision under varying light conditions. With a 30 percent light transmission level, the coating offers an exceptional Solar Heat Gain Coefficient of .19 and a low interior reflectance of 21 percent.

The green glass substrate also enhances the solar performance of the glass while also enhancing building aesthetics. “We chose green glass because we were building in a very natural environment, and the green glass enhances the green of the trees and other natural colors,” says Currence.

Unique Configuration Enhances Energy Performance

To further enhance solar performance, Currence and his team designed a unique configuration of vision and spandrel areas. On each floor, from the main viewing area to the ceiling, the glass is transparent and has only the VRE coating. On the lower glass area down to the floor, the glass incorporates a simulated sandblast ceramic frit in combination with the VRE coating.

“This configuration has two benefits,” says Currence. “All circulation is on the exterior wall of the building, so having a translucent look at the bottom gives the perception of security to people who may be uncomfortable walking next to the wall of glass. It also allows diffused natural light into the building but blocks solar heat in areas in which we don’t necessarily need a clear view.”

A unique ceiling configuration complements the glass composition. Ceilings in the building are level throughout the workspace, then slope up to form a knife edge where the ceiling meets the curtainwall. The ceiling is painted white, which allows light entering the upper windows to reflect into the workspace. Horizontal solar shades on the south side of the building also help bounce light deep into the building's interior.

The end result is functional, comfortable and quite striking. "Everyone I've talked to has been ecstatic with it," says Young.

With the unique glazing configuration and Viracon coatings, combined with other sustainable features, the ADEQ building earned LEED® Gold certification and three Green Globes from the Green Building Initiative. It is the first LEED-Green Globe dual certified building in Arkansas. But perhaps most importantly, the building reflects the environmental values of the agency it houses and provides an example of sustainable building practices to the public it serves.

For additional information, visit www.viracon.com, email glass@viracon.com or call 800-533-2080.

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About Viracon, Inc.

Viracon is based in Owatonna, Minnesota, and has facilities in Statesboro, Georgia and St. George, Utah. The company is an international company of Apogee Enterprises, Inc. Viracon produces high-performance glass products, including tempered, laminated, insulating, silk-screened and high-performance coatings. Apogee Enterprises, Inc. is a leading fabricator, distributor and installer of value-added glass products and systems. Headquartered in Minneapolis, the company's stock is traded on NASDAQ under the symbol APOG.