

# Rackspace is going green

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When Rackspace Managed Hosting moves into its new Windsor Park Mall headquarters next spring, it will move to a greener campus.

Rackspace is creating a green environment for its 1,400 employees at the mall, complete with solar panel skylights, a rooftop garden and energy-saving lighting and air-conditioning systems. Employees even will be able to turn off the lights and to control the temperature at their workstations.

"We're going to go as green as we can," said John Engates, Rackspace's chief technology officer.

Rackspace, San Antonio's largest high-tech employer, runs eight data centers in Texas, Virginia and England that house Web sites for many Fortune 500 companies. Next year, it will move its local employees to a 221-acre campus at the mall.

Rackspace will put a new data center in the Windsor Park Mall site — dubbed "The Castle" by its employees — by 2009 and plans to employ the latest green technology.

"We're recycling this old dinosaur of a shopping mall into a new facility," said Randy Smith, Rackspace's real estate manager.

Rackspace's green initiatives are an example of how businesses in different industries are embracing environmental protection for sound business reasons, said David Downie, associate director of the climate and society program at Columbia University's Earth Institute in New York.

"Over the long term, they will save money," he said. "They will reduce carbon emissions, and they will improve their corporate image."

Data centers require huge amounts of energy to power computer servers, which provide Web pages to computer users worldwide. By using alternative energy from wind farms or other green sources, the data centers can reduce the country's carbon emissions, Downie said. And by designing the data centers better, the companies can save lots of energy, he said.

In fact, Mike Manos, Microsoft Corp.'s director of data centers, told the San Antonio Manufacturing Association during a recent dinner that the U.S. will need to build five new power plants by 2010 to supply the power needed for data centers being built today. Microsoft is building a massive data center using energy-saving technology in Westover Hills.

CityNap, a downtown data center, already bills itself as Texas' first green data center because it buys 100 percent of its energy needs from CPS Energy's Windtricity program.

In the first phase of Rackspace's mall renovation, the company is transforming the 88,000-square-foot former Mervyns department store into a green building, in part by recycling 50 tons of aluminum, copper and steel, Smith said.

In addition, Rackspace filled six truck trailers with recyclable doors, fixtures, windows and other materials that it donated to Habitat for Humanity.

Rackspace plans to outfit the renovated building with energy-saving technology, including compact fluorescent interior and exterior lighting. It's even using soy-based paint from a supplier in Uvalde to decorate. The company is applying for certification in the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, or LEED, for the site.

LEED recognizes new or remodeled buildings that "reduce waste sent to landfills, conserve energy and water, and reduce harmful greenhouse gas emission."

Even before planning for the new headquarters began, Rackspace already had put programs into place to offset its carbon footprint, or the amount of energy it uses. Earlier this year, Rackspace began using Advanced Micro Device's "quad core" processors, which enable it to get twice the power for the same energy costs as other processors.

"It allows us to deliver more performance to our customers for less money," Engates said.

The company also joined the Green Grid, an industry consortium focused on reducing energy consumption at data centers, Engates said.

In addition, Rackspace's new 60,000-square-foot data center being built in Slough, England, will use the latest green technology. The entire facility is being powered by renewable energy sources from biomass or energy produced from burning natural materials such as dead plants and wood chips.

In the U.S., Rackspace is working with NativeEnergy, a leading national marketer of renewable energy credits and carbon offsets. It supports the Owl Feather War Bonnet Wind Farm project in South Dakota and the Schrack dairy methane project in Pennsylvania.

"We're doing common-sense things to help the environment," Engates said. "They also make business sense."