

CASE STUDY

WINDOW SHADES

SHADES REDUCE GLARE IN LEED® PLATINUM CERTIFIED BUILDING



FlexShades®, Heifer International Headquarters, Little Rock, AR.
Installation by Blind Ambition, Photography ©Timothy Hursley, Little Rock, AR., Little Rock, AR.

- Surrounded by water, the building needed help dealing with glare reflecting off the beautiful landscape feature.

When the Heifer International Center opened in Little Rock, Arkansas, it was a marvel of modern sustainable architecture.

Among the features of the international charity's headquarters are large, energy-efficient plate glass windows for passive solar heat and indirect light, and a curved shape to capture the maximum amount of sunlight. These and other sustainable construction practices helped the building achieve a Platinum LEED® certification from the U.S. Green Building Council. But when the facility first opened, a glaring problem emerged: Workers couldn't use their computer stations on the south side of the building due to the sun load coming through those extra large windows.

"The architects did a great job designing fixed sun shades that help with passive solar control and glare, but with [the] building surrounded by water, we need additional help with

the glare from the water," said Erik J. Swindle, Director of Facilities Management for Heifer International.

Swindle recommended going with interior window shades. Management agreed, but initially only in private offices on the south side of the building. They called in Gerald Rogers (AIA), president of Little Rock's Blind Ambition, a shade dealer for Draper, Inc.

"I'm an architect and I previously worked in the firm that designed the project," says Rogers. After studying the building orientation, he recommended GREENGUARD®-certified Draper shades with Phifer SheerWeave® SW2000 fabric, featuring a 5% openness factor. The GREENGUARD Certification ProgramSM is an industry-independent, third-party testing program for low-emitting products and materials.

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“We used the LEED® system and designed the openness for the HVAC loading of the building due to its orientation on the site,” according to Rogers. “[Although] the shades were added after the building was occupied, and the original LEED calculations were complete prior to the shades being added, the shades did add to the LEED certification.”

According to Heifer, the building uses just 55% as much energy as a conventionally-designed and -constructed building. The occupants were so pleased with their new shades that Swindle called on Rogers to install even more.

“I’ve had shades installed throughout the facility in conference spaces,” Swindle says, who adds, “They are working very well and many staff would not be able to function in the facility without them.”

Although there are motorized shades located in a conference space and tied into AV equipment, many of the shades are manually-operated to keep cost at a minimum.

“In all we do, Heifer International strives toward our mission of ending hunger and poverty while caring for the earth,” according to Heifer President and CEO Jo Luck. “We are proud to have attained this elite Platinum rating because it supports our holistic devotion to this cause.”

Swindle continues to be pleased with the overall performance and maintenance of the Draper shades. “Cleaning is quite easy. The shades are part of our quarterly window cleaning and I have not received any complaints from my custodial staff or any Heifer staff on the lack of cleanliness. As for maintenance we really have not had any trouble.”

The Heifer headquarters building is one of several Platinum-rated buildings in the nation, and first in Arkansas. In addition, the 94,000 sq. ft. building was recognized by the American Institute of Architects as one of the “Top Ten Green Projects” in the United States in 2007.

Heifer International is a world hunger charity that uses gifts of livestock and training in agriculture and animal care to help poor families around the world become self-reliant. It is famous for its signature practice that requires recipients of livestock to “pass on the gift” of offspring of that livestock to others so the benefits of every donation are multiplied.

Founded in 1902, Draper, Inc. provides solar control shading solutions, projection screens, lifts and mounts for projectors and flat panels, and athletic equipment. For more information on Draper solar shading products and their commitment to green building, visit green.draperinc.com.

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