



Work started on 'living building' community center in North Portland

By Abby Haight, The Oregonian

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A small nonprofit organization is taking on the challenge of super sustainability with a new community center that meets the "living building" criteria for construction practices, energy efficiency and use of recycled materials.

Members of the Portland alumnae chapter of the **Delta Sigma Theta** sorority hope their new June Key Community Center also will show other organizations how to use recycled and low-cost materials to create community spaces.

"The **June Key Community Center** is a project that illustrates just how a small, nonprofit, community organization can be an example for innovative environmental practices in the region," said Marian Gilmore, chapter president.

The project, at 5940 N. Albina St., will convert an abandoned gas station into the hub of the community center and will use metal cargo shipping containers, salvaged glass and recycled construction materials. Solar panels will provide energy and the building will use harvested rainwater. Stormwater will be managed by bioswales planted with native vegetation.

The project, which broke ground earlier this month, is scheduled for completion next summer.

The center will provide support for educational development, physical and mental health, economic development, international awareness and social action. The center embodies the mission of Delta Sigma Theta, a **sorority** of primarily black college-educated women founded in 1913 at Howard University.

"It's becoming a reality," Gilmore said. "This project is not about our organization. It is wholeheartedly about how we serve our community and the great city of Portland."

-- Abby Haight

