

BET ON THE HOUSE

Gaming industry mainstays such as casinos have been understandably slow to adopt LEED standards. The Rivers Casino in Des Plaines, IL, is changing that.

By Ashley Kjos



In the game of word association, “casino” and “sustainable” wouldn’t be a natural match. But that may change now that **Development Management Associates** has helped create the Rivers Casino in Des Plaines, Illinois. The project is the first casino in the United States to earn the LEED stamp, and it did fairly well for itself, in the end achieving Gold certification.

The gaming industry is just the beginning for Development Management Associates (DMA). In June 2007, **Charles Porter, Michael Levin, and Martha Spatz** founded DMA after working together at another prominent development company where they accumulated more than 75 years of combined experience in retail development, mixed-use, high rises, and other special projects. Five years later the company is 12 people strong and active in many aspects of development, working on various project types around the country.



The LEED Gold-certified Rivers Casino is a novelty right now, but as owners catch on to the savings of energy efficiency, we’ll begin to see more green gaming facilities.



The LEED-certified Rivers Casino in Des Plaines, IL, sits on 20 acres that were developed as sustainably as possible: 90% of construction debris was diverted from landfills.

The casino's parking garage is green as well: DMA used hyper-efficient LEDs throughout, making it the only garage in the country to be lit entirely with LEDs.

One characteristic that defines DMA is its unique expertise in managing the development of casinos and gaming properties. During a recession, the economics of the gaming industry have typically mirrored that of the economic climate on the whole. The work that DMA is involved with, however, is the exception. "It just so happens that the people we know and work with, **Rush Street Gaming**, have been very active over the recent down turn," Porter says.

The Rivers Casino in Des Plaines, located on 20 acres at the northwest corner of Des Plaines River Road and Devon Avenue, opened last July. Building a sustainable casino, one that could potentially become LEED certified, was part of the dialogue from the beginning and something that was embraced by the entire team. "We always had the idea of pursuing LEED in the back of our minds. What gave us the push we needed was the support from the ownership and the City of Des Plaines," says **Jason Westrope**, a development manager and LEED AP at DMA. The casino is predicting 27 percent energy savings through the use of green technologies.

That amount is magnified due to the nature of a casino. "When you're operating a casino 22 hours out of the day and 365 days a year, any incremental savings is going to make a big difference to your bottom line," Westrope says. One of the most notable features of the casino is actually the parking garage. Installing LED lights throughout has made it the largest garage by square feet in the county to be lit completely by LED lighting and has reduced the electrical service to the garage from 1,200 amps to 800 amps.

Another important effort was to divert 90 percent of all construction waste away from landfills, an amount



that totaled 35,330 tons of material. Features that are more visible to the everyday patron are the skylights that let in natural daylight on the 43,000-square-foot casino floor and living green walls both inside and outside of the building. Rivers Casino also offers free valet parking service to anyone who pulls up in an electric or hybrid vehicle, electric-car-charging stations, and a free shuttle from the Chicago El, encouraging public transportation.

Greening recreational and gaming facilities hasn't been adopted as quickly or as readily as other types of structures. "The adoption of sustainable principles by industry sector has had a lot to do with how challenging the particular curve was," Westrope says. "The early adopters, commercial office spaces, were building mainly core-and-shell structures where a lot of the energy consumption is tenant driven. Casinos are largely wholly owned and occupied, and they are large energy consumers." Recreational facilities also are patron-driven as far as amenities and preference; as the consumer changes so will the level of sustainable features.

While work in the gaming industry is a unique niche that DMA continues

to be proud of, it has a wide range as a developer, and its principals have been involved in some of the more notable retail projects in Illinois, including Water Tower Place and 900 North Michigan. They've also managed the installation of thousands of square feet of Chicago's famous green roofs. Most recently Development Management Associates worked on the Barney's New York flagship store in Chicago, a five-story luxury retail space including a penthouse restaurant and a 6,000-square-foot green roof. "We try to fold green ideas into every project we take on," Westrope says.

Proficiency in a variety of project types and the willingness to take on the sustainable challenges of the gaming industry has served DMA well over its first five years. "You can do quality projects at any scale," Porter says. "And all quality projects are sustainable." **gb&d**

A MESSAGE FROM RIVERS CASINO

Rivers Casino is proud to have partnered with Development Management Associates, LLC on the construction and development of Rivers Casino in Des Plaines, Illinois. Their hard work, dedication, and creative input truly helped to make this a successful project. Their unique touches and "green" influences can be seen throughout the 147,000-square-foot facility. Thank you, and congratulations on a job well done.



PROJECT

LOCATION Des Plaines, IL
Size 147,000 ft²
Completed 2011
Program Casino floor, food and beverage areas, entertainment venue, and parking garage

TEAM

DEVELOPER Development Management Associates
Owner Midwest Gaming & Entertainment
Architect Klai Juba Architects
Interior Designer Cleo Design
Food-and-Beverage Designer DMAC Architecture

GREEN

CERTIFICATION LEED Gold
Recycling 35,330 tons of debris were diverted from the landfill
Parking Garage Use of LEDs reduced necessary amps from 1,200 to 800
Interior Skylights bring in daylight, while living walls are featured inside and out

“WHEN YOU’RE OPERATING A CASINO 22 HOURS OUT OF THE DAY AND 365 DAYS A YEAR, ANY INCREMENTAL SAVINGS IS GOING TO MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE TO YOUR BOTTOM LINE.”

Jason Westrope, Development Management Associates



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Rivers Casino thanks **DMA** for making us the 1st LEED Gold Certified Casino in the world. Green is our favorite color!

RIVERS CASINO 3000 S. River Road | Des Plaines, IL 60018 888.307.0777

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