



Media Release:

Audubon Nature Center Harnesses Natural Energy

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Sarasota Audubon's Nature Center Achieves *Ultimate* Energy Conservation

Sarasota, FL (August 2016)— The Sarasota Audubon Society's Nature Center design team, led by green building architect Michael Carlson, AIA, LEED AP, BD+C, along with Willis Smith Construction, Florida House Institute and Ringling College landscape architecture students, is proud to announce that the project has achieved net zero energy performance.

Audubon Nature Center is next generation of Green Building Design. According to commissioning agent, Roger Landry, of ESC LLC, the facility "produced more energy than it consumed every month since it opened last fall." The latest data about net zero energy (NZE) commercial properties from New Building Institute indicates there are fewer than 50 verified zero emission buildings (ZEB) in the U.S. presently. The U.S. Department of Energy defines an NZE as "an energy-efficient building where, on a source energy basis, the actual annual delivered energy is less than or equal to the on-site renewable exported energy."

"Most of the verified institutional buildings in America today are found in mild-weather environments," stated Audubon architect Michael Carlson. "That's what makes the news about Audubon's Nature Center energy results so amazing - the building was able to produce MORE energy than it used even during some of the hottest summer months on record for our region." Carlson's building design incorporated principals from American Institute of Architects (AIA) 2030 Challenge which calls for buildings to reduce energy use by a minimum of 70% (in 2016) compared to buildings of similar size and type. The remaining energy that the building needs to operate must come from a renewable energy source, such as solar or wind, that is not carbon emitting.

The following features of the new Nature Center contribute to the building's

energy efficiency and conservation performance:

- Solar Panels
- Tubular skylights
- Insulated Concrete Form walls (think giant foam blocks like Legos)
- passive design features such as proper building orientation and deep roof overhangs to shade all windows.

The facility also acts as a demonstration site for visitors to learn more about the benefits and savings associated with low-energy or zero-energy building performance.

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Carlson has been practicing architecture in Sarasota since 1986, and his firm, Carlson Studio Architecture is a leader in green building design in Florida. Since 2003, Michael has held leadership positions in the United States Green Building Council (USGBC) at the local, state and regional level. He has been a LEED Accredited professional since 2003, with a specialty in Building Design & Construction (BD+C). He currently serves as the Chair of the USGBC Florida Chapter.

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Carlson Studio Architecture is committed to high quality design solutions that promote commercially-viable sustainability by minimizing the consumption of materials and maximizing their reuse while protecting the environment.