

Fisher Creek Campus (Building A) – The 2011 Top Projects winner

Nestled among more than 150 acres of twisting creeks, swaying trees and delicate wetlands, sits one of this year's most celebrated projects in Clark County: Fisher Investments' new, state-of-the-art facility in Camas.

Located off of Northwest Pacific Rim Boulevard, this \$18 million construction project not only represents an opportunity for the Woodside, California-based investment firm to unite more than 400 Fisher employees working out of smaller satellite offices in Vancouver, it also brings an array of new jobs to a region that's ready to transform.

"We decided to build a Class-A office building in a warehouse market because we think that this part of Southern Washington is just ready," said Sherri Fisher, chief financial officer and co-founder of Fisher Investments. "It's ready for high paying jobs; it's ready for us."

According to Howard S. Wright Construction, general contractor for the project, Fisher Investments is also planning to consolidate their California operations, bringing several hundred additional employees to Camas as the campus continues to develop.

Set back from public roads and largely hidden from public view, Fisher said the project site was a challenge for contractors because roughly half of the property is comprised of wetlands. But instead of looking at the site's natural qualities as a hindrance, developers have done just the opposite.

"We needed to utilize existing amenities on the site to reduce costs associated with construction while still being able to meet stormwater ordinances," said Olson Engineering principal Peter Tuck, who served as civil engineer on the project. "Not only were we able to meet that goal, we were able to take some of the existing amenities on site and enhance them."

Tuck said low-impact development treatments have been utilized throughout the construction process, so the impact on existing wetlands has truly been minimal.

"The vision for the area is a very natural type of office park that is as green as possible," added Tuck.

In addition to keeping on-site wetlands intact, Fisher said workers are landscaping with native plants as much as possible and using bioswales, a purifying landscape element, to treat runoff. Fisher employees will also have access to outdoor seating and a number of walking paths.

"Our thinking was to unify wetlands with the spaces that we were developing and it seems to be working," said Fisher. "It's one of those experiments that will probably take five to 10 years to really see how it works."

"We're hoping that in 20 or 30 years, people will look at that building and say, 'Oh yes, those people were thinking. They were very forward thinking.' We hope it stands the test of time," she added.

While LEED certification was never something that the investment firm specifically sought out, Fisher said that she challenged the architects working on the facility to construct a building that was as environmentally friendly as it could be.

"Certainly being environmentally effective was a consideration because it's good business and good citizenship," explained Fisher.

As for the building itself, Howard S. Wright Construction's website reveals that the first floor is designed for a future 5,000-square-foot commercial kitchen and 4,000-square-foot full-service restaurant. All other floors contain upscale conference and meeting rooms, and an open office landscape arrangement with grand views of the surrounding park-like setting.



Given the firm's green vision and the natural beauty of their Camas property, if there's one thing Fisher isn't worried about, it's whether or not their employees will appreciate the new facility.

"This is going to make them feel at home, and that's one of those things that we always want for our employees," she said. "The financial industry can be challenging. They've got challenging jobs. So if they can be happy because they can look out and see trees and see a beautiful place, I think that makes a difference."

As construction of Fisher Investments' Camas building nears completion, Fisher is quick to credit the contractors, developers and a number of local agencies that helped make the company's new facility a reality.

"There's no job that is this large that doesn't have its hiccups and difficulties along the way," she said. "But the team is superb, the contractors have been excellent and it seems like things are coming together in a reasonably timely fashion, so we're pretty happy."