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Environmental Case Study (Green Community)

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Description

Seven years ago, Verdanz Partners, a new environmental design consortium, received grant money from the Green County Pilot Program in Mallard County, TX, to make the Coyote Canyon Development an environmentally friendly community. The goal of this case study is to determine whether or not their efforts were successful.

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Project Background

Seven years ago, Verdanz Partners, a new environmental design consortium, received grant money from the Green County Pilot Program in Mallard County, TX, to make the Coyote Canyon Development an environmentally friendly community. The goal of this case study is to determine whether or not their efforts were successful.

The goals of the Verdanz Partners were to dramatically lower the use of electricity and water, and to create renewable energy for the community when possible. To do this, Verdanz Partners and the Coyote Canyon Development developers, Dos Hermanas Corporation, did the following:

-  Added green roofs to the clubhouse and fitness center to drastically cut heating and cooling costs for these common buildings.
-  Added energy-efficient skylights to all communal buildings to cut down on lighting costs at all times of year and heating costs in winter.
-  Added solar collectors to roofs of all communal buildings to heat water and generate electricity.
-  Added a solar heat generation system and ultraviolet cleaning system to the community pool.
-  Replaced all lawns (existing or planned) with approved xeriscape plantings to cut down on water usage and maintenance costs.
-  Installed solar-powered lights in all outdoor fixtures to cut down on electricity usage.
-  Installed a windmill to pump water and installed ultraviolet treatment panels at sewage treatment plant to reduce electricity and chemical usage. Use resulting 'safe sludge' to fertilize communal landscaping.
-  Installed two wind generators flanking the cliff at the back of the planned community park to generate electricity for community buildings. This area is consistently windy and the cliff edge is already a safety hazard that must be fenced to keep the community safe. It was anticipated that at many times of year, much of the electricity created by these wind generators could be sold back to the utility company for a community profit.
-  Added skylights, solar panels, solar water heaters, and solar-powered outdoor lights to all houses planned for the community.

We'll examine each of these strategies to see how well they accomplished their objectives.

Present Situation

The Coyote Canyon Development is now fully built out and functioning very successfully, generating all its own electricity and handling its own sewage. The only commodity routinely purchased from the county is water, and the community uses approximately 25% on average of what similar homes and community facilities elsewhere use. Homes in Coyote Canyon Development sell for a premium price, and there's even a waiting list of prospective buyers in the community office.

Residents of Coyote Canyon Development are so enthusiastic about living in an environmentally friendly manner that they have become a major force in the county, lobbying for more recycling, bicycle trails, and electric car-share programs. Mallard County is fast becoming one of the 'greenest' counties in TX.

Dos Hermanas Corporation, in conjunction with Verdanz Partners, is planning another similar community 15 miles away. Verdanz Partners has become a leader in environmentally friendly design, recognized across the United States.

The grant money Verdanz Partners received from the Green County Pilot Program in Mallard County, TX has been paid back many times over in savings to the county in water, sewage treatment, and electricity generation.



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