

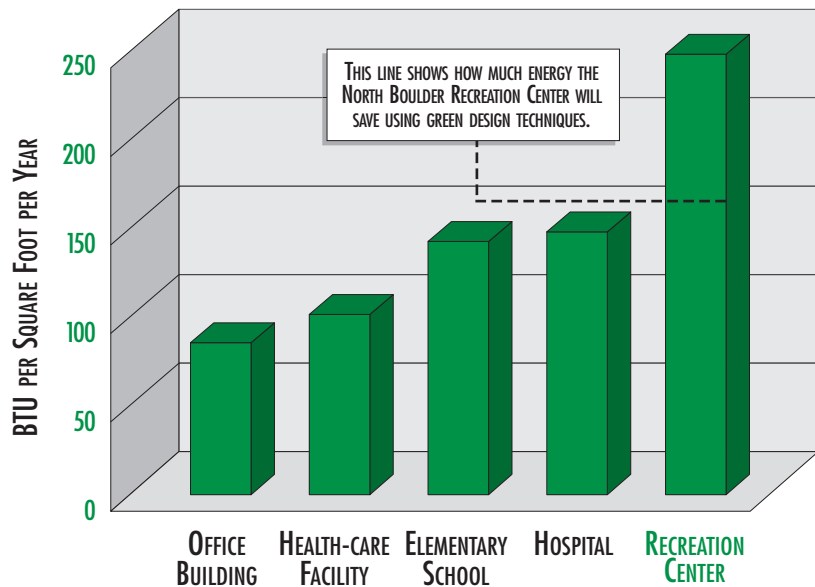
TAKING THE LEED

Behind the growing green trend is a governing body whose building program is the gold standard of sustainable design. The U.S. Green Building Council, situated in the nation's capital, is a member-driven group striving to create sustainable buildings under its Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design's Green Building Rating System.

"Prior to the development of our system, there wasn't any nationally recognized standard," says Taryn Holowka, communications manager for the council. "People were doing green features, but there wasn't anything that was a whole building approach or guideline."

Today, LEED has approximately 400 green-certified buildings and another 3,200 under consideration. The program is expanding to include residential homes, neighborhoods and office environments. Their considerations will even include issues such as obesity, overall health and factors that affect people's lives.

According to LEED, a building earns a certain number of points to achieve different certification levels. A minimum of 26 points earns a building a "certified" level, and 52 to 69 points can earn "platinum," the



SOURCE: NORTH BOULDER RECREATION CENTER

WHY LEED MATTERS

This graph shows how much energy is used in a variety of building types. The line on the Rec Center bar shows how much energy was saved using Leed standards

highest honor. The maximum number of possible points is 69, with silver and gold honors in between.

The North Boulder Recreation Center

earned a silver standing with LEED. The LEED component added an additional 2 percent to the project's cost, and another 2 1/2 percent paid for a solar system. — Rin-rin Yu