

World's first 'green' aviation hangar touted in Burbank

By Jerry Berrios, Staff Writer

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Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa looks on as a Boeing BBJ, similar to a 737, is wheeled into Hangar 25. The Hangar is the world's first aviation hangar to achieve Platinum certification under the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design Rating System. The hangar was unveiled Dec. 9, 2008 at the Bob Hope Airport in Burbank, California.

PHOTO GALLERY



Bob Hope Airport's Hangar 25

BURBANK - What's being touted as the world's first green aviation hangar was unveiled Tuesday at Bob Hope Airport, complete with solar panels, skylights, artificial grass, low-flush toilets and massive aerating fans.

Known as Hangar 25, the \$17 million structure is designed to be a model of green construction and was built for what a traditional aircraft hangar would cost, said Andy Meyers, president of Shangri-La Construction.

"Going green has the answer for the ills of today's foundering economy," Meyers said, noting officials would not have permitted additional airport expansion if the building was not green.

Hangar 25 is an extreme-makeover story. A former industrial lot with a cement slab, the property now houses a state-of-the-art green aviation hangar minimizing the 51,000-square-foot building's carbon footprint.

Avjet Corp., which owns the building, and Shangri-La Construction, which built the private aircraft hangar, held a grand opening Tuesday morning to show off the project.

The building also received a Platinum LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification - the highest rating from the Washington, D.C.-based U.S. Green Building Council.

"This is one of the most astounding applications of technology, of human intellect, of inspiration that has come together in a very long time," said S. Richard Fedrizzi, the council's president and chief executive officer.

He expects schools, health-care facilities and residential construction to follow suit.

"You can do green for not a penny more than conventional construction," Fedrizzi said.

Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa traveled beyond the city's border for the event.

"Today, as a region, we are saying that green building should be the only kind of building," Villaraigosa told the crowd of roughly 100 invited guests. "We set our expectations high. Now it's our job to meet them and to beat them."

Shangri-La Construction is in talks with Maguire Aviation to build a green building at Van Nuys Airport, one of the four owned and operated by Los Angeles World Airports. Villaraigosa also congratulated everyone involved.

"When we talk green, there is no facility quite like this one - a model for the city, the nation and the world," he said.

This building gives the aviation industry a chance to plug into the green movement, said John Picard, the project's environmental consultant.

"Because of this building, the door was opened for that industry to say, 'What can we do next?'" Picard said.

Before the speeches, an Avjet employee driving an electric tow cart pulled a white Boeing 737 airplane into the hangar. The plane's auxiliary power unit was turned off and then the employee plugged an industrial power cord from the building into a socket on the plane.

"The sun is providing all of the power," Meyers said.

In addition to providing power to run the tools and machines to maintain the planes, the energy from the solar panels on the roof powers the building's offices, copiers, computers and coffee machines, Picard said.

The building generates 110 percent of the energy it needs and then gives the surplus energy back to the municipal grid.

Seven Big Ass Fans, the brand name for huge ceiling fans that heat and cool the hangar, are part of the building's green features. Each fan blade is 12 feet long.

Meyers also touted the building's health benefits to the Avjet's pilots, crew, flight attendants and custodians who will work in the building.

Grates at the building's entrance scrape off contaminants under shoes. No toxic chemicals fill the fire suppression system. The concrete floor has no chemical polymers.

In the office area, all of the cabinets are made of plyboo, a type of bamboo with a water-based finish.

The hangar is large enough to house a Boeing 757, 737 and two Gulfstream jets all at once, said Daniel A. Langford, Avjet's vice president of customer services.

"All of this is just so easy to take care of," he said. "It's very low maintenance."

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