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California Gets A Mega Green Community

by Susan DeFreitas, January 18th, 2011

As one of the founders of [Community Fuels](#), the largest biodiesel producer in California, Coddling Enterprise's CEO Brad Baker was no stranger to sustainable concepts. Why not apply those principles to the company's real estate holdings in a large-scale, comprehensive way? Thus was Rohnert Park's [Sonoma Mountain Village](#) born: a massive five-year build-out of mixed use residential/commercial space on a 200 acre site formerly occupied by Agilent Technologies.

The development—which will be large scale no doubt — [is said to have a unique spin](#) on your typical run-of-the mill “green” development. Sonoma Mountain Village is part of a [State of California designated Innovation Hub](#), with recognitions running from LEED Platinum and [LEED for Neighborhood Development](#) to a shout out from no less than the [United Nations](#), which highlighted it and others like it around the world in a recent report on sustainable communities. To get a handle on what makes this project so exceptional, we chatted with Ryan Sakata, LEED Development Assistant for Sonoma Mountain Village, via e-mail.



image via Sonoma Mountain Village

EarthTechling (ET): As of 2010, Sonoma Mountain Village (SMV) was one of only four developments worldwide recognized by the World Wildlife Federation/BioRegional [One Planet Communities](#) program, and the [only one in North America](#). What is it that makes SMV so different from all the other mixed-use green developments out there?

Ryan Sakata (RS): Sonoma Mountain Village is unique because its plan addresses both the built environment and lifestyle elements of sustainability. Addressing lifestyle choices and providing infrastructure and framework necessary to reduce environmental impacts is a large piece of the Sustainability Action Plan for Sonoma Mountain Village. We plan to provide a lifestyle in which you can truly live, work, and recreate all within the same community, and with a One Planet ecological footprint.

ET: How does the “[5-Minute Lifestyle](#)” promoted by Sonoma Mountain Village (SMV) play into its position as a member of the LEED for Neighborhood Development pilot program?

RS: The “5-Minute Lifestyle” is synergistic in a variety of ways with the LEED-ND Pilot rating system. For example, LEED-ND offers credit for design features such as walkable streets, proximity to daily goods and services, and also access to active and public spaces.

The “5-minute Lifestyle” is a reference point to which we can design and facilitate a pedestrian-oriented environment that promotes walkability, integrated building design, and provides human-scale environments rather than auto-oriented environments.

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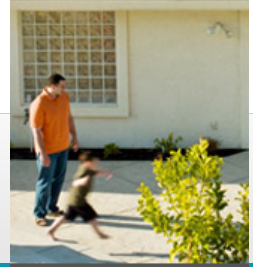


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