

## Urban Development Good Neighbor Program

eNews

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Office of the Chief Architect, US General Services Administration  
1800 F Street, NW Room 3341 Washington, DC 20405  
Tel: 202-501-1856 Fax: 202-501-3393, [www.gsa.gov/goodneighbor](http://www.gsa.gov/goodneighbor)



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### ACTIVE PUBLIC BUILDINGS

#### ANCHORAGE, ALASKA - GSA and the Last Great Race

In the remote reaches of America's last frontier, dog sled teams test the boundaries of human and canine endurance as they race more than a thousand miles across the punishing terrain of the Iditarod. No location, no quest could seem further removed from the business of Federal real estate, yet GSA has played a recurring role in this beloved Alaskan event. The streamlined Art Deco Federal Building (1939) in Anchorage, the focal point of celebration when Alaska became the nation's 49th state, has provided the photographic backdrop to the ceremonial start of the race for much of its history.

This year marks the hundredth anniversary of the first Iditarod, and the state of Alaska intends to commemorate the occasion with a series of large scale public events over the next four years. The Alaska State Historic Preservation Office (ASHPO) plans to promote the celebrations both nationally and internationally. Given the prominence of the Federal Building in so many Iditarod images, the hope at ASHPO is that GSA will become an active partner in the undertaking.



For more information, visit [www.iditarod.com](http://www.iditarod.com) or contact B. Story Swett (253) 931-7796.



**NEW YORK CITY, NEW YORK - A Lifetime Television Presentation**

GSA is coming soon to a television near you. The plaza area of 26 Federal Plaza in New York City recently hosted a Lifetime Television shoot highlighting exceptional professional women. Selected based on its vibrantly colored benches and railings designed by landscape architect Martha Schwartz, the plaza served as a backdrop for the 90-second video portrait of an African American lawyer whose fledging law practice grew into a major law firm. Wes French, GSA's Regional Program Manager for Outleasing, Site Acquisition, and Urban Development in the Northeast and Caribbean Region, was pleased to report that the Property Management Office and the Federal Protection Service worked together on last minute schedule changes that allowed not only for a successful shoot, but also for the elimination of an additional day of production. According to French, "This is an excellent example of the Federal government being a good neighbor in our urban areas."



For more information, contact Wes French (212) 264-3595.

**WASHINGTON, D.C. - Kiosks Provide More Than Just Improved Public Spaces**

When the new U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) building opened earlier this year in a District neighborhood looking to reinvent itself, a local job training program seized the opportunity to help its clients reinvent themselves, too. Training Grounds, Inc. operates the kiosks at the DOT's Southwest Plaza, selling a range of products, from purses and jewelry to snacks and sodas. Manning the booths are the program's young adults from city neighborhoods who gain marketable job skills from the experience, while DOT employees and visitors to the new Nationals Stadium gain a more vibrant and enjoyable community environment.



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The newly constructed building's retail requirement was the result of an agreement among the D.C. Office of Planning, the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC), and GSA to "enliven the street and promote mixed uses to enhance the neighborhood." In filling the vendor slot for the on-street kiosks, building management company JBG/Federal Center, LLC turned to Training Grounds, with whom it had a pre-existing relationship, to take on the role. Implementing a business model that the organization had worked on for over a year, this public-private partnership has proved beneficial to both parties. Tom Brown, executive director of Training Grounds, is optimistic about the success of the project and looks forward to other opportunities to partner with building managers in and around the D.C. area.

For more information, visit [www.traininggroundsinc.org](http://www.traininggroundsinc.org) or contact Karen Beach (202) 501-0019.

## ○ SITES AND DESIGNS

### DENVER, COLORADO - Here Comes the Sun

With more than 300 days of sunshine every year, the metropolitan area of Denver is a perfect candidate for solar power, a reality recently harnessed by the Denver Federal Center (DFC) in Lakewood, CO. As a part of its Environmental Management System (EMS) to conserve resources and reduce waste, the DFC answered a solicitation by Xcel Energy to install six-and-a-half acres of solar panels onsite, an array that will provide one-ninth of the total energy used by the facility's 55 buildings. At a peak rate of 1.6 megawatts per year, the system is poised to pay for itself in a mere 13 years, rather than the 25 to 30 years that is more typical of solar installations. As DFC Director, Scott Conner, says, "It made good business sense for us to do it."



The DFC EMS is part of a broader GSA regional EMS plan. GSA selected the DFC because it "functions much like a small city," meaning that the successful implementation of efforts at the Federal Center location could result in broader regional applications. The opportunity to partner with Xcel Energy stemmed from voter-approved Amendment 37, legislation requiring that the energy provider work with its customers

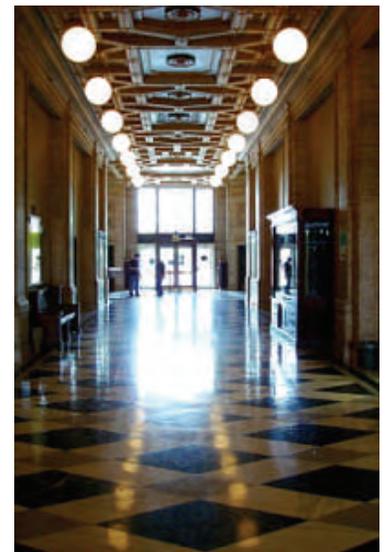
on projects exploring sustainable energy options.

For more information, visit [www.gsa.gov/dfcsolarpark](http://www.gsa.gov/dfcsolarpark) or contact Scott Conner (303) 236-8000.

### PORTLAND, OREGON - A Historic Post Office Goes Co-Ed

Richard Florida's "creative class" now has one more reason to look to the Portland area. Built in 1918, the federal building at 511 N.W. Broadway in Portland currently greets the spectators with an "elegant, but reserved" façade. If all goes according to plan, though, the historic structure will soon offer the students of Pacific Northwest College of Art (PNCA) a whole lot more than just an attractive exterior. With the departure of the Department of Homeland Security, GSA will cede control of the former post office to the academic institution at no cost, allowing PNCA to expand its reach into a burgeoning city neighborhood. The college, though, will foot the bill for the multi-year restoration and renovation, estimated at between \$12 and \$16 million.

Although a nonprofit-private partnership originally sought to combine a public market and private residences at the location, PNCA will now be able to take advantage of a surge in redevelopment of the surrounding neighborhood into an arts and design district. It also is located immediately adjacent to a large plaza and nearby to a Metropolitan Area Express (MAX) light rail station scheduled to open in a few years' time. With the handover and renovation of the Federal building itself slated to take several years, the timing, the site, and the student body appear to be matches well made.



For more information, contact B. Story Swett (253) 931-7796.

**BALTIMORE, MARYLAND - Artwork Makes the Fallon Federal Building Fashionable**

In addition to renovations modernizing the basement level, first, second, and third floors, the George H. Fallon Federal Building recently got a lesson in recycled clothing with the installation of *Dress Code*, a large panel artwork featuring various pieces of clothing donated by Armed Services veterans and recent immigrants. The GSA Mid-Atlantic Region celebrated its installation in the lobby, along with that of another piece at the main entrance, *Swing Over*, in early May. The artists, Jean Shin and Alice Aycock, respectively, attended the event where GSA Regional Administrator, Barbara Shelton, and Assistant Regional Administrator for PBS, Rob Hewell, addressed a crowd of more than 100 guests. The keynote speaker was John Cole, Director of the Veterans Benefits Academy, who praised the benefits to his agency and the building population as a result of the modernization efforts.



For more information, contact Jackie Strzepek (215) 446-4771.

## COLLABORATION

**KETCHIKAN, ALASKA - Ketchikan Can't Part With Pink**

Pink buildings and palm trees usually go hand-in-hand, but not in one Alaskan city. The rosy hue highlighting the historic Federal building against the gray skies over Ketchikan has gained the structure iconic status among locals. Painted a more traditional cream color 14 times during its first 50 years, the building earned its splashier appearance in 1990 at the hands of a citizen committee.

When in May of this year the question of its unusual hue came up again, with a push by preservationists to restore its prior paint color, the state agency (SHPO) opted out of the decision-making, thereby removing the choice from the Section 106 process. GSA then put the decision to a web-based poll conducted by the local newspapers, offering this "remote and small town known for its contrarian attitudes and arts interests" the chance to weigh in again. The result of the poll was an even split between cream and pink, prompting a public assembly to discuss the matter further.

And the outcome of the whole process? In an area characterized by such wintry skies, the cheerier pink prevailed.

For more information, contact B. Story Swett (253) 931-7796.

**BILLINGS, MONTANA - Community Comments Help Form Final Framework**

Courting public favor is in fashion during this campaign season, and no method guarantees success like letting the voice of the people be heard. Anticipating the future arrival of a leased Federal courthouse in the Billings Civic District, the Downtown Billings Partnership (DBP), along with the GSA Rocky Mountain Region, opened the floor for community comment regarding the Billings Civic District Framework Plan. The plan addresses design options for downtown Billings that help to incorporate the new courthouse. In the course of two outreach sessions, an open house, and a community survey, 200 members of the public provided the experts at design firm Rios Clementi Hale with input to guide the finishing touches of the plan. The framework will appear as part of a requirements package warranting the response of developers as they craft their bids.

For more information, contact Janet Preisser (303) 236-8000 ext. 5248.

**PORTLAND, OREGON - A Panel Retires From a Job Well Done**

As the centerpiece of the "city's living room," the Pioneer Courthouse, built in 1875, is important to the people of Portland. When GSA embarked upon an ambitious effort to ensure the building's longevity - including a seismic base isolation retrofit (notable for a structure of this age, size, and construction) and substantial interior improvements - the agency enlisted the help of those with a stake in the project's success. In 2007, GSA organized the Pioneer U.S. Courthouse Citizens Advisory Panel (CAP), comprised of court officials, historic preservationists, and community business and tourism groups. The panel served as an important link between the agency and the community, providing input and support to the project by ensuring continued public access to the building and contributing documents and other content for the displays on the public walking tour of the building. With the retrofit now completed, the panel voted unanimously to be formally retired, leaving current stewardship of the courthouse to the Pioneer Courthouse Historical Society.



For more information, contact B. Story Swett (253) 931-7796.

**TOLEDO, OHIO - City Mall Slated to Better Serve Its Citizens**

In happy coincidence with a new city initiative called "Toledo Pride," recent GSA efforts will no doubt provide civic pride with a boost by helping the city to enliven one of its undervalued and underused resources. On June 30, an ad hoc working group of interested parties convened a workshop in downtown Toledo, Ohio, to begin to form a long-term "vision plan" for the city's Civic Center Mall. The workshop represented an important early step to improve the Mall for its users and the citizens of Toledo. The ad hoc working group includes key stakeholders - such as the City of Toledo, the U.S. District Courts, and the Greater Downtown Business Partnership - who are serving as an informal steering committee of sorts. Activities at the workshop included self-guided tours of the Mall, during which observers recorded their impressions of specific features and offered suggestions for improvement.

Although the discussion is still at an early stage, the working group intends to involve a broader range of stakeholders soon. The intention is that the plan for the Mall will be developed with consensus among all interested parties, as these parties later will be called upon to implement the resulting vision - a vision that would serve and earn the support of the city's residents.

For more information, contact Frank Giblin (202) 501-1856.

## ○ NATIONAL NEWS

### WASHINGTON, DC - GSA Gives a Grant

Stemming from authority received earlier this fiscal year in Public Law 110-161, GSA recently awarded grant money aimed at “facilitating research and coordination” for efforts to site federal facilities in the National Capital Region in the long-term. The grant announcement elicited 22 responses, providing a very competitive pool of applicants. The grant review panel, consisting of three GSA staff members, two peer experts, and two non-voting advisors from other federal agencies, waded through the applications recently and selected the four deemed the best value for the dollars available.

GSA would like to congratulate the following organizations on their successful applications: D.C. Office of Planning, George Mason University, Alta Planning and Design, and Arlington County.



For more information, contact Frank Giblin (202) 501-1856. ○



*You never change something by fighting  
the existing reality.  
To change something, build a new model that makes  
the existing model obsolete.*

~R. Buckminster Fuller

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