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BSU goes 'green' with building design

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MUNCIE -- With its new David Letterman Communication and Media Building and the new Park Hall residence complex, Ball State University is leading the way in environmentally-friendly building design, experts say.

Ball State achieved Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification for both buildings. The voluntary distinction is the construction industry's stamp of approval that a building is as "green" as it can be.

Inside the Letterman building, visual details like doors, floors and trim made from bamboo, a renewable resource, are visual reminders of the building's LEED certification. Less evident but equally important to the certification is the building's advanced heating-cooling system. The building was designed by the architectural firm MSKTD and Associates Inc., and the general contractor was W.A. Sheets Co., both of Fort Wayne.

Geoff DeSmit, a Ball State senior who is an intern at CSO Architects, the Indianapolis firm that designed Park Hall, said Ball State will save thousands of dollars in energy costs over the life of those buildings for going "green."

He said the building trend is in demand not only for universities, but corporations as well. "More people want to work in an environment like this, where there is more natural light, more fresh air inside. It makes them want to spend more time there," DeSmit said.

Roger Lavery, dean of Ball State's College of Communication, Information and Media, agrees.

"In today's business environment, people work as teams, and we wanted the new building to invite students to discuss and collaborate," Lavery explained. "For that reason, we added natural gathering areas on each of the floors outside of the classrooms and studios. We don't want students to finish a class and leave. We want them to sit down and talk about what they are learning."
