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10-6-2011

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#### Recommended Citation

University Relations, "Welcome Center honored with Preservation Alliance of Minnesota's Sustainable Design Award" (2011). *Campus News Archive*. 570.

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**Welcome Center honored with Preservation Alliance of Minnesota's Sustainable Design Award**

*Summary: The award recognizes the Welcome Center for “forging a new path that recognizes the green value of adaptive reuse....”*

(October 6, 2011)-The Preservation Alliance of Minnesota (PAM), celebrating its 30th anniversary, presented 15 projects and individuals with a Minnesota Preservation Award at a ceremony held at the newly renovated Boy Scout Base Camp at Fort Snelling on Sept. 29, 2011. The Awards recognize significant achievement in historic preservation statewide and celebrate those who have chosen to sustainably reuse and reinvest in existing built resources. The University of Minnesota, Morris Welcome Center received the Sustainable Design Award.

PAM selected the Welcome Center for the green initiatives—wind turbines and a biomass facility—that provide electricity, heating, and cooling for the building. The PAM award program also reads, “The project architects—Meyer, Scherer & Rockcastle (MS&R)—have been the masters of inspired adaptive reuses of historic structures for 30 years. Merging the forces of sustainable energy, sustainable design, and sustainable reuse of an existing building further demonstrates that the University of Minnesota, Morris is leading the way for institutions statewide.

“...the Welcome Center is a modern, light-filled renovation of the school’s 1915 engineering building, a brick structure listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The building now houses admissions, external relations, the Office of Community Engagement, and the Center for Small Towns. MS&R led the restoration of the historic exterior, which included reopening windows that had been bricked-in in the 1970s. Daylight now fills an open, 21st-century interior with rural flourishes: wheatgrass embedded in translucent partition panels, sustainable carpeting in the colors and pattern of farm fields as seen from above.

“Reclaimed and recycled materials are used throughout the building, with the largest reclaimed element being the building itself. However, the project’s most talked-about green feature is its use of chilled beams—thin pipes running cold water across ceilings, lightly blown with air—to cool the building. The technology is popular in Europe, but the Welcome Center is the first Minnesota building and the first entire building on the National Register to use it. If the chilled beams aren’t enough to signal this project’s intentions, an energy kiosk in the lobby charts the campus’ energy performance in real time.

“For forging a new path that recognizes the green value of adaptive reuse, the respect for low-tech, sustainable design features in historic buildings, and the sensitive integration of high-tech energy-efficient systems, we recognize the project participants with the 2011 Sustainable Design Award.”

Representatives from University of Minnesota Capital Planning (CPPM), design firm MS&R, construction management firm JE Dunn, and the University of Minnesota, Morris attended the award ceremony. Dave Aronson, project coordinator at Morris, commented, “It is an honor for the University of Minnesota, Morris to be recognized by the Preservation Alliance of Minnesota. The Welcome Center has become all that we had hoped it would be—a reflection of the campus’s past, a comfortable workplace for today, and a model and demonstration of the campus goals for

sustainability and energy efficiency.

PAM is the statewide, private, nonprofit organization advocating for the preservation of Minnesota's historic resources. Over the past 27 years, more than 300 projects across the state have received recognition through the PAM awards program. Awards are selected based on the creativity and quality of the project, the dedication and savvy of a group or individual, or most important, a positive preservation outcome.

Photo from left to right: Bonnie McDonald, executive director Preservation Alliance of Minnesota Tom Meyer, MS&R Jeff Callinan, assistant vice president JE Dunn Dave Aronson, UMM (holding award) Aaron Wittkamper, MS&R Dean Carlson University of Minnesota, CPPM Josh Stowers, MS&R

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