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Entire Gulch Gets LEED Status

A downtown Nashville neighborhood has become the first in the south to receive certification from the U-S Green Building Council.

The Gulch is among just two-dozen neighborhoods around the world to receive this blanket certification. Another includes the Olympic Village in Beijing.

10-years ago, the Gulch was mostly deserted industrial space. MarketStreet Enterprises is guiding the redevelopment. It owns roughly 40-percent of the area covered by the LEED certification.

Managing director Jay Turner says the designation doesn't hold other property owners to any standard, but it does make it easier for them to get an individual certification.

“You get an extra credit for developing inside of a green neighborhood, so when other people develop it will be easier for them to do a green certified building, for instance.”

Turner says he hopes the green designation will attract new tenants and developers as the Gulch tries to continue expanding during this economic downturn.

The Gulch received high marks for its proximity to the city's business district, access to public transit and reuse of existing buildings.

Metro government has had a hand in reviving the area. Over the last decade, the city has made 7-million dollars of improvements to the infrastructure. Condo developers have also received 15-million dollars in tax increment financing to build affordable units.

By Blake Farmer