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DOWNTOWN MIAMI

HIGH-RISES GO GREEN

THE WACHOVIA FINANCIAL CENTER, THE BANK OF AMERICA TOWER AND THE FUTURE 1450 BRICKELL ARE ADAPTING FEATURES IN ORDER TO BECOME MORE ECO-FRIENDLY

BY JESSICA KIRCHNER
Special to The Miami Herald

The "greening" of South Miami-Dade is spreading to the top: Three high-rises in downtown Miami, including the largest tower in the state.

The Wachovia Financial Center, the Bank of America tower and the future 1450 Brickell are adding and modifying "green" features in order to be certified at the highest standard.

The three are part of a trend of buildings going "green" to save money and energy while promoting the environment.

At 1.2 million square feet, the Wachovia Financial Center is the largest office tower in Florida — and the biggest to undergo retrofitting and other changes to receive the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, or LEED, silver rating.

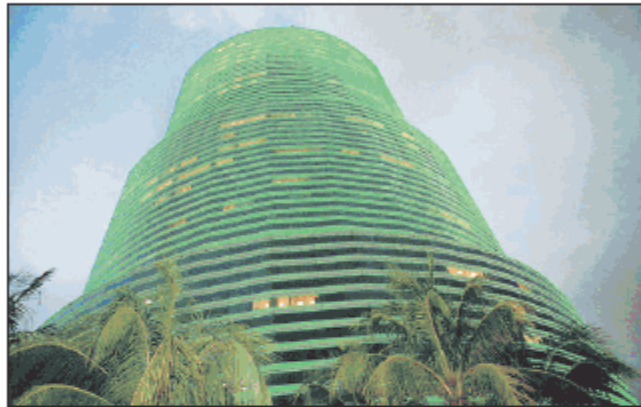
To achieve this rating, the building has started using energy-efficient light bulbs, an effective recycling program and a janitorial service that uses "green" chemicals.

"The tenants in the marketplace are becoming much more conscious of obtaining sustainable properties and environmentally sound buildings," said Don Cartwright, director of Leasing for Cushman and Wakefield, the building's leasing company. "It clearly makes good sense from an ecological standpoint and a cost-saving standpoint."

The Wachovia Center will be the first existing office tower to receive a LEED certification.

"It is clearly important we do everything we can to preserve the resources we have," Cartwright said. "We live in a world where resources are important."

The Bank of America Tower at International Place is widely known for its changing palette of exterior lighting



LANDMARK: The Bank of America Tower, formerly the CenTrust Tower, was built in 1987 for CenTrust Savings & Loan. At 47 stories and 625 feet high, it is the third-tallest skyscraper in Miami and in Florida. It's known for its different shades of lighting.

schemes that light up Miami's skyline.

Recently, the building earned the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Energy Star for 2008.

When evaluating the building, the EPA found that it uses 34 percent less energy than the average building of similar size across the country, ranking it in the 82nd percentile for the category.

"With all the talk of new buildings being developed with energy efficiency in mind, it's easy to forget that existing buildings also have an opportunity to embrace environmental sustainability," said Vincent Croce, senior property manager for Wealth Capital Management, the building's owner. "The Energy Star designation is a fine example of how we're working to remain on the leading edge of the region's commercial office market."

The building has added



UNDER CONSTRUCTION: The 35-story 1450 Brickell has already won awards.

environmentally sound upgrades, including an on-site recycling program, a "green" extermination service and a janitorial service that uses environmentally safe cleaning products.

"Some people think that

the concept of going green costs more money," Croce said. "But they are very fundamentally small concepts that will save the building money."

"Going green is important because we must reduce the amount of greenhouse gases that the world produces," he added. "If we don't pay attention to this now, it will affect generations to come."

Just a few blocks south in the Brickell neighborhood, the 35-story, 586,000-square-foot 1450 Brickell building, now under construction, has been awarded LEED Gold precertification based on its documented plans to satisfy green performance and systems requirements.

"1450 Brickell's distinction as Miami's first LEED Gold precertified office tower is a direct reflection of our firm's commitment to environmentally sound design and construction," said Alan Ojeda,

CEO of Rilea Group, the firm responsible for building 1450 Brickell. "The benefits of sustainable development are three-fold. Beyond environmental advantages, 'green' construction reduces operating costs over the long term and positively contributes to the health and productivity, resulting in increased efficiency for building tenants."

"Given these benefits, 1450 Brickell is ahead of the curve," Ojeda said. "Soon, LEED certification will be the rule, not the exception." Completion is targeted for January 2010.

One of the main features of the building's "going green" concept is the glass.

"The glass we are using is not only an anti-hurricane glass but a glass that separates heat and light," Ojeda said. "It stops a lot of heat from coming into the building but allows light."

Other "green" features include 75 percent of the construction being recycled, 35 percent of its electricity coming from renewable energy sources via a green power contract, preferred parking for fuel-efficient cars, pedestrian and cyclist-friendly amenities, tenants having control over thermostats, a short walking distance to the Metromover station and a series of construction guidelines that will encourage commercial tenants to pursue LEED certification.

"This is where the world is going. Every new building in the world, from China to Europe to everywhere, it's green, in some way or fashion," Ojeda said. "Companies will have a 'green conscience,' meaning they will only lease in buildings that are green, to be ecologically correct. This is not a light trend that is happening. This is here to stay."



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Downtown Miami skyscrapers going green

BY JESSICA KIRCHNER

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