

## MERCEDES-BENZ DEALERSHIP AND THE CITY OF PEORIA JOIN FORCES IN ENVIRONMENTAL INITIATIVE TO GO “GREEN”

Mercedes-Benz of Arrowhead and the City of Peoria are joining forces in an effort to establish a partnership in environmental stewardship. While the concept of “Going Green” is universally encouraged, this dealership is setting the standard by becoming a LEEDs certified facility. LEEDs (Leadership of Energy and Environmental Design) certification is a concept developed by the U.S. Green Building Council, a nonprofit organization internationally recognized for its leadership in environmental building design.

By attaining the LEEDs certification, Mercedes-Benz of Arrowhead represents the first luxury vehicle dealership of its kind in the world to pursue this level of environmental responsibility. While several dealerships have sought “star energy” status, LEED’s certification has never been sought by a Mercedes-Benz dealership. This will be a “first” not only for Arizona, but for Mercedes-Benz as a global entity.

Owner/Principal Chuck Theisen grew up in Arizona and has observed the startling environmental changes over the years. He is excited about the prospect of making a difference: “I am passionate about doing our part in the fight against global warming and pollution, as well as in serving as a steward for the environment. We are really excited to be coming to a city that is so supportive of these goals as well.”

At a substantial investment of 20 per cent above cost to attain this accreditation, Theisen explained, “I feel it is an investment in our common future and an opportunity to improve the world we live in.”

The City of Peoria has embraced his enthusiasm with an offer to assist in making it happen. Peoria Mayor Bob Barrett said, “We are thrilled to have you. The LEEDs aspect is a bonus for us as a community which takes pride in its environmental sensitivity. Having this project come on line is a good hand-in-glove initiative for our building program.”

Deputy City Manager John Wenderski said, “This fits right in with our current efforts at environmental conservation with the inauguration of our curbside recycling program, our award-winning desert preservation program, and the retrofitting of all our traffic lights from incandescent to LED.” Mayor Barrett added, “This is clearly a major coup for Peoria and its residents. Not only are we bringing in a business that will give the city jobs and sales tax revenue, but we also are bringing in an innovator and leader in the automobile industry.”

The demographics are very positive for Mercedes-Benz in the West Valley. Having been in business for more than 100 years, Mercedes-Benz is known for its standards. This new dealership promises to raise those standards even higher with its environmentally sensitive design, cutting edge technology and outstanding customer service.

To meet LEEDs requirements, the project is monitored throughout every phase of the building process, from certification of the use of sustainable and recyclable materials to the disposition of trash.

As Development Manager, Rick Cartell, of Autopilot Development Services, is excited about this opportunity to create a global facility. He said, “We are working shoulder to shoulder with Peoria city staff.” He explains that LEEDs certification requires commitment from day one. “Everything is audited throughout the process – even to the point that an independent consultant has to create an energy model.” More than \$100,000 has been spent in consulting fees.

To meet LEEDs requirements, the design includes the following features:

1. South-facing building to maximize energy, light and shade
2. One-third of site vehicle parking located on the roof to maximize open space and landscaping, as well as shading to help reduce energy demand
3. Water reclamation system for the car wash which reduces consumption from 20 gallons per wash to 6; and a filtered cistern system for the waste water to irrigate the project’s landscaping
4. Large, sweeping roof extensions and canopy screens to maximize interior shading during summer months, and maximize heat and natural daylight infiltration in winter
5. Underground storm water system to minimize soil erosion and maximize sedimentation control
6. Fully integrated energy management system which allows Individual control of the employee work environment, and monitors CO<sub>2</sub> content in the building air to ensure a healthy working environment
7. State-of-the-art fresh air induction system in the Technical Service Center, coupled with an emissions vacuum system at each work station to reduce the facility HVAC system by 100 tons and cut energy consumption by 25%
8. EIFS (exterior insulated and finish system) wrapped around structure to maximize energy efficiency and substantially cut power consumption
9. Interior and exterior lighting systems that promote low energy use, heat transmission and light pollution
10. Maximize use of recyclable materials during construction, and locally or regionally manufactured materials to minimize fuel consumption required for shipping
11. PV Solar panels on top of the building providing up to 35% of the electrical power during off-peak hours, with surplus power sold back to the utility company. Panel support structures provide shading for the building roof.

Cartell said, “We are probably the first auto dealership in the country to use solar panels, which allows us to sell some of the energy back to the utility company.”

Jim Astuno, General Manager of Mercedes-Benz of Arrowhead and the team's current Mercedes dealership, Phoenix Motor Company, addressed the issue of the attitude of its employees: “We at Phoenix Motor Company have maintained the highest customer satisfaction ratings in the West and one of the best in the entire country. We will be bringing employees to Peoria who already place the highest value on customer satisfaction. Many of those employees currently live in Peoria and are excited about the prospect of transferring to not only work closer to home but about working in an environmentally-friendly and open workspace. This is a growing area, and we look forward to the resources this community has to offer.”

Employee incentives include:

1. Showers and lockers for people who want to bike to work
2. Low carbon dioxide levels which improve working environment
3. Close-in parking for those with electric or “0” emission vehicles
4. Onsite ultra low sulfur diesel fuel
5. Shuttle service to public transportation for employees

As construction begins, everyone in the process is excited about the outcome. Full accreditation is granted upon completion of the building. To that end the City of Peoria and the Mercedes-Benz of Arrowhead Project Team are diligently moving forward in this groundbreaking venture to realize Chuck Theisen’s dream.

He visualized a sleek, functional facility which will not only maximize comfort, but be equally appealing 50 years from now.

“The building is somewhat like the cars – not only beautiful and stylish but technologically and ecologically sound. The more we can synchronize with our environment so that it is a symbiotic relationship, the better off everyone is,” he said.

“We are implementing Chuck’s ‘green dream,’” Cartell said, “through our efforts and the enthusiastic endorsement and cooperation of the City of Peoria.”

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