

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Walker Brands Named Tampa's First "Gold" LEED® - Certified Building**

**TAMPA, Fla.** – (March 31, 2009) – Walker Brands is now Tampa's first building to receive Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Gold Certification, the U.S. Green Building Council's (USGBC) leading-edge system for designing and constructing a sustainable, energy-efficient and high-performance building.

The new Walker Brands headquarters, an 8,400-square-foot facility that opened in March 2008 near Downtown Tampa, is helping lead the way for other Tampa Bay area businesses – large and small – to create structures that are environmentally responsible, profitable and healthy for living and working.

"This building is proof that you don't have to be a large corporation to build green," said Nancy Walker, president of Walker Brands. "We didn't want to be the newest old building, and it was an opportunity to tell our brand story with an innovative design that also demonstrated environmental responsibility. We exceeded our initial sustainability goals and we're absolutely thrilled to now be LEED Gold Certified."

Walker's basic philosophy for its new headquarters fit very well with LEED criteria, and with the help of its design-build partner, Beck Group, the project was completed to meet the LEED Gold certification criteria set forth by the USGBC – higher than both silver and standard certification.

### **LEED-Certified Features and Benefits**

Walker Brands maximized energy efficiency in order to reduce total energy consumption by 30%. Water usage was reduced by more than 40% as well. Examples include:

- White roofing materials with a high level of Solar Reflectance Index to minimize the absorption of heat and reduce the demands of the air-conditioning system.
- The heart pine wood flooring throughout is made of 200-500-year-old reclaimed logs from the bottom of the Suwannee River, eliminating the need to cut down trees.
- Glass façade on building's exterior features double pane high performance glass to reduce heat flow and maintain comfortable climate conditions.
- Over 75% of the building is exposed to natural daylight, reducing the need for artificial light.
- Building lighting is motion-censored, and the HVAC system is controlled by zones based on employee needs.
- Florescent lighting throughout.
- Installation of dual flush toilets, Energy Star appliances and low-flow fixtures contribute to a 46% reduction in water use.
- Native species of landscape requiring less artificial irrigation were planted, helping reduce the draw on our municipal water system.

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## **Walker's Green Philosophy Beyond LEED**

While great care was taken during construction to meet LEED standards for environmental friendliness, Walker's green philosophy extended to interior design and daily business practices. Examples include:

- The recycled rudder of a Douglas C-54 Skymaster WWII-era cargo plane acts as the conference room table, giving new life and a new use to an old aircraft from an airplane bone yard in the Arizona desert.
- Implementation of green operational practices, including recycling office supplies, aluminum cans, plastics, toner and ink; recycled paper repurposed into note pads; filtered tap water instead of bottled water; computer-based fax system instead of traditional paper machine; etc.
- Green cleaning supplies used by an environmentally friendly janitorial service.
- Stationery and other collateral printed on recycled paper.
- Purchasing used reference books as opposed to new

## **Community Revitalization and Connectivity**

The landmark building sits on a previously developed site in the Kennedy Boulevard Corridor Overlay District, which is designed to encourage revitalization of the streetscape and promote pedestrian activity. By not building on undisturbed land, Walker did not displace animal habitats, disrupt the natural flow of groundwater or take up valuable green space. It's also helping to beautify a once dilapidated area in the midst of a renaissance by creating a clearly defined pedestrian zone that respects the scale and character of the surrounding community, thereby meeting LEED criteria.

Conveniently located just blocks from two major bus routes, Walker is contributing to the sustainability of the community by providing walkable alternatives for employees. Within a half-mile of the office, employees can find over 75 businesses ranging from restaurants and dry cleaners, to banks, the post office and grocers. Employees are taking advantage of this access by leaving their cars at home and biking to work, where showers are available for use. This proximity to transit and amenity access count as qualifying services aiding in overall community connectivity under the LEED criteria. Other highlights include:

- Preferred parking spaces for hybrid vehicles and carpoolers to help encourage the reduction of harmful automotive emissions.
- Limited on-site parking to promote ridesharing and transit use.
- Turf block incorporated into the parking area as an alternative to asphalt pavement to allow plant life to grow limit water runoff.

## **Awards**

The new Walker Brands headquarters and its design-build partner, BECK Group, have received a variety of local and national awards, including:

- Associated General Contractors Best Project of the Year (2009)
- Associated General Contractors Best New Construction/\$2M - \$6M (2009)
- Design-Build Institute of America Design-Build Excellence Award (2008)
- Hillsborough County City-County Planning Commission Award of Excellence/ Green Projects (2008)



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The building was also honored as a nominee for the 2008 Sustainable Florida Best Practice Awards.

### **Industry and Public Tours**

More than 1,200 people have toured Walker Brands since its opening in 2008. The building continues to be open to visitors and serves as a tangible, green example to educate the commercial sector and the public about what can be done now to positively impact the community.

### **About LEED**

*Developed and operated by the U.S. Green Building Council, the LEED® Green Building Rating System™ is the nationally accepted benchmark for the design, construction, and operation of high performance green buildings. LEED gives building owners and operators the tools they need to have an immediate and measurable impact on their buildings' performance. LEED promotes a whole-building approach to sustainability by recognizing performance in five key areas of human and environmental health: sustainable site development, water savings, energy efficiency, materials selection, and indoor environmental quality. For more information, please visit [www.usgbc.org](http://www.usgbc.org).*

### **About Walker**

*Founded in 1992, Walker Brands is an award-winning branding firm serving premier destinations, developments, attractions, retailers and health care clients nationwide. The firm develops strategic brand programs that combine marketing, public relations, placemaking and customer experiences to increase their long-term value and bottom line – ensuring distinct, compelling and consistent expansion of the brand throughout all customer touchpoints. For more information, please visit [www.walkerbrands.com](http://www.walkerbrands.com).*

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**Media Note:** Building photos and additional LEED information can be found at [www.walkerbrands.com/ourplace.htm](http://www.walkerbrands.com/ourplace.htm). To schedule a tour of Walker Brands with Nancy Walker and representatives from Beck Group, please contact Mary Ellen Collins at (813) 875-3322 or [mecollins@walkerbrands.com](mailto:mecollins@walkerbrands.com).

