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ImageTree Embraces Green Expansion Project

By CATHY BONNSTETTER

For The State Journal

MORGANTOWN — When **ImageTree Corp.**, a new forestry service corporation, needed more room at its offices in The United Center, **Dan Servian**, one of the Geographic Information Systems (GIS) technicians there, decided the new space should reflect the company's environmental mission.

With their new green build work space, everyone was a winner, including Mother Earth.

"I have always been environmentally conscious," Servian said. "Building green took a lot of extra time, but it really wasn't a burden. It was worth it to show that anybody could do it. I involved everyone here. There's a little piece of all of us in that space."

ImageTree expanded its third-floor suite to double its size to 6,403 square feet. The expansion includes offices and work stations, a new server room and open conference area, all with natural lighting coming from a multitude of windows.

Servian went to ImageTree CEO **Mark Redlus** with his green build out proposal.

"My first question was how much will it cost to do it green," Redlus said. "When I was told the cost would be about 5 percent higher (than a traditional expansion), it was clearly the right thing to do. We will get that much back in the savings from the electricity bill in just a year."

Many of the environmentally friendly products were not nearly as elusive or exotic as would be expected.

"I looked on the Internet for ideas," Servian said. "Then I went to **Lowe's**. Many products are environmentally friendly — we just don't know about it until we read the labels."

Paints and adhesives used in the new space did not contain volatile organic compounds (VOCs). The VOC-free products were purchased locally and included some that the contractor, **Commercial Builders Inc.**, had used on other jobs, as well.

"These VOC-free paints and adhesives have been around for a while for people with breathing problems," Servian said. "Now they are becoming more popular, and the prices are coming down. No one got a headache during the painting or after we moved in because of the smells. It smelled a little like clay."

Among the project's goals was to produce little waste. Servian estimates that 75 percent of the construction waste was recycled.

"The recycling took a lot of extra effort," Servian said.

The green build-out took about four months to complete. Cooperation was the key to the project's success.

"**GlenMark Holdings** is the easiest to work with and the most forward-thinking collaborative of the real estate groups I've worked with," Redlus said. "**Commercial Builders Inc.** was incredible. They spent a lot of time and effort finding cost-effective measures and helping us be successful."

Many of the products, including recycled furniture and carpeting, came from the surrounding area. The new server room's floor is recycled tires, which will keep employees safe from electrical shock. Other flooring was made from renewable resources, such as cork and bamboo. The building also includes ambient light detectors with motion sensors and Energy Star-designated computers and light bulbs.

ImageTree is a growing company. Redlus said that from year end 2006 to year end 2007, the company grew 4,000

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— **Mark Redlus, ImageTree CEO**

percent in revenues, and it is growing at about 100 percent each quarter. It soon will need more people and more room.

"We plan to grow from 22 to 75 employees in the next 18 to 24 months," Redlus said. "Our plan is to increase our space by 50 percent by the end of the year."



CATHY BONNSTETTER / For The State Journal

ImageTree GIS Technician Dan Servian, left, and CEO Mark Redlus look over materials in the company's new green workplace.

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