

FROM JUNE 2008



Urban Times

ARCHIVES



**KIB hopes its new headquarters stands as model for community**

**T**HE SHINY NEW HEADQUARTERS WHICH WILL soon be home to Keep Indianapolis Beautiful could have cost a bit less than its \$2.4 million price tag, had KIB not chosen to walk the walk, not just talk the talk.

But KIB went green, a decision which President David Forsell said added between 10 and 15 percent to the price tag. As a result, Keep Indianapolis Beautiful's renovated Fountain Square facility promises to serve as a model of excellence, a laboratory of sustainability.

"It will be an innovative and forward-thinking space for the community," Forsell said, "a place where people can visit and

learn.” College professors, civic leaders, city officials have already lined up for tours.

But there’s an even bigger message here. Keep Indianapolis Beautiful is a not-for-profit. If KIB organization can pull this off, why can’t other builders with far deeper pockets?

“You need the will, the desire, the determination – and a little more money,” Forsell said. “The question is, how do you do it, sustainably and affordably? Every direction you turn, there’s an environmental story to tell, inspiring and motivating to people.”

For KIB itself, the new headquarters will bring heightened efficiency to the organization which employs 11 full-time staff members plus 25-30 part-time and seasonal employees. “Getting administration and operation in one spot was motivation number-one,” Forsell said. Until now, KIB’s staff worked out of a 9th floor Downtown office building, while materials and equipment were stored at two near-Downtown warehouses – one without electricity. “We’ve been begging and borrowing space,” he said, including some storage on a Habitat for Humanity site in Martindale on the Monon.

KIB plans to use 7,000 square feet of its new headquarters for office space, with another 11,000 square feet going to warehouse space. That leaves about 6,500 square feet of space for one or more tenants. Forsell is now looking for an organization harmonious with KIB’s ideals.

If he can fill that space, KIB’s annual budget will get a \$35,000 boost. Add that to the \$65,000 saved by not paying rent, and KIB has \$100,000 more to spend on programs. The biggest savings will come by eliminating travel time. “We lost 400 to 500 hours a year commuting from place to place,” Forsell said.

The renovated facility will also allow KIB to expand on its educational outreach programs, as well as provide space for community meetings. KIB currently hosts several events, including two tree steward classes a year, each for 50 people; a green space workshop, for 20; Adopt-a-Block Roundtables for 40-60, and other events. These events can now be staged on Fletcher Avenue, eliminating the time and trouble setting up off-site locations.

The new space will also provide meeting space opportunities for KIB’s community partners, Forsell noted.

There are a couple of other perks, as well. The front of the building will be adorned by a piece of public art – a 3-dimensional “KIB” mobile by Scott VanKirk of Expo Design. “And we’re also excited about our wind energy demonstration project,” Forsell said. He sees that project as “fun and Fountain Square-ish,” where people can not only see and learn about wind energy, but also use the space for meditation.

KIB’s challenge at the corner of Fletcher Avenue and Shelby Street was not an easy one. The site is a textbook

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## **Move-in day: June 12**

Keep Indianapolis Beautiful will move into its new headquarters at 1029 Fletcher Ave. on Thursday, June 12. A formal grand-opening is envisioned for July.

KIB is still in fund-raising mode for the facility, with \$800,000 still needed to cover the \$2.4 million project. KIB has raised about \$1.1 million in cash donations and another \$600,000 in in-kind goods and services.

## **Just how ‘green’ is it?**

Keep Indianapolis Beautiful is redeveloping the site and building with the intent of qualifying for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification with the U.S. Green Building Council. Green elements in the design which contribute to LEED certification include:

- Reuse of urban lot, saving natural resources.
- Reuse of existing building, saving resources.
- Parking lot paved with pervious pavement, reducing stormwater runoff.
- A white “cool roof” system with high reflectance, reducing heat from roof and reducing energy usage and costs.
- A 10,000-gallon cistern, reducing stormwater runoff for reuse in watering trees and plant materials.
- A rain garden, reducing stormwater runoff.
- A central atrium, which captures natural daylight, adding to quality of life, and reducing energy usage and costs.
- Used and/or recycled/recyclable furniture, saving natural and financial resources.
- Bicycle racks, accommodating for and encouraging bike travel to and from the facility.
- Low “VOC” paints, reducing use of toxic chemicals.
- Occupancy sensor-activated lighting and energy-efficient bulbs, reducing energy usage and costs.
- Energy-efficient appliances, reducing energy usage and costs.
- Landscaping with native plants, shrubs and trees, saving water.
- Wind energy, utilizing renewal energy, reducing energy and costs. ■

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brownfield, having been home to two service stations, a dry cleaner and a metal-plating shop. Forsell was able to enlist state government help to clean up the petroleum mess, while the Barnes and Thornburg law firm donated \$50,000 in legal services to work through the complicated bureaucratic process.

“What had been a drain on the community – vacant and



▲ KIB's new headquarters features a "pocket park" garden area (at the left front corner of the building). The space, which includes a rain garden, will feature a variety of native plants that have particular talents in filtering stormwater before it enters the ground.

dirty – is now inhabited, clean and green,” said Forsell, adding that the new headquarters not only helps KIB, but the neighborhood as well. “We hope we contribute to the economic vitality and cultural life. We want to be an anchor for revitalization along Shelby Street,” he said. “We’re really proud of that.”

Mark Stewart, executive director of Southeast Neighborhood Development, is equally pleased about the Shelby Street prospects.

“We’re really excited to have them in the neighborhood,” he said, adding that “KIB will act as an anchor” for the area north of Fountain Square. Stewart said the corridor will also benefit from a couple of façade projects along Shelby Street, plus the recent residential development east of Shelby Street on Hosbrook, Lexington and Elm streets.

“On the west side, there’s still work to be done,” he said. “Now we’re trying to connect those dots of redevelopment, to get a larger impact.”

**- Bill Brooks**