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AUSTIN CITY HALL WINS GREEN ROOF AWARD

Green Roofs for Healthy Cities to present Award of Excellence to City on May 5th

Green Roofs for Healthy Cities, a not-for-profit organization representing the green roof industry in North America, has honored Austin City Hall and Public Plaza as its 2008 Green Roof Award of Excellence winner in the Intensive Institutional category. Austin City Council Member Lee Leffingwell will receive the award in a ceremony at City Hall **Tuesday, May 5th, 2009, at 2:00 PM. Tours of City Hall's "green roof" will be available immediately following the award presentation.**

According Jeffry L. Bruce, incoming Chair of Green Roofs for Healthy Cities, the City Hall project was cited for combining a "depth of vision with practicality of execution that sets a superlative example for government and institutional building owners".

The Austin City Council's goal for the project was to create a unique public space that would serve as an educational model for green building. Research has shown that green roofs (roofs with added layers of substrate and vegetation) can provide numerous benefits in urban areas, including improved storm-water management, better regulation of building temperatures, reduced urban heat-island effects, and increased urban wildlife habitat.

Project architect Antoine Predock drew inspiration from the limestone bluffs of the Balcones Escarpment, as well as the waterfalls, creeks, spreading live oaks, and pasture of the lower plateau. McKinney Kelley JV Landscape Architects built on this theme by using a native plant palette that reflects the diverse ecosystems of Travis County.

In addition to the 12,000 sq. foot green roof, other design features include the use of HVAC condensate for the waterfall, the use of groundwater to irrigate the green roofs, and the installation of solar panels on the amphitheatre canopy. By incorporating these design features, the building was able to achieve Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Gold certification – a first in Austin.

Since its installation, the green roof has hosted weekly educational tours for citizens, visitors, and school groups.

Other North American cities have supported green roof development through various incentives and regulatory requirements. For instance, the City of Portland requires that all new City-owned buildings be built with a green roof that covers at least 70% of the roof. Toronto's Eco-Roof Incentive Program provides funding for qualifying green roof projects of \$50 per square meter, up to a maximum of \$100,000. New York and Philadelphia are encouraging green roof implementation through tax credit incentives.

Green Roofs for Healthy Cities' mission is to increase the awareness of the economic, social, and environmental benefits of green roofs and walls and other forms of living architecture through education, advocacy, professional development and celebrations of excellence.