

Deltas Break Ground on 'Living Building' Community Center

Brian Stimson of The Skanner News

Within a week, Colas Construction will begin work on what promises to be the most sustainable and advanced environmental building in the inner Northeast area. The June Key Delta Community Center at 5940 N. Albina St. promises to be a “living building” – a building made with the lowest environmental impact possible. Members of the Portland Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority celebrated the groundbreaking on Oct. 7.

The site, home to the Portland Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, was once an old gas station, converted into the sorority’s headquarters. With the assistance of Nye Architecture, Colas Construction and a number of government and private sponsors, including Sen. Ron Wyden, D-Ore., Portland Community College’s Algie Gatewood, and Neil Kelly Remodeling, and others, the sorority hopes to turn their center into a model of how a small community organization can create an innovative building that will be available for community use. The construction will use nontoxic and recycled building products and be able to produce a net zero impact on the city’s power and water systems. The design will allow for more natural light, rain water harvesting systems, and highly efficient heating and cooling systems.



The project will begin construction mid-October and is expected to take 6 to 9 months to complete.

“I’m really proud to be involved in getting the first living building constructed in the community,” says Colas Construction owner Andrew Colas. “We’re very aware that this is where the construction industry is headed.”

The building will use giant metal cargo containers to house the bathroom and kitchen of the community center. Sitting on a former brownfield site, architect Mark Nye says plantings will be used to restore the soil.

“This is the most exciting project I’ve ever worked on,” he said.

Chapter President Marian Gilmore says she expects to have the grand opening of the community center sometime in 2010.

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